



# Comment on objections 98

Dr Adam Carr

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**Comment on Objections OB152, OB235, OB86, OB94, OB95, OB174, OB416, OB448, OB47, OB462, OB482, OB493, OB448, OB503, OB149. OB481**

Dear Commission members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the proposed redistribution of Victorian electorates.

I have lived and worked in the Division of Macnamara (formerly Melbourne Ports) for more than 30 years, mainly in St Kilda but more recently in Southbank. I am very familiar with the geography, economy and social structure of the area. As someone who does not own a car, I am also very familiar with the public transport system of the area. It is on this basis that I wish to comment on the redistribution proposal for Macnamara and on the objections which have been raised to that proposal.

I support the Commission's proposal to make St Kilda Road the boundary between the Divisions of Macnamara and Melbourne. This places the part of South Yarra between St Kilda Road and Punt Road, which is in the City of Melbourne, in the Division of Melbourne, which is a better fit than placing it in Macnamara. St Kilda Road is a strong and clear boundary between the electors of South Yarra, Windsor, Prahran on the one hand and those of South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Albert Park and Southbank on the other, and this boundary is appropriately reflected in the proposal.

I know the existing Division of Macnamara is under quota and given the proposal to abolish the adjacent Division of Higgins, Macnamara is required to gain electors. The commission's proposal to transfer 5,251 voters in Windsor to Macnamara from Higgins is an appropriate one, as this locality was previously a part of the electorate.

Several suggestions including the Liberal Party of Australia (Victorian Division) (**OB398**) propose a transfer of an additional approximately

27,000 electors to the proposed division of Macnamara by transferring electors bounded south of Toorak Road and West of Williams Road, and electors bounded west of Orrong Road and south of Malvern Road. Likewise, the Australian Greens Victoria (OB481) suggest that Prahran East should be in the proposed division of Macnamara.

This proposal has come up at every recent redistribution. It is true that the incorporation of Caulfield into the then Division of Melbourne Ports in 1990 created a somewhat anomalous Division. But in the more than 30 years since then, the current form of the Division has become established and accepted, and there is now a real sense of community identity between the eastern and western parts of the Division, which share the concerns of all voters in inner-metropolitan areas. This is reinforced by the strong east-west transport links within the Division.

The Commission will doubtless recall that strong objections were raised in previous redistributions when this proposal was put forward, and that on both occasions the proposal was abandoned. I hope the Commission will once again reject this suggestion, which would be very disruptive to many residents. It is also an unnecessary proposal, since the numerical requirements of the redistribution can be met by causing significantly less disruption, as the Commission proposed.

The Commission has proposed that the Division of Melbourne incorporate territory south of the Yarra for the first time. I accept that the abolition of Higgins has made this necessary. That being so, I think Commission has chosen the correct place for the crossing. There is a major thoroughfare down Chapel St and Church St that connects South Yarra to Richmond and deeper into the proposed Division of Melbourne.

The Liberal Party suggests Toorak Road is a boundary which unites a recognised community. This is not correct. Toorak Road is a central feature of South Yarra, it is not a boundary. There is nothing which divides electors on either side of Toorak Road. In fact, in my view

Toorak Road is a meeting place for the community and it would be inappropriate to use this main dining and shopping precinct as a boundary.

There is also no east-west means of travel between South Yarra and the communities on the other side of St Kilda Road. The residents of Middle Park do not convene on Chapel Street.

As a resident of Southbank, I am opposed to any suggestion that any Division should cross the lower Yarra - that is the Yarra west of St Kilda Road. There is no community of interest between the north and south banks of lower Yarra. I am strongly opposed to the Liberal Party's suggestion that Southbank and Fishermans Bend should be moved into the proposed Division of Melbourne because they are "city fringe areas." This is not correct. Southbank is not oriented to the north bank of the Yarra. It is oriented towards South Melbourne by City Road and Clarendon Street, and to St Kilda via St Kilda Road. This will be even more true of the Fishermans Bend area as it is developed. These areas belong in Macnamara, not Melbourne.

I am also opposed to the suggestion that the West Gate Freeway should form the border between Macnamara and Melbourne. It is true that the Freeway forms part of the boundary between the City of Melbourne and the City of Port Phillip. But that boundary was imposed on the area by a former state government and is still strongly resented by many Southbank residents, who rightly feel that they have much more in common with Port Phillip than they do with the City of Melbourne, which is dominated by the business interests of the CBD. The West Gate Freeway has nothing to do with the suburbs it passes through. It connects residents from across Melbourne to the rest of the state. It is not a means of travel within the local community.

As a gay man, I have been an active member of the Melbourne LGBTI community for many years. I note some proposals have argued for the incorporation of Prahran and South Yarra into Macnamara on the grounds that this will unite residential areas with a strong LGBTI presence. I must say I think this is a rather old-

fashioned view. The days when LGBTI people (and gay men in particular) huddled together for safety in residential ghettos are long past. Today LGBTI people live in all parts of the inner metropolitan area, indeed all across Melbourne and also in regional centres. This is actually to the advantage of the LGBTI community, since it means that all parties and candidates will be more inclined to pay attention to the community's interests than they would do if most LGBTI voters were corralled into one electorate.

I hope this submission is of assistance to you as you make your final determination of the redistribution.

Sincerely

Dr Adam Carr



Southbank