



Objection 311

Cr Mike Scott

2 pages

Objection for the 2023-2024 Victorian federal redistribution

Please find a summary of the points I would like to raise as my objection to the federal redistribution of the seat of Higgins.

1. Communities of Interest and Cohesion: The proposed redistribution would fragment Prahran, Windsor and South Yarra, dividing it across three federal electorates, which would undermine connectivity and effective representation of shared interests like transport, health, and economic concerns. For another example, Carnegie and East Malvern differ significantly from Noble Park and Springvale, raising concerns about fair representation. Additionally, splitting Stonnington into five multiple electorates is seen as divisive and counterproductive, diluting advocacy for community-specific needs.

2. Physical Features and Natural Boundaries: The current boundaries of the Division of Higgins are well-defined by natural borders such as the Yarra River and Dandenong Highway, aligning closely with the Stonnington local government area. Natural and man made features like the Monash Freeway and Gardiners Creek serve as clear, logical boundaries that should be preserved to maintain community coherence. In contrast, the proposed Division of Melbourne lacks such clear physical boundaries, uniting disparate communities divided by significant barriers like the Yarra River and the congested CBD. The author argues that the redistribution should respect physical boundaries to reflect and maintain community integrity.

3. Historical and Symbolic Importance: The Division of Higgins holds significant historical importance, having been represented by prominent political figures, including two Prime Ministers and an influential Minister for Women. Preserving the name and integrity of Higgins honors its historical legacy and contributions, including its namesake, Justice Henry Higgins, renowned for introducing fair wage measures in 1907. Fragmenting this electorate would negatively impact the strong sense of identity and pride fostered by long-established community connections and networks.

4. Population Growth and Projections: Higgins is poised for significant growth due to ongoing residential developments. Projections indicate that the population of Stonnington alone will reach 125,500 by 2028 and 137,725 by 2036. This growth necessitates maintaining a coherent electoral boundary to ensure effective representation. The Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) decisions on redistribution should reassess the accuracy and durability of their projections before implementing disruptive changes.

5. Cultural and Institutional Significance: Higgins is home to important local institutions such as Cabrini Hospital, which plays a crucial role in healthcare for Stonnington's residents. Keeping such institutions within the same electoral boundaries ensures continued support and representation. Fragmenting Higgins into parts of other electorates with different characteristics would be viewed negatively by its residents and disrupt the established community cohesion.

Recommendation: Given the need to eliminate a metropolitan Federal Division in Melbourne, the author suggests abolishing the Division of Hotham instead of Higgins. Hotham lacks distinct community character and clear physical boundaries. Proposed changes include integrating Oakleigh and Chadstone into Higgins, reuniting Bentleigh East with Bentleigh in Goldstein, combining Noble Park with Dandenong in Bruce, and placing Clayton and Springvale's large Asian migrant and student populations into Chisholm.

Conclusion: The proposed redistribution of the seat of Higgins raises significant concerns about community cohesion, representation, natural and historical boundaries, population growth, cultural significance, and historical legacy. These factors should be carefully considered to avoid undermining the community's interests and historical identity.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Mike Scott

Deputy Mayor

City of Stonnington