



Objection 60

Charles Richardson

14 pages

FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION 2020-21: VICTORIA

OBJECTIONS to the PROPOSAL of the VICTORIAN REDISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

From CHARLES RICHARDSON

I am grateful for the opportunity to make objections to the proposal for the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in Victoria, as released by the Redistribution Committee on 19 March 2021. I commend the Committee on its work, which does an excellent job of satisfying the statutory criteria without causing unnecessary disruption to existing boundaries. There are, however, a number of places where I believe its work could be improved upon, which I outline below.

It is reasonable to assume that the Augmented Electoral Commission will try to avoid any large-scale overhaul of the Committee's work, so none of my objections involve rethinking the proposed boundaries from scratch. (Number 16, relating to the Maroondah Highway corridor, is the closest thing to an exception to this rule.) That said, I am disappointed that the Committee has again chosen not to try to resolve the unsatisfactory state of *McEwen*, whose lack of any coherent geographical principle reduces the quality of representation provided for its residents. I would fully support the Commission if it were to revisit that decision.

It is also my view that those making objections should confine themselves to cases where they have something better to suggest, and should not point to problems if they are unable to, even vaguely, offer solutions. As an example, I must point out the unseemly nature of the Committee's proposed eastward extension of *Isaacs*, into the triangle formed by Thompson Road, the Western Port Highway and the Cranbourne railway. But I have no suggestion for fixing it without going back to the drawing board entirely in that part of Melbourne, so it does not appear on my list.

I begin with a general point about the Committee's approach to the numerical constraints on its work, which is relevant to many of my concerns. Then follow 17 numbered objections, organised geographically by moving around the state in a roughly clockwise direction.

ENROLMENT TARGETS

Section 66(3) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* imposes two requirements on a redistribution as far as enrolment numbers are concerned: that “as far as practicable” the enrolment of each division at the projected time (which in this case is January 2025) shall not vary by more than 3.5% either way from the average divisional enrolment at that time, and that “in no case” shall the enrolment of a division at the time of the redistribution (the “actual enrolment”)

vary by more than 10% either way from the average, or quota. The Committee's proposal fulfils both criteria.

With that starting point, there are logically four attitudes one could adopt to enrolment figures:

- (a) Their only purpose is in relation to the statutory criteria; provided those have been met, they should be ignored.
- (b) Greater equality in projected enrolments should be treated as a desirable goal, subject to the other criteria in the Act, but the actual enrolments should be ignored (provided the 10% constraint has been complied with).
- (c) Greater equality in actual enrolments should be treated as a desirable goal, subject to the other criteria in the Act, but the projected enrolments should be ignored (provided the 3.5% constraint has been complied with).
- (d) Greater equality in both actual and projected enrolments should be treated as desirable goals, subject to the other criteria in the Act, even after both the numerical constraints have been complied with.

In normal circumstances I would recommend that (d) is the appropriate attitude to adopt. Given, however, the extreme uncertainty about future population trends that the events of the last year have occasioned, I would now argue (as I did in my original suggestions) that (c) is more appropriate. My primary purpose, however, is to argue strongly against both (a) and (b).

The Act clearly differentiates between the two sets of figures. The actual enrolments are fundamental to the process: "subject thereto the redistribution quota for the State shall be the basis for the proposed redistribution, and the Redistribution Committee may adopt a margin of allowance, to be used whenever necessary". In other words, the 10% figure is just a maximum, but it is strongly hinted that the Committee should work with a lower margin if it finds that to be feasible in the circumstances. There is no such provision in relation to the projected enrolments; their legislative purpose is exhausted by the requirement to maintain a 3.5% tolerance.

The whole point of the legislative provisions is to provide for fair representation, and that means greater equality between divisions is always desirable, other things being equal. To say that, for example, once the other criteria had been fully satisfied there was nothing at all to choose between a division that was at 102% of the quota and one that was at 108%, would be deeply subversive of the Act's purpose. I submit that the Commission should keep equality of divisions constantly in mind as a goal, to be pursued wherever this can be done without violating the other criteria in the Act.

While it is tempting to say that attention should be given to both actual and projected enrolments, in practical terms this means giving priority to the projections, since they are already privileged by the much lower tolerance. A greater weight for them is built in, despite their uncertainty. If we were blessed with knowledge of the future, that greater weight would make sense: we could equalise enrolments as of half-way through the life of the redistribution, confident that the inequalities either side of that point would roughly cancel out.

