



Objection 5H

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3 pages

Dear Committee members,

I welcome the opportunity to provide you with an opposition to the proposed redistribution of Higgins and Macnamara.

I write this objection in my capacity as a long-time local resident and as a former Member of the Victorian Parliament for the Southern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council, which encompasses the entirety of the Federal Divisions of Macnamara, Higgins and Goldstein and parts of Kooyong, Chisholm, Hotham and Isaacs.

My submission is focused on the proposed redistribution to Macnamara and Higgins. It is my view that the proposal to divide the electorates along Hotham St and move Caulfield, Elsternwick and St Kilda East from Macnamara into Higgins is particularly problematic against the 'communities of interest' and 'means of travel and communication' considerations. It is clear to me that it fails to strike an appropriate balance between the competing considerations at play.

As a former Parliamentarian representing this area, and a long-time resident, I have an acute perspective on these communities, their links and the barriers that existed within them. Furthermore, I also served for six years as the President of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), the peak roof body of the Victorian Jewish Community. With 52 major communal organisations as its affiliates, it represents the breadth of Jewish religious, political, cultural, welfare, educational and social associations that serve the community in Victoria. That said, I make this submission in a personal capacity and as a former Member of Parliament, and not on behalf of the JCCV, which I am no longer an office holder or executive member of.

But as a former MP and Jewish community leader I am acutely aware of the fact that the Jewish community, and many of its leading community organisations, are located both east and west of Hotham Street. By putting the boundary down on Hotham Street, the community will be carved up between Macnamara and Higgins. That division would cut through the very heart of the community – the parts home to many of its leading schools, synagogues, associations, and businesses that together lay down the social, religious and cultural foundations of the community.

The community has for a long time benefited greatly from being located within Macnamara and Melbourne Ports. It has given the community a voice in relation to its affairs and its interests, as a community of significant size in the local area. The community has used its platform effectively and in my view often for the benefit of the local community and Victorians more generally, by for example advocating for policy and law that advances the interests of migrant and multicultural communities. The proposed redistribution will weaken its capacity to speak and advocate for its interests with one voice. This outcome should be avoided.

The communities of St Kilda, St Kilda East, Elwood, Ripponlea and Balaclava share far more in the form of 'communities of interest' and 'means of travel and communication' with St Kilda East, Caulfield and Elsternwick than the people who live in Prahran, Armadale,

Kooyong, Malvern and Toorak. Those south of Dandenong road on both sides of Hotham Street use the same tram lines and train stations of Balaclava and Ripponlea. They socialise on Carlisle St/Balaclava Road, on Fitzroy Street and Acland Street, rather than Chapel Street, Malvern Road, Glenferrie Road and High Street.

While these areas were all within my Southern Metropolitan Region, I found that there was a distinct difference between these communities North and South of Dandenong Road. In my experience as a Parliamentarian, these communities south of Dandenong Road are very connected, and the Jewish community is an exemplar of how interrelated these communities are with those of St Kilda, Elwood, Ripponlea and Balaclava.

By contrast, Dandenong Road, being one of the main highways in Melbourne, forms a genuine barrier between these communities and those presently in Higgins. The nub of my submission in this respect is that dividing the electorates through Hotham Street in no way reflects how the residents live as communities of interest nor how they travel and communicate. Lumping those north and south of Dandenong Road together will put together communities with conspicuously distinct interests and means of travel and communication.

I found that the City of Stonnington – located entirely north of Dandenong Road – formed its own distinct community from the Cities of Glen Eira and Port Phillip. Glen Eira and Port Phillip shared suburbs, shopping strips and main roads. They shared communities of interest across Caulfield, Balaclava, Elsternwick, Ripponlea, Elwood, St Kilda and St Kilda East. People in Glen Eira and Port Phillip frequently visited each other's municipalities but they less frequently crossed Dandenong Road into the City of Stonnington.

This proposed redistribution may make for "neater shapes" but it does not provide for more contiguous and coherent electorates that accurately represent communities of interest with clear and distinct borders and boundaries and means of travel and communication.

For these reasons I request that the Committee re-examines its proposed redistribution of Macnamara and Higgins, and implements a different redistribution that collects in one electorate as far as possible the suburbs of Caulfield (and Caulfield East, Caulfield North and Glen Huntly), St Kilda East and Elsternwick with Balaclava, Ripponlea, St Kilda and Elwood. This, rather than the proposal, will have due regard to the 'community of interest' consideration and accurately reflect the 'means of travel and communication' in these areas.

Thank you for considering my objection.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Huppert

