



Objection 432

Victorian Pride Lobby

2 pages



Victorian Pride Lobby

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To the Australian Electoral Commission,

We are writing on behalf of the Victorian Pride Lobby in support of the AEC's proposed redistribution of Victorian electoral boundaries, specifically the redistribution of the seat of Melbourne, which has been proposed to take in the suburbs of Prahan and South Yarra.

The inclusion of these two suburbs into the seat of Melbourne, alongside already included suburbs such as Collingwood, Fitzroy and Abbotsford, would bring together a large majority of LGBTIQ+ people living in Melbourne and would promote the interests of LGBTIQ+ people as a community of interest.

These areas have historically been the most popular neighbourhoods for LGBTIQ+ people living across Melbourne. The concentration of the LGBTIQ+ Community in these neighbourhoods can be seen by the prevalence of well established places for the LGBTIQ+ to meet, connect, celebrate and seek specialist services.

Importantly, there are numerous health services and clinics tailored for the LGBTIQ+ community throughout the current and proposed region of the Melbourne electorate. These clinics provide crucial, life-saving support and care directly to the community, strategically situated in Melbourne's Inner North and South for optimal accessibility to meet the community's specific needs.

For example, Thorne Harbour Health, formerly the Victorian AIDS Council, has their head office located in Abbotsford where they operate Equinox, their peer led trans and gender diverse health service, alongside the PRONTO! clinic which offers sexual health services for men who have sex with men and trans and gender diverse people among other health services.

Prahan Market Clinic is a medical practice for independent and allied health professionals, focused on sexual health and LGBTIQ+ health, along with HIV clinical research trials. In South Yarra, Thorne Harbour Health operates a secondary site, the Positive Living Centre, which provides social, emotional, recreational, and skills-based services and activities for people living with HIV.

During the initial MPOX (Monkeypox) outbreak in 2022, these established health services were able to quickly administer information and care to the LGBTIQ+ community. Thorne Harbour provided pop up vaccination clinics for the virus at their head office in Abbotsford, as well as at the Prahan Town Hall - located in this way to make treatment as accessible as possible to community members.

These neighbourhoods are also home to some of the most well known LGBTIQ+ venues in Melbourne, again due to the high concentration of community members. Commercial Road in South Yarra was once the queer epicentre of Melbourne with a number of gay bars and clubs based there, with newer venues opening up on nearby Chapel Street. While in the northside, Smith Street in Collingwood is teeming with LGBTIQ+ nightclubs and is home to multiple iconic rainbow footpaths, and since 2022 has been the home of Victoria's Pride Street Party as part of Victoria's Midsumma celebrations.

In 2023 the Victorian Pride Lobby made a submission and contributed to a public hearing around the electoral structure review for Stonnington City Council where we detailed the substantial LGBTIQ+ community in the council area, noting that Prahran, and South Yarra have a significantly higher proportion of same-sex couples than average. We advocated that any proposed ward boundaries should try to keep Prahran and South Yarra together as much as possible to provide a better outcome for the LGBTIQ+ community in these areas and to ensure their voices are heard as a community of interest.

The move to include South Yarra and Prahran into the federal electorate of Melbourne together with the existing suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Abbotsford unites the LGBTIQ+ community, which we strongly support. Deep understanding of our community by a single MP will forge a path for the best health and wellbeing outcomes, and allow for clear advocacy by and for LGBTIQ+ people in inner city Melbourne.

Kind Regards,

Gemma Muir & Odus Moore

Co-Convenors, Victorian Pride Lobby