In fact, however, we do not have that knowledge, especially in our present circumstances. It cannot be stressed enough that the actual electors are real; the projected electors are purely hypothetical. We do not really know where population growth and decline will be in four years time. Some trends are fairly clear, but other projections are frankly speculative, and there is no agreement among demographers about just where the effects of the pandemic will be felt and how

serious they will be.

I submit that the Commission has discharged its obligation to the projected electors when it complies with the 3.5% tolerance, but it has a continuing obligation to the actual electors to try to provide equitable representation for them as much as possible.

1. POINT COOK and TRUGANINA: GELLIBRAND / LALOR

The Committee proposes to run the boundary between *Gellibrand* and *Lalor* further south along Hacketts Road, transferring the level two statistical area (SA2) of Point Cook–South to *Gellibrand*. This is logical as far as it goes, but it leaves the remainder of the suburb of Point Cook, west of Hacketts Road, stranded, cut off from the rest of *Lalor* by the Princes Freeway and a large non-residential area to its west (see figure 1). Prior to this area being developed it was part of the suburb of Werribee, but the boundary was moved in 2013 to reclassify it as part of Point Cook and it is now largely indistinguishable from the rest of that suburb: Hacketts Road is not a major divide.



Figure 1: Princes Freeway, Werribee, at the Sneydes Road crossing (April 2021).

I suggest that the boundary be extended further west to run all the way along the freeway as far as the Werribee River, and from there to the coast, thus transferring the remainder of Point Cook plus the locality of Werribee South into *Gellibrand*.¹ This involves 2,891 electors (3,942 projected), and provides scope for the remainder of the *Gellibrand/Lalor* boundary to revert to its previous shape, undoing the Committee's proposed swap of territory in Truganina and Williams Landing, which transferred a net 5,280 electors (6,901 projected) from *Lalor* to *Gellibrand*. Once *Lalor* is losing enough electors south of the freeway, there is no need to disturb the existing boundary in the north; the Committee's proposal does not even have the virtue of uniting the suburb of Truganina, since the part closest to *Gellibrand* (south of Sayers Road) would stay in *Lalor*, while the much larger part in the north would move to *Gellibrand*, even though it is largely cut off from that division.

My suggested changes would increase *Lalor*, as compared to the proposed boundaries, by 2,389 electors (2,959 projected) to a total of 102,882, or 94.4% of the quota (119,551 and 102.1%

¹ Credit to Darren McSweeney, who proposed this in his original suggestion (number 24) on the redistribution.

projected). This is a marked improvement in terms of equality of enrolments. *Gellibrand* as a result of the same change would fall to 103,541 (114,402 projected); that is lower than is ideal (although better than *Lalor*, and of course still well within the tolerances), but my next objection would incidentally address that problem.

2. YARRAVILLE: FRASER / GELLIBRAND

The Committee's proposal would transfer about half of the suburb of Yarraville from *Gellibrand* to *Fraser*: the part east of Williamstown Road and north of Francis Street. Splitting the suburb in some fashion is unavoidable, but it is unfortunate that it splits it so evenly; the central business district of Yarraville would be in *Fraser*, but a substantial residential area with a number of facilities (including the largest supermarket) would stay in *Gellibrand*. The even split is also numerically unnecessary, since it results in *Gellibrand* having about five thousand fewer electors than *Fraser* – a problem that is exacerbated if the suggestion in my previous objection is adopted, since it would take *Gellibrand* down to just 95.0% of the quota (97.7% projected).

I suggest that instead Yarraville should be mostly retained in *Gellibrand*, with only two small areas going to *Fraser*: 1,648 electors (1,739 projected) north of Somerville Road, and 791 electors (832 projected) west of Roberts Street and north of Francis Street (see accompanying map). This would bring *Gellibrand* up to 108,880 electors (120,546 projected), almost dead on the quota, while *Fraser* at 107,987 (113,255 projected) would be just 0.9% below. *Gellibrand* then also has more scope for the change suggested in objection one; the two work together although each, in my view, is desirable and feasible on its own.



Map 1: Proposed Fraser/Gellibrand boundary (in purple).

3. BATESFORD: CORIO / TUCKER

The proposed boundary between *Corio* and *Tucker* uses the municipal boundary north of the Barwon River, with the City of Greater Geelong in *Corio* and the Shire of Golden Plains in *Tucker*. This boundary was adopted at the 2018 redistribution, but it makes very little sense on the ground. Between the river and the Midland Highway it follows a series of minor roads, one of them unsealed; north of the highway it follows the Moorabool River, thereby cutting the township of Batesford in half.

