



# Comment on objections 37

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4 pages

## Overview

Strong alignment is apparent across numerous submissions with the issues identified in my Objection relating to the proposed Division of Bruce, including the primary objection in relation to Dandenong and consequential options for further consideration:

1. Dandenong West and Dandenong generally (reversing the proposal to split Central Dandenong and include Dandenong West in the Division of Isaacs)
2. La Trobe / Bruce interface (leaving the boundary as is or shifting some of Narre Warren North and / or Berwick into La Trobe)
3. La Trobe / Casey interface
4. Sliver of Mulgrave in Bruce
5. Bruce / Holt interface.

I consider relevant objections and comment on each of those issues in turn.

### **1. Dandenong West and Dandenong generally (reversing the proposal to split Central Dandenong and include Dandenong West in the Division of Isaacs)**

Objections 172, 175, 177, 369, 425, 478 and 495 persuasively object to the proposal for Isaacs to jump the Railway Line (these look like a community driven response not connected to my objection). In addition to reinforcing the concerns raised, further points are made in some or all these as well as Objection 481 including:

- arguing against further fragmentation of the suburb of Dandenong which I agree with,
- arguing strongly against splitting the Dandenong CBD down the main street (Lonsdale St) as proposed by the Commission – this is a very powerful argument I omitted which augments the points in my submission, and
- proposing the consolidation of the entire suburb of Dandenong into Bruce – I don't consider it necessary for this to occur and agree with the statement that Dandenong South is a discrete neighbourhood, though note there is at least some community of interest logic argued as opposed to the Commission's proposal that Isaacs jump the railway line in Dandenong West.

Objection 174 also objects to Isaacs jumping the railway line, arguing very strongly and cogently against splitting the major commercial and business centre of Dandenong in half as *“a very poor outcomes on community of interest grounds – Dandenong is a significant suburban CBD that should not be split unless absolutely necessary”*. I omitted this argument and endorse it.

Objection 108, Objection 152 and the Liberal Party's Objection 398 also object to Isaacs jumping the Railway Line at Dandenong. They further propose consolidating Dandenong into Bruce from Isaacs (on which my comment is the same as above).

## 2. La Trobe / Bruce interface (leaving the boundary as is or shifting some of Narre Warren North and / or Berwick into La Trobe)

Numerous objectors argue against shifting the boundary of Bruce and La Trobe to the Cardinia Creek. Indeed, most objections which consider this issue adopt this view and argue Bruce's eastward growth is neither necessary nor desirable.

**This is unsurprising as it is consistent with the large number of contributors who proposed that the boundary between Bruce and La Trobe either remain unchanged, or even that much of Berwick and / or Narre Warren North should be shifted *from Bruce into La Trobe*.** For example, the Liberal Party proposed to consolidate more of Berwick from Bruce into La Trobe. Many other suggestions also expressed similar intent to consolidate more of Narre Warren North and / or Berwick from Bruce into La Trobe (e.g. S9, S15, S18, S19, S21, S23, S32, S33, S35, S41, S43, S57, S60, S63).

Objections 172, 175, 177, 369, 425, 478 and 495 note that moving Bruce's boundary east into La Trobe as the Commission has proposed "*dilutes the community of interest of the electorate*". These objections go on to sensibly state that "*the old boundary of Bruce and La Trobe works well as a community of interest ... the part of Berwick east of Lyall and Clyde Roads have more in common with Beaconsfield, and the semi-rural area between Harkaway and Guy's Hill has a much clearer community of interest with the seat of La Trobe than the outer-metro focus of Bruce.*"

Objection 108 proposes reversing the La Trobe to Bruce transfers which identifies and sensibly reinforces similar issues as in my objection:

- "*Undo the La Trobe to Bruce transfers*"
- "*Move parts of Berwick bounded by Princes Hwy, Princes Fwy and Clyde Rd from Bruce to La Trobe*"

Objection 448 objects to the proposal to transfer electors from La Trobe into Bruce noting "*the economic, social and regional interests of these areas are much more aligned with the division of La Trobe, including areas such as Officer and Pakenham, that with the area surrounding Dandenong*". This is logical and accurate.

Objection 493 and Objection 498 similarly propose reversing the proposed transfers and restoring the current boundary for cogent and well-argued reasons.

I note that Objection 398 by the Liberal Party is factually wrong and contradicts their initial position. It states that La Trobe "*encompass[es] the entire boundaries of the unique community of the Cardinia LGA*". In fact, the Commission's proposal would illogically see part of Beaconsfield in Cardinia LGA shifted into Bruce. The statement that "*rapid population changes in the growth corridor around Berwick makes ongoing adjustments in that area necessary*" is simplistic and ignores the need for Bruce to gain some greenfield growth area (which can only come from Holt in Cranbourne North or La Trobe in Clyde North), as well as La Trobe's need to retain slow-growing Berwick. The Liberal Party's initial position regarding Berwick is more logical and sensible.

