



Objection 382

Ross Boddington

3 pages

Objection to the Higgins electorate redistribution

Summary

I contend that there is minimal alignment between Higgins and Chisholm from a cultural, education, income, leisure, transport or health perspective. The numerical legislative requirement has been given priority over “*the obligations relating to community of interests, means of communication and travel*”.¹

Chisholm is more aligned to Hotham based on the above factors. Higgins is more aligned to Kooyong in all aspects of life and any redistribution should consider all factors of life and electorate alignment. The more diverse the cohort the more management will be required to deliver services to the electorate. A much larger range of services would be needed for any elected candidate to manage.

Any numerical projections are based on historic statistics and modelling, but there is always a risk or uncertainty on any future projections. Interstate movement across Australia is one risk to these projections.

When applying the statutory requirements to this proposal the committee should always consider the hierarchy set out in the act.

“(3A) When applying subsection (3), the Redistribution Committee must treat the matter in subparagraph (3)(b)(v) as subordinate to the matters in subparagraphs (3)(b)(i), (ii) and (iv). These statutory requirements are expressed in a hierarchical order. “

Definitions, Requirements of the Act and Projections

Def: projected enrolment quota

(Number of electors projected to be enrolled in a state or territory at the projection time) / (Number of members of the House of Representatives the state or territory is entitled to) The projected enrolment quota for this redistribution is 127,238 electors²

As the proposed redistribution report indicates, estimates of electors are proposed. Any proposed numbers can shift based on economic or socio-economic factors including age. Retirement phase of life can have a big impact on electoral numbers, where typical city electoral residents move to country or coastal areas and even interstate.

See the ABS statistics on Australian State population moves where Victoria had a negative overall position.³

Statutory requirements for the making of a proposed redistribution (pp24)⁴

42. The Redistribution Committee also gave due consideration to the requirements of paragraph 66(3)(b) of the Electoral Act:

¹ Redistribution Committee for Victoria, Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions. May 2024, Commonwealth of Australia 2024 © Victoria 2024

² ibid

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, March). *National, state and territory population*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/mar-2023>.

⁴ Redistribution Committee for Victoria, Proposed redistribution of Victoria into electoral divisions. May 2024, Commonwealth of Australia 2024 © Victoria 2024, p24.

Objection to Higgins electorate redistribution

- i. community of interests within the proposed electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests,
- ii. means of communication and travel within the proposed electoral division,
- iii. the physical features and area of the proposed electoral division, and
- iv. the boundaries of existing electoral divisions in Victoria, with this factor being subordinate to consideration of factors i, ii and iv.¹⁴

Of note above is the references to '*Community of interests*' including economic, social and transport requirements of the electoral act which is not supported by the redistribution of Higgins.

Key facts impacting move to Chisholm

Many of the economic and socio-economic interests and needs in Higgins have little alignment to those of Chisholm. Higgins is more aligned to Kooyong interests and needs.

Education

Age profile

The age profile will certainly impact services needed by the electorate and hence what the elected member would need to advocate for. For example: The 25-40 age group is substantially more represented in Higgins thus impacting on policy and services advocated by the elected member.

<i>Higgins</i>		%
25-29 years	16,583	10.7
30-34 years	15,050	9.7
35-39 years	12,475	8.0
<i>Chisholm</i>		
25-29 years	13,689	7.5
30-34 years	12,362	6.7
35-39 years	12,560	6.8

Marital Status

There is a marked difference in marital status across Higgins and Chisholm. This again would impact the advocacy of policy and funding for singles, couples and married/family groups.

Registered marital status

<i>Higgins</i>		%
Married	54,350	40.3
Never married	62,234	46.2
<i>Chisholm</i>		
Married	79,306	51.0
Never married	55,233	35.5

Real estate value, Business ownership.

Common interest difference is also evident in real-estate types and value across Higgins and Chisholm. This difference and mortgage amounts may also impact on policy and advocacy by the elected member. Business default rates, tax concessions for business and support from Government would also require difference in policies and actions by members.

Objection to Higgins electorate redistribution

Higgins residents are more likely to own rental or holiday properties thus impacting policies like capital gains tax and negative gearing for owners.

Income and work

Differences apply to work and income for Higgins and Chisholm, where electorate priorities and policies may differ. Median weekly household income for families is also substantially different (approx. 50%) impacting spend on leisure and discretionary goods and services or essentials and mortgage repayments.⁵

	<i>Higgins</i>	<i>Chisholm</i>
Personal (b)	\$1,218	\$803
Family (c)	\$3,179	\$2,218
Household (d)	\$2,201	\$1,832

Transport

Transport is yet another service where the electorate needs are substantially different. Higgins relies more on public transport, whereas Chisholm more on car for travel to work. Again, this can impact policy advocacy funding and priorities for the elected member.

	<i>Chisholm</i>	<i>Higgins</i>
Car, as driver	42.8	30.3
Train	2.3	3.9

Cultural diversity

As at the 2021 census Chisholm had a Chinese ancestry of 29%, whereas Higgins only 10%. Other country of birth (COB) statistics in Chisholm and not in Higgins included: Sri Lanka, Malaysia. Indian COB was represented in both electorates but with 57% more in Chisholm

This skewed representation from Asia could significantly impact services, education and community service needs for these residents. Their needs would be significantly different to the profile of Higgins residents where most ancestry is from English, Australian, Irish, New Zealand and Chinese. The profiles are below.

A merger with Hotham for Chisholm would be more appropriate given that the top 3 ancestry responses are identical

Chisholm

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/CED207#cultural-diversity>⁶

Higgins

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/CED220#cultural-diversity>

Hotham

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/CED222#cultural-diversity>

⁵ 2021 Higgins, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics ([abs.gov.au](https://www.abs.gov.au))

⁶ 2021 Chisholm, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics ([abs.gov.au](https://www.abs.gov.au))