The number of electors involved is too small to make much difference to anything

(although any small gain for *Tucker* is worthwhile, since the Committee's proposal for it is well under the quota), but in my view it would be a gain for community of interest if the eastern part of Batesford – the area bounded by the municipal boundary, the Barwon River, the Princes Freeway and the Geelong-Ballarat railway – were to be transferred to *Tucker*. Crossing the municipal boundary seems less significant, since *Corangamite* (now to be *Tucker*) already contains a large portion of the City of Greater Geelong; the existing boundary departs from the municipal boundary south of the Barwon River to unite the whole of Ceres in *Corangamite*. No additional municipality would be split, but the electors of Batesford would all be in the same division. The change would involve at most 795 electors (895 projected).²

4. BELMONT and DRYSDALE-LEOPOLD: CORIO / TUCKER

The Committee's proposal takes a conservative approach to the Geelong area, leaving *Corio* unchanged. The boundary between *Corio* and *Tucker* is not intrinsically a bad one (except perhaps for the Batesford anomaly just noted), but keeping it in place has the effect of greatly unbalancing the enrolments between them, with *Corio* having almost ten thousand more electors than *Tucker*. The problem is that the proposed *Tucker* consists mostly of high growth territory; on the projected enrolments it is actually bigger than *Corio* (although the imbalance is nowhere near as great, about 2,300 electors).

I do not believe that such a gross inequity should be tolerated if there is a readily available alternative, and in this case there is. The boundary through the southern suburbs of Geelong can be run along the Barwon River, which is the traditional boundary between the two divisions, and *Corio* can instead be extended eastwards to incorporate the localities of Moolap, Leopold, Curlewis, Clifton Springs and Drysdale. While this splits the Bellarine Peninsula, it does so in a logical fashion: these are primarily residential areas, more closely linked to Geelong than the coastal resorts from Portarlington onwards.

A total of 23,360 electors (26,787 projected) would move from *Tucker* to *Corio*, and 25,343 (26,494 projected) would move the other way. This brings a substantial parcel of low growth territory in Belmont and Highton into *Tucker*; the gap between its actual and projected enrolments would come down from 9.6 percentage points to 7.5. *Corio* with 108,903 electors (117,676 projected) would still be substantially bigger than *Tucker* with 102,983 (119,392 projected), but given the disparity in growth rates the difference would no longer be unreasonably large. (The change suggested in objection three would bring it down slightly more.)

5. STAWELL and LEXTON: MALLEE / WANNON

The Committee proposes to transfer the towns of Stawell and Halls Gap (basically the remainder of Stawell SA2) from *Wannon* to *Mallee*. This results in a major imbalance between the two divisions, with *Mallee* 9.7% above the quota and *Wannon* only 3.9% above – a difference of more than six thousand electors. It is also, in my view, geographically undesirable: Stawell and Ararat are closely related towns that belong together, and there are obvious advantages in having the whole of the Grampians in one division.

The only thing to be said for the Committee's proposal is that it unites the Shire of Northern Grampians in *Mallee*, but it seems to me that this is a minor consideration: the shire is

² This is a maximum figure because the boundary along the freeway would split a level one statistical area (SA1), # 2104037, with 507 electors (583 projected). In reality the majority of them would be east of the freeway, so the total transferred would probably be less than 500.

an artificial construct, with very little in common between its northern part, based on St Arnaud, and the Stawell-Halls Gap area. The lines of communication in the area mostly run from north-west to south-east, not north-east to south-west, so St Arnaud's main links are with Donald, Charlton and Maryborough, not with Stawell.

I suggest that the boundary be returned to its existing position north of Stawell, and that *Mallee* should instead take an additional area of the Shire of Pyrenees: the remainder of Avoca SA2,³ containing the towns of Lexton and Waubra, with 678 electors (702 projected). That would bring *Mallee* to 114,479 electors (113,748 projected); still 5.0% above the quota, but a reasonable number in view of its very low growth rate. Lexton fits well with Avoca and Talbot, and the area needs to be moved anyway if my next objection is acted upon, since otherwise it would be cut off from the rest of *Wannon*.

