



Objection 497

Professor Katie Allen

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Dear AEC

I object to the proposed abolition of the Higgins federal electoral division.

As a former Member of Parliament for Higgins and a local constituent for over 40 years, I have experienced firsthand the importance of this constituency and why it should remain. Higgins is a diverse and historically significant community.

In my first speech in the House, I noted: "I stand here today, deeply honored to represent the people of Higgins, a constituency that exemplifies the diversity and dynamism of our nation.

From the bustling markets of Prahran to the leafy streets of Glen Iris, Higgins is home to a community that is both resilient and forward-thinking.

It is a place where small businesses thrive alongside innovative tech startups, and where cultural festivals celebrate the rich tapestry of our multicultural heritage."

With my husband I have raised my 4 children in this community.

Higgins brings together various communities, fostering cooperation and dialogue. This has resulted in innovative local policies and initiatives that have been models for other regions.

It is the home to Australia's first hospice for children, the Very Special Kids. Victoria's first eating disorder residence is sited in Higgins. The innovative food bank Second Bite was established in Higgins- initially at the Prahran Market.

Chapel St is one of Australia's iconic shopping strips. The Prahran market lived by generations.

We have had an over-representation of STEM superstars from our electorate. Our local hospital, Cabrini, is one of the best in Australia and has served our community faithfully.

There are dozens of local not-for-profit charity groups that rely on volunteers to apply for government grants. Their effectiveness will be hampered by fragmented representation.

Every year dozens of locals are represented in the Australia Day honours lists as having gone above and beyond in contributing to community and country. Removing Higgins would mean losing this important and historical sense of community.

The logistical challenges of abolishing Higgins are significant. Redistributing its population into neighboring constituencies will dilute the effectiveness of representation and increase the workload for adjacent members of parliament.

This would reduce the quality of service and advocacy that the people of Higgins rely on. Higgins is a tolerant and diverse community with the full spectrum of economic need.

But Higgins is more than just a collection of suburbs; it is a community that has shown tremendous support for progressive policies, environmental sustainability, and social justice. We had one of the highest votes for marriage equality in the country and is home to a large and vibrant LGBTIQ+ community. We have proudly innovated care for those with HIV/AIDs.

Our local schools, hospital, and community organizations are among the best in the country, and this is a testament to the active engagement and commitment of our residents.

These community groups are served by a coordinated network of trams and trains that have been delivered by strong and united political representation.

Higgins is named after H.B. Higgins, an influential justice and politician. He represented Victoria at the Australasian Federal Convention, where he helped draft the new federal constitution.

This constituency embodies a legacy of economic leadership through its history of Prime Ministers and Treasurers.

Preserving this heritage is crucial for historical continuity and for inspiring future generations to engage in public service and uphold these values.

Keeping Higgins will ensure continued effective representation and preserve a community that contributes significantly to our country's social and political life.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

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Former Member for Higgins