



Comment on objections 31

William Ma

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Dear Redistribution Committee

I am writing to you to comment on some of the Objections to the proposed redistribution.

As I have previously stated, I have long standing ties to the Box Hill area including having operated businesses in the area for over 30 years (which I continue to do) and have served in various positions for the Asian Business Association of Whitehorse, including as Vice President.

My ties to Box Hill are significant and I would like to confine my comments to the impact of the redistribution on this community.

Firstly, I again want to congratulate the Redistribution Committee on its proposed boundaries. Uniting Box Hill into the Menzies electorate is to be applauded and must be maintained.

I also note my earlier comments (s48) and objection (OB365), which reiterates Box Hill's close ties to the areas to its immediate North and South. That is, Box Hill as a Major Activity Centre is most closely connected to Doncaster to its North or Glen Waverley to its South.

That's why I originally requested that the Redistribution Committee unite Box Hill into either Menzies with Doncaster or Chisholm with Glen Waverley (refer to my submission S48). I suggested that if a seat in the north was abolished, Box Hill should be united in Chisholm along with Glen Waverley. Alternatively, I suggested that if a seat was abolished in the south (as ultimately occurred), Box Hill should be united in Menzies along with Doncaster.

I was then very pleased that the Redistribution Committee adopted one of my proposals, including Box Hill in the Menzies electorate (following the decision to abolish Higgins).

This decision was consistent with the 2021 Redistribution which correctly concluded that Box Hill was closely connected to Doncaster and should be included in the Menzies electorate (refer to paragraph 171 of the 2021 Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions):

171. The Redistribution Committee considered both options, however ultimately deemed the communities north of Whitehorse Road, currently situated in the Division of Chisholm, to be better aligned with localities in the south of the Division of Menzies, particularly around Doncaster and Donvale. The Redistribution Committee considered the community of interest arising from shared social, recreational and health care links between these areas.

And paragraph 389:

189. The Redistribution Committee also has been able to address communities of interest by transferring the localities of Box Hill North, Blackburn North and portions of Box Hill, Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham to the proposed Division of Menzies. This emphasises the close community links between these localities, notably transport links, main roads, school zones and Box Hill Hospital.

This decision from the Redistribution Committee has been universally accepted by the Box Hill community and I believed made clear, once and for all, the predominantly north / south community connections we enjoyed.

I was accordingly surprised to see this matter being re-litigated again in this redistribution. Most notably in OB487 from Victorian Labor. In their submission they again seek to argue that Box Hill should be placed in an electorate with no cohesive communities of interest, that narrowly stretches throughout the eastern suburbs all the way to Croydon.

In effect, they are arguing that Box Hill shares closer community connections with Ringwood and Croydon than Doncaster. This is simply incorrect. Almost identical arguments were rejected in the last redistribution and should be rejected again.

Without seeking to make all the same arguments again, I would just refer to the comment on objections from The Asian Business Association of Whitehorse (COB9) at the 2021 Redistribution which said the following:

Secondly, we would like to reiterate the view provided in our original submission (CS29), that once we accept that the areas of Box Hill, Box Hill North, Blackburn and Blackburn North cannot remain wholly within the electorate of Chisholm, it is clear these areas orient most strongly towards Doncaster and Doncaster East in the Menzies electorate.

This is due to major road connections, central shopping centres, health and education services, community groups and public facilities.

The solution provided by the Redistribution Committee is, in our judgment, worth supporting because the alternative proposals are all significantly inferior on a community of interest basis.

It's worth remembering that when the The Asian Business Association of Whitehorse referred here to inferior alternative proposals, it was referring to an almost identical proposal to that contained in OB487.

The Redistribution Committee rightly accepted these arguments from The Asian Business Association of Whitehorse (and many others). This ultimately meant that Box Hill was included in the Menzies electorate along with Doncaster and Doncaster East.

Nothing has changed in our community since that time, other than perhaps the connections between Box Hill and Doncaster being even closer than before.

On that basis, I again commend the Redistribution Committee for its proposed boundaries as they relate to Box Hill (subject to the minor amendments I suggested in OB365)

Yours sincerely

William Ma