6. BEAUFORT-SKIPTON-SNAKE VALLEY: BALLARAT / WANNON

The change recommended in the previous objection would leave *Wannon* very large (8.5% above quota), but it is a simple matter for it to shed territory to *Ballarat*. The Committee has already moved in this direction by transferring to *Ballarat Wannon's* share of the Shire of Golden Plains, including the suburban area around Haddon and Ross Creek plus the towns of Linton, Rokewood and Smythesdale. I propose that the rest of Beaufort SA2 should be transferred as well, taking the boundary to the western edge of the Shire of Pyrenees. I would add to that the town of Skipton, which although it is in the Shire of Corangamite is on the Glenelg Highway and clearly belongs with Linton and the southern part of Pyrenees.

That amounts to a transfer of 3,511 electors (3,608 projected); in conjunction with the suggestion made in objection five, it would bring *Wannon* to 114,815 electors (115,358 projected). *Ballarat* would have 111,407 (120,596 projected), which although well within the tolerances is somewhat on the high side for a division with moderately strong growth. My next objection deals with that problem.

7. GORDON: BALLARAT / HAWKE

The Committee's proposed new division of *Hawke* fits neatly around the western outskirts of Melbourne. It is, however, rather small: 5.6% below quota, and still only equal to average on the projected enrolments. Not much can be done about this, since on the Committee's scheme most of the divisions in this region (including neighboring *Calwell*, *Gorton* and *McEwen*) are underweight in enrolments. But if my suggestion in objection six is accepted, there would be some electors to spare in *Ballarat*, and it is a natural move to shift the *Ballarat/Hawke* boundary a little to the west, transferring the towns of Gordon and Mount Egerton⁴ to *Hawke*: a total of 1,692 electors (1,790 projected).

Gordon and Mount Egerton fit well with Ballarat at the outer edge of the Melbourne commuter belt, and shifting *Ballarat* to the west gives it more flexibility for the future. (It seems likely that the Ballarat area will be relatively well placed for post-Covid growth.) Another possibility would be to extend *Hawke* northward to take Trentham and Tylden: while I think this

³ The Commission may wish to use the municipal boundary rather than the SA2 boundary for the eastern edge of this area, although it cuts very close to the centre of Waubra. The difference in terms of electors would be tiny.

⁴ Including also the localities of Barkstead, Bolwarrah, Bunding, Bungal and Morrisons. I have calculated the numbers on the basis of the relevant SA1s but the Commission may be able to find a neater boundary.

would work quite well, it involves crossing another two municipal boundaries, so the Gordon option is probably to be preferred.

8. DIVISION NAMES: HAWKE / WILLS

There is general agreement on naming a division “*Hawke*”, in honor of the late prime minister. The Committee proposes to give that name to the new division, rather than renaming the existing *Wills*. As a result there will continue to be a *Wills* but no *Burke*, a situation that to me makes no sense. Burke was the leader of the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860-61; Wills was his deputy – if one of them is to be commemorated, there is no reason why it should be Wills. Interestingly, this situation has arisen before, after *Burke* was abolished in 1955, but the anomaly was recognised and a new *Burke* was created in the 1968 redistribution.

The obvious way to proceed, it seems to me, is to rename *Wills* as “*Hawke*“, since it was the division that Bob Hawke represented throughout his time in parliament. If the 1860-61 expedition is still thought to be worth commemorating, then the new division should be named “*Burke*” (it is in roughly the same position as *Burke* was prior to 2004); if not, then a new name should be found for it from among the many valuable suggestions made to the Committee at the previous stage of the redistribution.

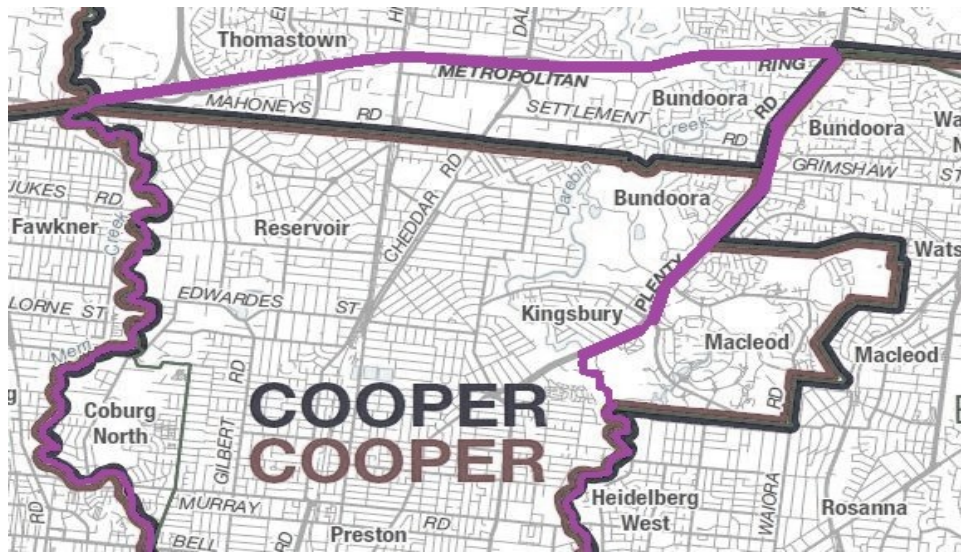
9. BUNDOORA, MERNDA and RESEARCH: COOPER / JAGAJAGA / MCEWEN / SCULLIN