### 3. La Trobe / Casey interface

Consequential impacts for Bruce would arise if the Commission chose to accept objections (that align with many Comments on Suggestions including the Liberal Party in the earlier stage) proposing Emerald and surrounds shift into La Trobe.

This shift is all but certain in the future, and adjustments now in this direction may be one option to reduce the peculiarity of the Bruce / La Trobe interface as well as the likelihood of future reversals shifting Berwick *back* into La Trobe. I do not express a preferred view on this and simply note that many ways that this general adjustment could be achieved if the Commission chooses to do so, for example:

- Objection 108 proposes moving Emerald, Cockatoo, Gembrook and Mount Burnett from La Trobe into Casey.
- Objection 448 proposes that *“community of interest would be better maintained by instead including the areas around Emerald, Avonsleigh, Cockatoo and Gembrook”* in Casey from La Trobe as they *“share strong community ties with towns in the Division of Casey such as Monbulk, and Belgrave”* which have been combined at a State level.
- Objection 398 by the Liberal Party now suggests no changes to Casey referencing issues to do with Nillumbik on which I have no view. I simply note that this objection does not explicitly oppose the Liberal Party’s initial Comment on Suggestions which proposed Casey grow South into Emerald (necessary in the medium-term if not now).
- Objection 493 similarly proposes expanding Casey south into La Trobe noting there are various ways this can occur, to provide *“better representation for the people of those towns by uniting them with the rest of the Dandenongs”*.

### 4. Sliver of Mulgrave in Bruce

One consequence of resolving the Dandenong West issue may be reviewing the inclusion of a sliver of Mulgrave in Bruce. Numerous submissions to this and previous redistributions argued against Bruce crossing Police Road into the City of Monash – including S2, S14, S15, S18, S19, S28, S33, S43, S53, S57, CS13, CS60 and others (most directly and some indirectly) which some objections further discuss.

While I do not agree with all aspects of Objection 152 both options would necessarily consolidate Mulgrave from Bruce into Hotham.

I note the Liberal Party’s Objection 398 proposal which may bring Wheelers Hill into Hotham. While not directly relevant to my objection, and not something I endorse, I just observe that a movement in that direction would underscore the logic of consolidating Mulgrave into one electorate (Hotham).

Objection 481 (p21) makes a peculiar argument that the Haverbrack Estate in Mulgrave is a “logical exception” as it relates to the Dandenong Creek not the rest of Mulgrave. That is not an accurate or persuasive argument and if there is a choice to be made for whatever reason then it is obvious locally that the suburb and LGA border (Police Road) is a stronger and far more logical boundary than a creek.

## 5. Bruce / Holt interface

The relatively few submissions which considered the Bruce / Holt interface in detail generally acknowledged the need for Holt to shrink slightly and for Bruce to grow south as proposed by the Commission, with various proposals as to precisely how this southern growth should occur.

Most objectors acknowledged Holt as a Cranbourne based seat and Bruce as a seat that will increasingly sit to the north of Holt which is logical. For example, Objection 416 acknowledges that in the long-term Bruce is highly likely to “*be a northern Casey based seat*” although it does not adequately consider issues to do with La Trobe’s medium-term growth and need to retain most of Berwick.

Again, while expressing no specific proposal I simply note that:

- Objection 416 proposes that Bruce consolidate the rest of Narre Warren from Holt rather than Cranbourne North. While that may make sense from a community of interest point of view, it would probably not shift sufficient greenfield growth into Bruce. Minor adjustments like that would also likely depend on how the Bruce / La Trobe interface is finally resolved.
- Objection 398 by the Liberal Party proposes that Bruce absorb more of Narre Warren South (along with Dandenong South) instead of Cranbourne North, allowing Holt to consolidate as a Cranbourne based seat. While again this may not be an illogical argument, it does not appear to take sufficient account of the need for or desirability of Bruce gaining some greenfield growth now and in the future around Cranbourne North and Clyde North.

**In summary, there is clearly very strong support by Objectors for the Commission to not have Isaacs jump the Railway Line at Dandenong West, and for Bruce not to shift eastwards into La Trobe. There are various ways in which these issues can be addressed.**

**I would be pleased to elaborate on these issues at a public hearing once I have had the chance to further consider the Comments on Objections by others.**

**I wish the Commission well in its complex endeavours.**