



Comment on suggestions 65

Yarra Ranges Council

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7 December 2023

Redistribution Committee for Victoria
 Australian Electoral Commission
 Locked Bag 4007
 Canberra ACT 2601

Yarra Ranges Council Submissions - Victorian Federal Electoral Boundary Redistribution

Dear Redistribution Committee for Victoria.

Victoria is undergoing a redistribution of the House of Representatives, decreasing from 39 to 38.

Yarra Ranges Council (Council) acknowledges the need for the abolition of a commonwealth electoral division and the associated boundary changes to ensure that all electoral divisions remain within quota.

The current and projected enrolment for the Commonwealth Electoral Division of Casey is:

Electoral division	Actual enrolment Wednesday 9 August 2023	Projected enrolment Monday 17 April 2028	Are the numerical quotas met?
Casey	115,636	124,041	Yes

We note that several submissions received have proposed some realignment to the division of Casey, with the suggestions ranging from relatively minor changes to those which seek its abolition.

Since 1977, the division of Casey has been structured around the Lilydale and Yarra Valley districts. Currently, the division of Casey begins in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne, extends into the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and therefore near mirrors the Yarra Ranges municipality.

Over two successive redistributions in 2010 and 2018, Yarra Ranges was progressively united into an almost contiguous single federal seat, being the division of Casey. This correctly united all the Yarra Ranges municipality, which was reaffirmed in the 2021 redistribution.

This has ensured that the strong communities of interest within the Yarra Ranges have been maintained and has allowed for better representation of our community in the Federal Parliament. The Council considers abolishing the division of Casey, as proposed in submissions 32, 42, 49 and 57, and therefore splitting the Yarra Ranges Council municipality, which almost identically mirrors the division of Casey, and separating the municipality into four or five divisions, would split our Yarra Ranges community, and therefore split our social, cultural and economic interests as well as our historical connections.



Additionally, some submissions seek to split major travel corridors of the Maroondah Highway, the Melba Highway, and the Warburton Highway. Council draws the Committee's attention to submission 36, in which providing *"good examples [of] electorates in Victoria...giving their communities strong connections to each other"* the submitter utilises *"the seat of Casey which takes in the Yarra Valley and outer eastern suburbs [as] it firmly represents the communities running along the interlinked Melba, Maroondah, and Warburton Highway corridors."*

Other submissions also seek to place Chirnside Park in a different electoral division, whereas Council regards Chirnside Park as a 'Gateway' into the municipality and the Yarra Valley. These gateway suburbs strengthen our identity, our culture and heritage and create a sense of belonging for our community. Therefore, this should remain in the same electoral division as the rest of the municipality.

The Council most strongly advocates that the division of Casey remains unchanged for the following reasons:

- It meets current requirements.
- The current division meets the numerical quotas for both actual and projected enrolment.
- The current division boundary also meets the non-numerical considerations as set out in s.66 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* as they strongly reflect, communities of interest, the incorporation of all major service centres in the one electorate, the importance of travel corridors in the area, the common economic interests, based on agriculture and tourism.

Considerable effort has previously been undertaken to align boundaries:

- It has been the past practice of redistribution committees to utilise the boundaries of local government areas in rural and regional areas – previous redistributions have expanded the division of Casey.

Strong community identity and representation is supported:

- Fragmentation of Commonwealth Electoral Divisions across Councils, particularly in rural and regional areas, should be lessened whenever possible.
- It allows for most of Yarra Ranges residents to be able to be more easily identify and access their federal representative.
- The alignment of the municipality and division of Casey allows for strong relations between members of Parliament and Councillors, Council and all tiers of government, and local communities.
- Our status as a large, progressive, and high performing Local Government area is greatly supported with a single and strong relationship with the Federal Government.
- Separating the division of Casey will further exasperate the tension between the Metropolitan and Rural reaches of the region.
- It ensures that communities of interest are not split, or portions of the community disadvantaged through dislocation from natural/behavioural centres of attraction.

Council supports the submissions proposing the renaming of the division of Casey to Barak after the highly respected Wurundjeri leader William Barak. We consider renaming the division to Barak a very appropriate recognition of his advocacy and leadership for Indigenous people and culture and supports these submissions to the Committee.

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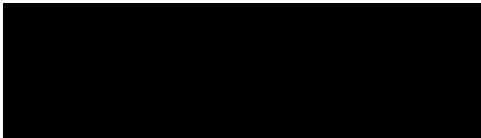
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The Yarra Ranges Council thanks the Redistribution Committee for Victoria for the opportunity to make comments in respect of the submissions received and looks forward to the release of the draft boundaries.

Yours sincerely.



Ms Tammi Rose

CEO, Yarra Ranges Council