The Committee's proposal fixes an existing anomaly at the southern end of *Cooper*, returning to *Melbourne* the territory west of Merri Creek. It leaves in place, however, a problem at the other end of *Cooper*, where it projects awkwardly into the suburb of Macleod, north and east of La Trobe University. In doing so it follows the municipal boundary, but that boundary was drawn before the area was developed for housing; it simply follows the boundaries of the psychiatric hospitals that then occupied the site. Both sides of it are now residential, and they are separated from the rest of *Cooper* by the university and its associated parklands. The whole suburb should logically be in *Jagajaga*.

It is possible to achieve this by a relatively straightforward rotation of territory in a clockwise direction through four divisions, as follows:

- (a) Run the eastern boundary of *Cooper* along Plenty Road the whole way from Darebin Creek north to the Metropolitan Ring Road, as shown on the accompanying map. This transfers the 2,864 electors (3,182 projected) in Macleod from *Cooper* to *Jagajaga*, and 4,159 electors (4,265 projected), almost all of them in the west of Bundoora, from *Scullin* to *Cooper*.
- (b) Extend the existing *McEwen/Scullin* boundary along Bridge Inn Road westwards as far as Darebin Creek, which is the locality boundary (instead of running down Cravens Road). This transfers approximately⁵ 2,405 electors (3,331 projected) in Mernda from *McEwen* to *Scullin*.

⁵ Approximate because there is one SA1, #2143410, that straddles Bridge Inn Road. I'm counting it as if its electors were all on the south side, which is certainly where most of them are.



Map 2: Proposed northern boundaries of Cooper (in purple).

- (c) Transfer the localities of Kangaroo Ground and Research from *Jagajaga* to *McEwen*. This area is currently in *Menzies*, so there is no additional disruption involved to its 2,924 electors (3,045 projected).

At the price of a series of small changes, I believe this plan improves boundaries all round. Bundoora would extend across two divisions rather than three; the ring road is a stronger boundary than Mahoneys Road (and was used as the boundary prior to 2018); *McEwen* would have a bit less urban territory; and Kangaroo Ground and Research fit well with Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge. It would also help bring *McEwen* closer to the quota (as would my next suggestion); the Committee has it a long way short at 92.7%.

10. KINGLAKE: INDI / MCEWEN

The Committee proposes that *Indi* remain unchanged. There is nothing particularly wrong with its boundaries, but at 4.3% above the quota it is unnecessarily large, being another area that is likely to do better out of post-Covid growth than is reflected in recent growth patterns. Since, as just noted, neighboring *McEwen* is noticeably underweight, I suggest it would be sensible to transfer some electors to it from *Indi*.

Kinglake SA2 is the obvious choice; as part of the Greater Melbourne statistical area it is a poor fit for a division that extends to the New South Wales border. Kinglake and Kinglake West naturally look to Hurstbridge and Whittlesea respectively, rather than north to Yea. To the extent that *McEwen* has any unifying character, it is this sort of peri-urban territory. The change would add 2,980 electors (3,202 projected) to *McEwen*; in conjunction with that suggested in objection nine it would bring it to 95.9% of quota (entirely appropriate for a growth area) and would bring *Indi* down to 101.6%.

11. YALLOURN NORTH: GIPPSLAND / MONASH

The Committee also proposes to keep *Gippsland* exactly as it is. At 102.6% of quota it is not unreasonably large, but its boundary with *Monash* could in my view be improved, and at 4.3% below quota *Monash* could do with a few additional electors. The township of Yallourn North,

with 1,205 electors (1,195 projected), belongs with Moe rather than Morwell, as do the 90 electors in Hernes Oak who have been stranded on the *Gippsland* side of the boundary. The Morwell River is a good natural divide.

