



Comment on objections 8

Anonymous 2

2 pages

27 June 2024

To the Australian Electoral Commission Panel,

I hope this letter finds you well.

Please note: This submission is intended to be formatted as a personal recount including evidence-based context and lived-experiences. The matters I wish to discuss transcend the usual scope of local, state, or even global concerns, as they touch upon the very fabric of our electorate of Higgins.

Please consider this as my **submission** which expresses my **strong objections against Proposed Electoral Distribution of the Seat of Higgins Victoria, Australia**

Our diverse community is a beacon of support and inclusivity, attracting individuals from all walks of life who seek the stability and services we offer. It is with great pride that I have engaged with community groups and stakeholders to ensure that my submission is reflective of the needs of those directly affected, with a particular focus on well-being, equality, and access to services.

As a neurodivergent, queer woman, I was drawn to this area for its accepting nature and the promise of a quality of life that cherishes diversity. The potential abolishment of Higgins poses a significant threat to the well-established community groups and services that have become a cornerstone of support for marginalised individuals. Such a change would not only disrupt the lives of those seeking to improve their circumstances but also undermine the sense of security and belonging that has been cultivated over the years.

The confusion and anxiety that the proposed changes by the AEC have caused, cannot be overstated. Misinformation and fear are rife, leading to unnecessary mental health strains on a population that already faces numerous challenges. As a dual citizen of Italy and Australia, I understand the importance of community cohesion and the devastating impact that a lack of clarity can have on individuals who have come to call this area home.

On very personal level, engaging with the members of Higgins has been a unique and rewarding experience, one that has allowed me to form meaningful connections and contribute to a community that values social consciousness and inclusivity. This engagement has been a lifeline for me, particularly after a life-changing event that led to severe agoraphobia. With the encouragement and support I received from my father, a constant advocate for environmental conservation and fellow member, led me to a meeting in the park plan and launch a doorknocking campaign. Being among likeminded, compassionate and positive-spirited members and expressing ideas, kick-started my confidence and purpose and have been instrumental in my recovery and reintegration into society.

Furthermore, the conversations and engagement with the community of Higgins is something I look forward to and member doorknocking on my street, would have been warmly received at a time of isolation and disconnection.

Months later, every opportunity to converse and the potential interaction behind each door continues to add to the unique and special social connection with the Higgins volunteers and generates curiosity and conversation about the issues that directly (and indirectly) involve residents in decision making. These ideas are shared in a safe, supporting, thought provoking, debrief over coffee and setting intentions for the next meet-up.

The prospect of losing such a supportive environment is deeply concerning. The services provided here, from harm reduction to mental health support, are vital not just for the well-being of individuals but for the safety and prosperity of the entire community. The potential division of our electorate threatens to undo the progress we have made and the stability we have achieved.

Abolishing an electorate when there are other viable options with far fewer impacts on residents is a hasty decision of convenience rather than one of which considers the specific needs of the community and will dismantle more than just geographical boundaries.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the far-reaching implications of the proposed changes. The strength and unity of our community are at stake, and it is imperative that we preserve the support systems that allow us to thrive.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, and I hope that together, we can find a way to maintain the integrity and vitality of our beloved Higgins.

Sincerely,

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