



Comment on objections 7

Peter Goegan

2 pages

To the Australian Electoral Commission Panel,

**Re.: Submission Against Proposed Electoral Distribution of the Seat of Higgins
Victoria, Australia**

I am writing to express my strong objections to the proposed electoral redistribution that significantly impacts the seat of Higgins in Victoria. I have a lifelong passion and interest in geopolitics and especially concerned about decision-making that appears to disregard the impact(s) and interests of the Electorate. With a Post Grad in Urban Tree Management, Melbourne University and 40 years' experience working in local government environmental policy and management; a specialist in Eucalyptus; Team leader of tree and park maintenance for an outer suburban council; championed the retention of suitable dead trees in suburbia. I initiated one of the first dedicated urban bushland management teams it is with this experience, knowledge and passion for equality and consistency that forms my strong objection **against Proposed Electoral Distribution of the Seat of Higgins Victoria, Australia.**

My objections are grounded in the following key points:

1. Stonnington Council Shouldn't Be Split Five Ways

The proposal to split the Stonnington Council into five different electorates is fundamentally flawed and disregards the cohesive nature of the Stonnington community. The Stonnington area, along with parts of Glen Eira, forms a unique and interconnected community with shared interests and activities. For example:

Friends of Gardiners Creek: This group works tirelessly to preserve and enhance the Gardiners Creek area, an initiative that binds the residents across Stonnington and Glen Eira. Splitting these communities dilutes the efforts and effectiveness of such groups.

Stonnington City Brass: A community music group that draws members from across Stonnington, offering a cultural touchstone that unites residents.

Sports Clubs: Clubs like the Prahran Assumption Football Club and the Stonnington City Soccer Club cater to residents across the council area, fostering a strong sense of community and local identity. Splitting this area into multiple electorates would fragment these well-established networks and diminish the community's ability to advocate for and address local issues cohesively.

2. Kooyong Should Not Be Extended Across the Monash Freeway

The proposal to extend Kooyong across the Monash Freeway is flawed and ill-advised. Kooyong should remain a Boroondara-only electorate for several reasons:

Geographical Integrity: The Monash Freeway is a significant boundary that naturally delineates communities. Drawing Kooyong across this freeway disrupts the geographical cohesion, is a major impediment to the access and maintenance of infrastructure and public open space by Councils and confuses the electorate's identity.

Community Continuity: Boroondara has a distinct community character that differs from areas south of the Monash Freeway. Keeping Kooyong within Boroondara preserves its unique community interests and maintains electoral coherence.

While acknowledging the challenge of meeting numerical requirements, I propose that Glen Iris and Ashburton, despite being in Stonnington, be considered part of the sacrifice to maintain the integrity of Kooyong and, by extension, Higgins. This adjustment ensures both electorates remain coherent and community-focused.

3. Hotham Should Be Abolished Instead

The proposed abolition of Higgins is less favourable compared to abolishing Hotham for several reasons:

Community Identity: Higgins has a well-defined and cohesive community identity, unlike Hotham, which spans five local government areas and lacks a unified character.

Geographical Spread: The draft map shows Hotham stretching from Noble Park to East Malvern, covering a diverse range of communities with varied interests and needs. This broad spread makes it difficult to address the unique concerns of such a disparate electorate effectively.

Suggestions and Support: More submissions suggested the abolition of Hotham over Higgins, reflecting a broader consensus on the issue. Abolishing Hotham and redistributing its areas into surrounding electorates would better serve the interests of those communities.

Conclusion

The proposed redistribution that affects Higgins is problematic on several fronts. It disrupts established community networks in Stonnington, mismanages the natural geographical boundaries of Kooyong, and overlooks the benefits of abolishing Hotham instead. I urge the Australian Electoral Commission to reconsider these changes and focus on preserving the integrity and identity of these communities.

Thank you for considering my objections.

Sincerely,

Peter Goegan