The Commission might also consider transferring Boolarra into *Monash*, but since that would involve departing from the municipal boundary I do not recommend it.

12. CLYDE-TOORADIN: HOLT / LA TROBE

(Note that this and the next three objections are closely linked. They are independently motivated, since I think each identifies a problem that should be fixed, but the solutions that I propose work together: the numbers would not permit some of them to be implemented in isolation.)

The Committee proposes to transfer a substantial slice of territory from the south-eastern end of *Holt* to *La Trobe*, consisting of most of the suburb of Clyde plus the town of Tooradin. It contains 3,120 electors (4,371 projected). On the Committee's scheme *La Trobe* needs those electors – even with them it is only about 120 clear of the minimum tolerance – but this is an unfortunate place to get them. Tooradin really belongs with the other bayside communities of Warneet and Cannons Creek, while Clyde should ideally remain in a single division. Clyde, moreover, is high growth territory, which *La Trobe* already has more than enough of. Even if one is sceptical about how much of this growth will actually eventuate, it is clearly in the interests of stability for it to be in *Holt* rather than *La Trobe*.

I therefore suggest that this whole area remain in *Holt*, and that *La Trobe* find the electors elsewhere, as covered in the next objection.

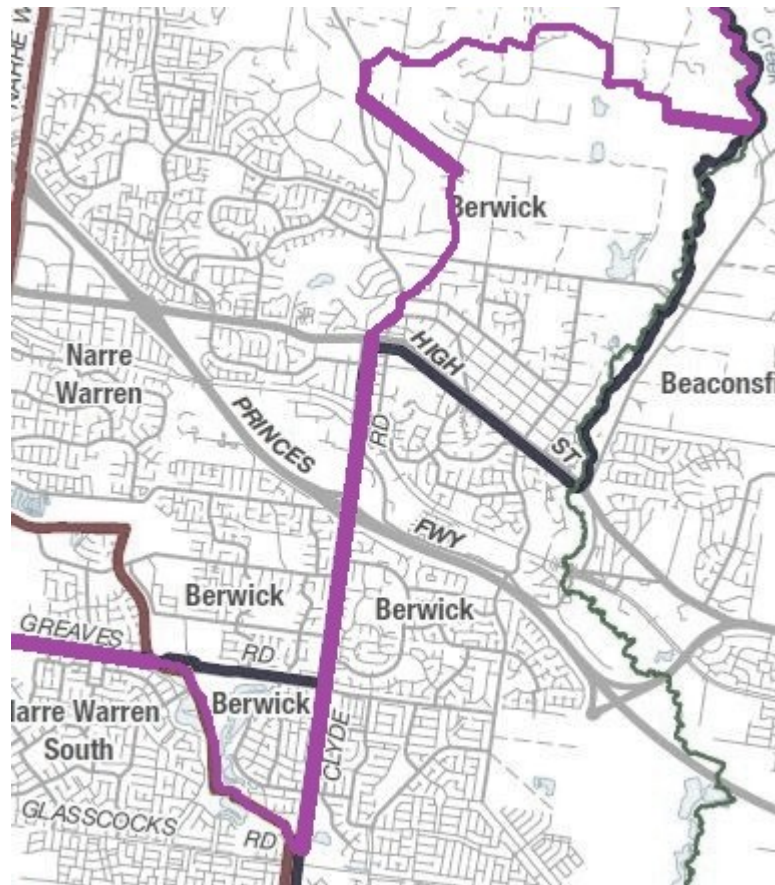
13. BERWICK: BRUCE / LA TROBE

The Committee's proposed boundary between *Bruce* and *La Trobe* runs down the main street of Berwick – the old Princes Highway, there known as High Street. This is an exceptionally disruptive boundary; High Street is a major shopping area and community centre (see figure 2), with shops, restaurants and other services evenly distributed on both sides of the road. There is a wide median strip with gardens and car parking, which encourages foot traffic back and forth. Asking two different members of parliament to represent equal shares of such a precinct is a recipe for confusion on a substantial scale.

Nor is this a difficult problem to fix. The boundary along Clyde Road can simply continue north on the same general alignment; I suggest (following the SA1 boundaries) Lyall Road, Beaumont Road, then the transmission line west to the Berwick/Harkaway locality boundary, and follow that boundary back to the municipal boundary at Cardinia Creek. (This and the following objection are illustrated on the accompanying map; with more precise data to split SA1s the Commission may be able to find a neater line.) That would hand 3,574 electors (3,773 projected) from *Bruce* back to *La Trobe*, which conveniently balances the transfer out of *La Trobe* just suggested in objection twelve. And because the north of Berwick is a low growth area, it would not only keep *La Trobe* within the tolerances but would also reduce the imbalance between its actual and projected enrolments.



