



# Objection 480

Solidarity with Asylum Seekers in Australia

2 pages



26 June 2024

The Australian Electoral Commission  
Locked Bag 4007  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Secretariat,

Thank you for providing members of the public with an opportunity to make a submission in relation to the proposed boundaries in Victoria.

On behalf of Solidarity with Asylum Seekers in Australia (SASA), we write to you in opposition to the proposed boundaries of the Federal Electorate of Wills. SASA was established to create a platform for various refugee groups to advocate on similar issues to government.

Wills is a multicultural electorate – the needs of communities across these suburbs are similar. Oak Park, Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South and Brunswick have longstanding connections with many culturally and linguistically diverse community groups, who have become an integral part of the social fabric of our community. There are cultural, language and religious needs across various community groups in Wills that must be protected and nurtured.

Refugees play a crucial role in Australia across various domains, including fostering social engagement, actively participating in the workforce, owning businesses, and volunteering within our communities. There are many refugee cohorts spread across Wills – as part of the proposed redistribution, the needs of these new and emerging refugee and migrant groups must also be specifically considered. It often takes time for newly arrived refugees to find their place in a community and feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to others. When this happens, we must foster this sense of belonging.

There are many newly arrived Iranian refugees, who feel quite connected to one another and to Wills. The Iranian community, including cohorts who are both Farsi and Arab speaking is a community of interest based in Glenroy, Oak Park and Pascoe Vale. The community is connected by its shared cultural identity, and continues to grow in these suburbs. Many Iranian refugees in Wills feel strongly connected – splitting members of this community into two electorates will diminish growth, as a community of interest that has formed within Wills. It will also make it

more challenging for the community to seek representation from a Federal representative, on behalf of their specific needs.

Fragmenting these communities also poses a risk of disrupting the supportive infrastructure, which includes culturally sensitive services that residents depend on through their connection with the Merri-bek LGA and Wills. This encompasses culturally competent medical and health services, local businesses, and restaurants. For instance, there are currently many Iranian general practitioners and food grocers catering to the cultural needs of diverse residents. Excluding parts of these suburbs from Wills undermines efforts to maintain community connections to essential services.

The needs of communities across Pascoe Vale, Glenroy and Oak Park are similar – they should not be split and put into Maribyrnong, an electorate that does not represent a comparable community of interest. The cultural similarity between these suburbs cannot be compared to that within Fitzroy North, Princes Hill and Carlton North, or in suburbs in Maribyrnong. Many of us do not feel connected to these suburbs or to the Maribyrnong FEA as there are not many people who live in these areas who share our culture or speak a similar language.

Additionally, this proposal artificially divides the suburbs. Currently, the border between the electorate of Wills and the electoral Division of Melbourne, running along Park Street and up Lygon Street, serves as a suitable boundary separating the two divisions.

Therefore, I ask that the Committee retains Oak Park, Glenroy, Pascoe Vale South, and Brunswick West within Wills (while continuing to exclude Fitzroy North, Carlton North, and Princes Hill) for the reasons outlined above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Solidarity with Asylum Seekers in Australia

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