



Objection 413

Bronwyn Cran

2 pages

Objection to proposed changes to boundaries of the Federal Electoral Division of WILLS in Victoria

Dear Redistribution Committee,

I write as a longtime resident of the suburb of Brunswick in Melbourne, and as a citizen registered to vote in the Federal electorate of Wills since 1990.

I wish to lodge a strong objection to the proposed new boundaries of the Federal Electoral Division of Wills, as detailed in the redistribution report of 31 May, 2024. The report proposes removing parts of the suburbs of Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West from the current electorate of Wills. The report also proposes adding parts of the suburbs of Princes Hill, Carlton North and Fitzroy North, currently in the Federal electorate of Melbourne, to the Wills electorate.

In my view, this proposal is not a sensible one, for the following reasons:

1. The proposal does not take into account the distinct communities of interests in the current Electoral Divisions of Wills and of Melbourne. On the whole, the residents of the suburbs of Glenroy, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West are significantly less economically advantaged, and more culturally diverse, than the residents of Princes Hill, Carlton North and Fitzroy North, who belong in the main to a gentrified, inner city demographic. Splintering the culturally diverse ethnic groups from parts of the largely northern suburbs in the Division of Wills will diminish the community of interests which they have developed and which they share in the electorate of Wills. The implications of the proposed change for these ethnic groups need to be more fully considered before any decision is made to remove parts of the northern suburbs from the Division of Wills.
2. The suburbs of Oak Park, Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West have been part of the Local Government Area of Merri-bek (formerly Moreland) since the 1990s, and consequently have a longstanding connection to Merri-bek. The residents of the above suburbs currently access community services via Merri-bek Council. Splitting these residents between two different Federal electorates will diminish the representations that the Federal MP for Wills can make on their behalf to Merri-bek Council to address their concerns. I have been aware for some years of the personal interventions that the current Federal member for Wills (Peter Khalil) makes for Wills constituents to Merri-Bek Council. The concerns of these constituents are those of a largely disadvantaged and migrant background demographic, and they are currently shared within distinct

communities of place, that is, whole northern suburbs. It does not make sense to split the residents between two Federal electorates.

3. Further to the above, the draft proposal for the redistribution of Division of Wills means that two Federal Members of Parliament (for Wills and for Maribyrnong) will represent the same suburbs within the one Local Government Area, that of Merri-bek. This is not in the best and shared interests of all the residents of the suburbs of Oak Park, Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West, who form a distinct demographic entity.
4. In terms of the existing Divisions in the State of Victoria, the borders defining the current electorate of Wills are geographically distinct and on the whole make geographical sense. The current border runs along Moonee Ponds Creek in the west, Merri Creek in the east, the Western Ring Road in the north, and along Park Street, Lygon Street and Glenlyon Road in the south. All current borders – with the exception of parts of the existing southern border - are geographically logical, as they also define the borders of existing suburbs. (The exception is part of the current southern border, which places part of Brunswick East in the electorate of Melbourne.) Excising parts of the suburbs of Oak Park, Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick West from the current Wills electorate, as detailed in the proposed redistribution, violates the geographical logic of the current western border. As well, extending the southern border as far as Alexandra Parade and Queens Parade in the south violates the geographical location of most of the current electorate of Wills in the Merri-Bek Local Government Area. This proposed change would add parts of three more suburbs (Princes Hill, Carlton North and Fitzroy North) and two more Local Government Areas (Melbourne and Yarra) to the Wills electorate. It is not a sensible change. The current borders are distinct, logical and workable.

In summary, the proposed changes to the Division of Wills are neither geographically nor demographically sensible, nor are they demonstrative of sensitivity to communities of place and to the current community of interests in Wills. It seems to me that the proposed changes to Wills are a largely statistical response to the proposed abolition of the Federal electorate of Higgins. I respectfully submit that the proposed changes to the electorate of Wills be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

Bronwyn Cran