Figure 2: High Street, Berwick (April 2021).



Map 3: Proposed south-eastern boundary of Bruce (in purple).

14. BERWICK SOUTH: BRUCE / HOLT

The Committee proposes to run the boundary between *Bruce* and *Holt* along Pound Road and Greaves Road rather than (as at present) along the Hallam main drain. This is not as good a boundary (it detaches electors at the north end of Hampton Park from the rest of their suburb), but

Bruce needs the additional electors and it is the best available option. At the eastern end of the boundary, however, this consideration no longer applies: there Greaves Road crosses the drainage reserve, so following the latter from that point down to Clyde Road would result in a gain to *Bruce*, not a loss.

I therefore suggest that should be done, transferring 1,317 electors (1,493 projected) from *Holt* to *Bruce*. By following the locality boundary it would prevent *Holt* from intruding into Berwick, and it would create scope for the transfer into *Holt* contemplated by objection twelve above. It would also compensate *Bruce* for the transfer to *La Trobe* recommended above in objection thirteen.

15. EMERALD-MACCLESFIELD: CASEY / LA TROBE

The existing boundary between *Casey* and *La Trobe* follows the municipal boundary; that is, the southern boundary of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The Committee proposes to depart from this in two places, transferring to *Casey* (a) the locality of Clematis and the remainder of Menzies Creek (412 electors, 422 projected), and (b) the locality of Avonsleigh (637 electors, 633 projected). These small numbers matter because on the Committee's proposal both divisions are towards the upper end of the tolerance for projected enrolments (*Casey* 102.3%, *La Trobe* 102.6%) and *La Trobe* (as noted above under objection twelve) is extremely close to the lower end of the tolerance for actual enrolments (90.1%). *Casey* at 105.1% is much higher than is ideal on actual enrolments but is at no risk of breaching the tolerance.

In geographical terms, the only part of the proposed change that makes much sense is unifying the locality of Menzies Creek, which involves 152 electors (153 projected). Whether that is enough to justify crossing the municipal boundary is a matter of opinion. But granted that, bundling Clematis in with the move as well is clearly suboptimal. Its residents are functionally part of Emerald, not Belgrave, and while the proposed boundary basically follows the locality boundary, by running down the main road it would cut off both Clematis station and the Paradise Valley Hotel, the only private business of note in the locality.

The incision of Avonsleigh is just as bad. It cuts the main road between Emerald and Cockatoo, and the proposed boundary along Macclesfield Road bisects a single residential neighborhood (and incidentally separates the Avonsleigh general store from what is presumably most of its market). While having Avonsleigh and Macclesfield in the same division is clearly a gain, they look south rather than north: the connection to Monbulk and Woori Yallock is tenuous and over minor roads, while the connection to Emerald is clear and obvious. This was acknowledged by the then Commissioners in the 2010 redistribution, when the boundary was adjusted northwards to include Macclesfield in *La Trobe*.

The proposed *La Trobe* is, as already noted, close to the upper limit for projected enrolments, but it is not *that* close. It could take back both Clematis and Avonsleigh and still be only at 103.3% (91.1% actual). I strongly recommend that it should do so.

One advantage of the changes proposed under objections twelve and thirteen above is that by bringing *La Trobe's* enrolment back a little from the edge of the permitted tolerances it provides scope for doing more in this area. In addition to taking back Avonsleigh, *La Trobe* could also gain from *Casey* the whole of Macclesfield, amounting to 688 electors (709 projected). As the Committee has recognised, it and Avonsleigh belong together: this is the way to do it. It also has the side benefit of bringing *Casey* closer to the quota (103.7%).⁶

⁶ The Commission could also consider transferring to *La Trobe* the northern end of Emerald (basically that part

16. MAROONDAH HIGHWAY CORRIDOR: CHISHOLM / DEAKIN / MENZIES

As was widely suggested, the Committee has proposed that the territory north of the Yarra that was added last time (except for North Warrandyte) be detached from *Menzies*. That leaves *Menzies* needing to gain elsewhere, and there are realistically only two options: to the south-east, from the City of Maroondah, or to the south, from the City of Whitehorse.⁷ The Committee has chosen the second of those; I believe that with the benefit of further consideration, the Commission should reverse that decision.

