



Comment on objections 120

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Submission on the 2024 AEC federal redistribution plan regarding North Melbourne and Parkville

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion. My comments relate specifically to the Victorian Labor Party's proposal contained in its Submission No 487 to redistribute the suburbs of North Melbourne and Parkville from the federal Division of Melbourne to the Division of Maribyrnong. I strongly object to this proposal.

My background

I have been a resident of West Melbourne since 1983. For several years prior to that I lived in North Melbourne. Since about 1998 I have volunteered with the *North (& West) Melbourne News*, for many years as a coordinator. My working life was based mainly in the city and I attended the University of Melbourne in the 1990s as a mature-age student.

North and West Melbourne as a cohesive unit

In my experience over most of that time the suburbs of North and West Melbourne have been viewed largely as one neighbourhood. To separate them arbitrarily would be socially as well as physically divisive.

For instance, the two suburbs share important resources, such as the Errol Street shopping centre and Queen Victoria Market. Gyms and sporting facilities, such as North Melbourne Recreation Centre, are attended by all. There are many other examples of this connection.

The neighbourhood house in Errol Street recently changed its name from The Centre to North & West Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre, which was formerly its name until about 2005. The *North Melbourne News* changed its name to *North & West Melbourne News* in 2003. Some years ago the North Melbourne Association joined with two West Melbourne action groups to become the North and West Melbourne Association (NWMA). I have been a member of the NWMA Committee for a number of years and endorse the Association's submission.

North Melbourne Station is situated in West Melbourne. Despite much lobbying to change the name to West Melbourne, Public Transport Victoria has consistently refused. The station is more convenient for West Melburnians, whereas the new Arden Station will be more convenient for most North Melburnians, although residents and workers in both suburbs will use both stations when Arden becomes operational in 2025.

Shared interests of North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Parkville

Residents of North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Parkville all use the Royal Melbourne, Royal Children's and Royal Women's hospitals in Parkville. Royal Park is a wonderful open space frequented by all. Likewise, football grounds and two tennis clubs in Royal Park are used by all local people.

North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Parkville are all within the City of Melbourne LGA and border the CBD. Residents and workers of these suburbs avail themselves of city institutions such as the State Library of Victoria, the Arts Centre, ACMI at Federation Square, the art galleries and numerous theatres, regarding them and supporting them as their own.

There is no equivalent ambience in the Division of Maribyrnong. It makes far more sense for City of Melbourne suburbs to be in the federal Division of Melbourne. Administratively it would seem that this makes for easier management, too.

Looking at the proposed ALP changes in the supporting map, excising the area shaded pink would leave an unwieldy hole in the landscape that emphasises the absurdity of the

proposal. As pointed out in the NWMA submission, North Melbourne would be separated from other parts of Maribyrnong by a major barrier in the Tullamarine Freeway and CityLink.

Social cohesion

While appreciating that the objective of redistributing divisions is to ensure approximately even population numbers across the divisions, I believe this is far less important than fostering social cohesion. The ALP's idea that North Melbourne and Parkville have more in common with Maribyrnong constituents because of income parity, for example, is really clutching at straws. Our residents have far more in common with those of Carlton and Fitzroy than Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds.

The ALP's argument that people with similar incomes and aspirations should be grouped together quite frankly astonishes me. City of Melbourne suburbs pride themselves and thrive on the reality of people of mixed ethnic backgrounds, ages, employment status and social milieu living side by side and benefiting from each other's contributions to the community.

Built form and architecture in our inner suburbs are much more aligned with other City of Melbourne suburbs.

The ALP submission (as I recall it, and please excuse me if I misinterpreted this) suggests that educationally Parkville belongs with the Division of Maribyrnong because schoolchildren are zoned to Debney Meadows Primary School. It doesn't appear to acknowledge that Parkville and North and West Melbourne are all zoned to University High School in Parkville for secondary education. Students form friendships across these areas.

Conclusion

I submit that Parkville and North Melbourne should be retained in the federal Division of Melbourne.

Janet C. Graham
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