



Objection 419

Voices for Casey

2 pages



Voices for Casey is making this submission to **Step 3** of the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) process to review the redistribution of federal electoral divisions in Victoria.

Voices for Casey supports changing the name of the electorate from Casey to Barak to avoid the confusion between the electorate and the geographically distinct City of Casey and to honour an indigenous person born in and connected to the electorate whose leadership made a significant contribution to both the electorate and to Australia. Voices for Casey believes a well-run community consultation process will strengthen community support for the proposed name change and offers to support the AEC consultation process.

1. **Voices for Casey supports a name change of the federal electorate of Casey** for the following reasons:

- To address significant voter confusion about where the electorate of Casey is because of proximity to the adjacent City of Casey, noting that the two are geographically distinct with no overlap.
- Lord Richard Casey, for whom the electorate was named, has no direct connection to the electorate or with its electors.
- The eight submissions to the AEC Redistribution Review from the Casey community supporting the name change show the electorate is highly engaged in the electoral review process and their voices should be listened to.

2. **Voices for Casey acknowledges and supports the suggestion to rename the federal electorate of Casey to Barak in honour of William Barak**, renowned and influential Indigenous Elder of the Wurundjeri and last Chief of the Yarra Yarra tribe.

- Changing the name of the electorate to a prominent local Indigenous person aligns with local community sentiment that more needs to be done in promoting local Aboriginal history.
- The name Barak is consistent with the AEC naming guidelines of recognising a deceased noteworthy Australian who has made a significant contribution to public life.

3. **Voices for Casey recommends the AEC conduct community engagement with the Casey electorate in two parts to make the process positive and empowering for our community** by:

- asking for suggested names for the electorate from voters
- surveying the community on their preferred name.

4. **Voices for Casey offers to support the AEC community engagement processes**

Voices for Casey has a network of 580 people with 160 active volunteers ready to support the AEC community engagement process, encouraging active community participation.

5. **Voices for Casey supports the retention of the existing electorate boundaries**

It is noted that submissions have been received proposed a change to the electorate boundaries of Casey. Voices for Casey does not support these proposals, notably the proposal to delete the Casey electorate with our community divided into four parts.

More detail is given in Attachment 1.



Attachment 1

#1 – Significant voter confusion about the Casey boundaries

The current name of Casey causes public confusion given that it is also the name of the City of Casey, an LGA located in a geographically different part of outer eastern Melbourne in Narre Warren and Berwick. The Casey electorate is close to the City of Casey yet has no geographic overlap with the Casey LGA, causing significant voter confusion. Not just a hypothetical: name sharing causes real problems with voters not sure which electorate they should vote in.

The AEC practice of giving Electorates names that are already used for Local Government Area (LGAs) is a source of real confusion for voters and should cease. Selecting a new name for the electorate of Casey is a priority.

#2 – Lord Richard Casey has no personal connection with the electorate or its voters

The former politician and Governor-General Lord Richard Casey MP, after whom the electorate is named, has no direct nor geographic connection to the electorate nor its electors. He was not born in Casey, nor did he serve as an MP for the electorate.

Renaming the electorate of Casey will not diminish recognition of Lord Richard Casey as he continues to be recognised with the City of Casey named after him. The City of Casey is situated in the Federal seat of Latrobe where Lord Casey served as an MP.

#3 – The Casey community is highly engaged in the AEC Redistribution Review and their voices should be heard

It is noteworthy that of the sixty-three (63) suggestions received as part of Step 2 of the AEC Electoral Review Process – eight submissions (12.7% of all submissions) suggested the federal electorate of Casey should be renamed.

This very high level of community engagement indicates a positive disproportionately high level of community appetite and community interest in a name change for the Casey electorate.

#4 – Community engagement on the renaming of the Casey electorate will be positive and empowering

A proactive community engagement process will role-model and demonstrate a positive democratic process with the Casey electors – directly responding to vote confusion and misunderstandings with the current name and asking the community for suggestions for a new name that is meaningful for our community, elevating the awareness of the federal electorate in our region.

#5 - Changing the name of the electorate to a prominent local Indigenous person aligns with local community sentiment that local Aboriginal history needs to be promoted

During the 2023 Referendum a local community group called Casey for YES was formed with 293 Members and 138 Active Volunteers. This group suggested the Australian Electoral Commission should undertake community engagement to listen and survey the electors to change the name of the Casey electorate to a First Nations name that is meaningful to our community.

#6 - The name Barak is consistent with the AEC naming guidelines to recognise a deceased noteworthy Australian who has made a significant contribution to public life

Submissions to Step 2 of the AEC review process suggested the federal electorate of Casey be named Barak in honour of William Barak. [William Barak](#) (1824 - 1903) was the renowned and influential Indigenous Elder of the Wurundjeri and last Chief of the Yarra Yarra tribe and is recognised in the Victorian Indigenous Honour Roll. He has tribal, birth, geographic and historically significant ties to the electorate. He was both a diplomat and an ambassador.

For most of his life he lived in the electorate of Casey at the Aboriginal settlement Coranderrk, established near Healesville in 1863 in response to a campaign organised by Barak. He also contributed to the early success of Coranderrk as a thriving, self-sufficient community and was its indefatigable defender until the end of his life. Coranderrk enabled Kulin people to maintain a physical connection to their country and Barak played key role in educating non-Aboriginal people about this relationship.

William Barak's leadership included two significant 'walks' for land rights and recognition from Healesville to Parliament House in Melbourne, events that continue to inspire advocacy by First Nations peoples in Australia.