Each option has its advantages. That chosen by the Committee fits the whole City of Maroondah within a single division (*Deakin*), which is a real gain. But the price paid for it, in my view, is too high. The existing *Menzies/Chisholm* boundary along Mullum Mullum Creek (which mostly coincides with the Eastern Freeway) is a strong boundary of very long standing: breaching it requires a strong justification. The northern boundary of the Shire of Maroondah has no such weight of precedent behind it; it is a good boundary, but it has been crossed at the last three redistributions.

More seriously, the Committee's approach results in a boundary running along Whitehorse Road the whole way between Elgar Road and Heatherdale Road. This is a singularly poor boundary: it splits business and commercial districts in Box Hill (see figure 3), Nunawading and Mitcham, where in each case a number of important facilities would be separated from the greater part of their respective suburbs (examples include Box Hill TAFE, the Whitehorse civic centre and Mitcham's largest supermarket). Worst off would be Blackburn, which would be split three ways, with the *Chisholm/Deakin* boundary down Blackburn Road: its hotel and primary school would be in *Menzies*, its post office in *Deakin* and its railway station and supermarket in *Chisholm*.



Figure 3: Whitehorse Road at the centre of Box Hill (April 2021).

of Emerald–Cockatoo SA2 that is north of the municipal boundary), which would add another 259 electors (265 projected). I would be inclined to leave it in *Casey*; unlike Macclesfield, it has reasonably good connections with Monbulk.

⁷ It would, of course, also be possible to compromise between the two approaches and take some territory from each, but I see no advantage to be gained from that and I would urge the Commission not to consider it.

This is the sort of thing that should only be done if there is demonstrably no alternative, but in fact the alternative is readily available. While I do not suggest that it is perfect, it avoids these problems at a relatively small cost. The steps involved are as follows:

- (a) First, transfer the territory south of Mullum Mullum Creek from *Menzies* to *Deakin*: 26,788 electors (28,708 projected).
- (b) Next, compensate *Menzies* by giving it (from *Deakin*) the territory north of the Ringwood By-Pass and Whitehorse Road in the City of Maroondah: 28,573 electors (29,517 projected).
- (c) Fix up Box Hill and Blackburn by making a swap of territory between *Chisholm* and *Deakin*, with the boundary between them to run along Canterbury Road east to Springvale Road, then south to the Burwood Highway, and from there east to Dandenong Creek. This results in a net transfer of 1,078 electors (603 projected) from *Deakin* to *Chisholm*.

I submit that this option yields much superior boundaries within the City of Whitehorse, and that it divides the Shire of Maroondah in a sensible fashion. Whitehorse Road east of Ringwood is not a commercial thoroughfare the way it is further west; the worst this would do is split the shopping centres at Burnt Bridge and Croydon North, which seems a relatively minor consideration.

Otherwise, apart from dividing the Shire of Maroondah, the only drawback in my way of doing it is that *Chisholm* and *Menzies* would both move a little further from the quota (to 105.2% and 104.8% respectively). *Deakin*, however, which on the Committee's proposal is the largest of the three, would come significantly closer, from 105.5% to 102.9%, so that hardly seems a major problem. (All three are well within the tolerance on the projected enrolments.)



Map 3: Proposed boundaries of Deakin (in purple).

17. ST KILDA EAST: HIGGINS / MACNAMARA

I am pleased that the Committee has proposed a substantial revision of the *Higgins/Macnamara* boundary, to create two much more compact divisions, and I would urge the Commission to support this plan. There is, however, one anomaly in it. The proposed boundary runs straight down Hotham Street, putting a small section of the City of Port Phillip in St Kilda East into *Higgins*: the rectangle bounded by Hotham Street, Inkerman Road, Orrong Road and Dandenong Road, which contains 3,344 electors (3,477 projected).

The argument in favor of the Committee's proposal is that it provides a nice straight boundary the whole way. The argument for retaining that rectangle in *Macnamara* is that (a) it would respect the municipal boundary, keeping the whole of Port Phillip in *Macnamara*, and (b) it would equalise the enrolments a little better; *Higgins* would go from 102.0% of quota to 98.9% and *Macnamara* from 98.0% to 101.0%. My feeling is that neither of those on its own is compelling, but the conjunction of the two is at least persuasive.

I therefore suggest that this section of St Kilda East should be transferred to *Macnamara*.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Richardson

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