



Objection Number 15

**Phil Pearce, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Shepparton City
Council**

3 pages



20 August 2010

Redistribution Secretariat
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 9867
MELBOURNE VIC 8060

OBJECTION – PROPOSED VICTORIAN ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

On behalf of the Greater Shepparton City Councillors, I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed boundaries for Victoria, as outlined in *The 2010 Proposed Redistribution of Victoria into Electoral Divisions, Report of the Redistribution Committee*.

The City of Greater Shepparton is a vibrant, diverse community located approximately two hours north of Melbourne, in the heart of the Goulburn Valley. The city has a population of about 61,000 and covers an area of 2,421 square kilometres. It is the fourth largest provincial centre in Victoria and one of the fastest growing regions in Victoria.

The region has a strong and well developed economy, based primarily on irrigated agriculture, food processing, retailing and road transport. The Goulburn Valley is responsible for about 25 per cent of Victoria's agricultural production and is often referred to as the 'food bowl of Australia'.

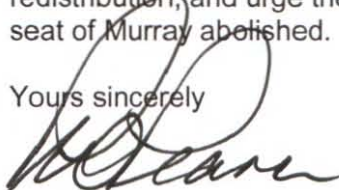
The inclusion of Shepparton in the proposed expanded seat of McEwen is very concerning, as it would shift the population centre of gravity away from Shepparton and it is almost certain that the member of the expanded seat would most likely locate their electorate office in the south of the seat, rather than Shepparton. This would see Victoria's fourth largest regional centre lose ready access to its Federal member of Parliament.

The proposed expanded seat of McEwen would encompass the rural/urban interface areas of northern metropolitan Melbourne and the rural/regional areas of north central Victoria. The social and political issues of these two significantly different population demographics would make it difficult for the seat's elected representative to effectively represent the significantly different needs and aspirations of these populations.

As evidence of our concerns, please find enclosed the attached article 'Town Off the Radar' as reported in the *Shepparton News* on 20 August, suggesting that none of the current candidates running for the federal seat of McEwen are familiar with the issues facing Seymour which has been part of that seat for a number of years.

For the reasons outlined above, Councillors are justifiably concerned about the proposed redistribution, and urge the committee to reconsider a redistribution that would see the seat of Murray abolished.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Pearce', written over the typed name.

Phil Pearce
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Town off the radar

HOPEFULS SHOW IGNORANCE

By Michelle Bradley

Candidates running for the federal seat of McEwen had a chance last week to explain how they would represent Seymour voters.

What became clear was how little most knew about the town.

Federal campaign newcomers — Liberal candidate Cameron Caine and Family First candidate Belinda Clarkson — both said they were at a disadvantage due to their quick entry into the campaign and living far from Seymour in their hometowns of Kinglake and Diamond Creek, respectively.

Without explanation, former long-serving Mitchell Shire councillor and previous McEwen candidate Robert Gordon of Wandong, who is a candidate for the Secular Party, simply said he did not know what the issues in Seymour were.

And Liberal Democratic candidate Mark Bini was a no-show to the candidate forum last Wednesday, hosted by The Seymour We Want, Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce and Seymour and District University of the Third Age.

This left Labor candidate Rob Mitchell and Greens candidate Steve Meacher to talk about Seymour-specific solutions with the estimated 50 people in attendance.

With plans to focus on improving educational and training opportunities, as well as enhance available health services, Mr Mitchell, of Broadford, said he would continue to throw his support behind the proposal to build a flood levee along the Goulburn River, near Emily St.

"I am hearing this is the one thing holding Seymour back," he said.

Mr Meacher, of Toolangi, noted Seymour's central location and said he would be pushing for green job opportunities, which could include the establishment of factories that make solar panels or wind-farm turbines. He also saw Seymour situated in an ideal location to help build a fast train to Sydney.

In defending his lack of understanding about what Seymour voters want, Mr Caine said he would "sit down with you and work with you to get what you want".

However, he did list truck routes, flood levee proposal and weekend crime among the possible issues for Seymour he could discuss with residents.

During his visit to Seymour last Wednesday, Mr Caine visited Seymour Bowling Club members and, if elected, promised \$260 000 to help with construction of a new \$600 000 clubhouse.

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BONUS
OF THE MONTH

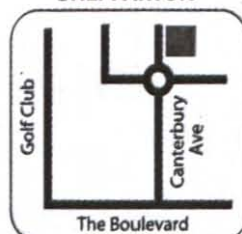
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