



Comment on objections 69

Nail Aykan

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Dear Electoral Commission,

I am writing in regard to the redistribution of Victoria's federal boundaries.

As a proud member of Melbourne's Muslim community, a former Head of the Islamic Council of Victoria, and a resident of Meadow Heights (Broadmeadows) I have deep insight into the Muslim population of Melbourne, particularly in the northern suburbs.

I note the submission made by the Victorian Labor party, specifically the arguments for the western boundary of the electorate to follow the Moonee Ponds Creek, so as to include the suburbs of Gowanbrae, Glenroy and Oak Park within Wills.

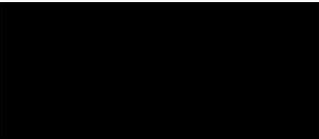
The argument hinges largely on identifying our Muslim community as a community of interest, and draws attention to areas with 'substantial Muslim populations'. I, of course, believe that our Muslim community is an incredibly important community of interest, and value our consideration in the drawing of federal boundaries. This has important implications for how our community is understood, and represented in the federal parliament. This is particularly relevant now, at a time when we are experiencing a rise in Islamophobia across Australia.

However, in the Victorian Labor Party's submission, there are many suburbs of interest listed in relation to this argument: Fawkner, Coburg, Glenroy, Hadfield, Coburg North, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick, Brunswick West, Oak Park, and Pascoe Vale South (all of the suburbs within the current boundaries of Wills).

I agree that our community has deep roots in this region. I do think it is important for the AEC to understand though, specifically where there is the highest density of Muslims in the northern suburbs. Fawkner (34.67%), Hadfield (21.34%) & Glenroy East (23.24%) have a significantly larger Islamic community than neighbouring Glenroy West (11%), Oak Park (6.37%) & Gowanbrae (4.95%). I note that in the suburbs around where I live in Meadow Heights (Broadmeadows), there is also a very high density of Muslim communities (Meadow Heights 14,890 - 52.6% / Broadmeadows 13,859 - 36.3%). I make this point to highlight that the Muslim community of the northern suburbs is not currently isolated to the electorate of Wills alone, and often exists beyond electoral boundaries already.

I feel strongly that the communities of Fawkner, Hadfield & Glenroy East remain united under one federal boundary, to recognise the significant, linked Muslim community in these suburbs. The Pascoe Vale Road boundary proposed by the AEC is therefore suitable, and it is my belief that the argument by the Labor party in relation to our community does not hold weight.

Regards



Nail Aykan

