



The Federal Redistribution 2010
Victoria



Objection Number 87

**Bernadette Burchell, Chief Executive Officer, Children's
Protection Society**

3 pages

From: Executive Assistant [executiveassistant@cps.org.au]
Sent: Friday, 27 August 2010 2:12 PM
To: VIC Redistribution
Subject: Changes to Electoral Boundaries - JagaJaga-Batman
Attachments: GOVN 100827 AEC redistribution ltr - electronic.pdf

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On behalf of
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27th August 2010

Redistribution Secretariat
Australian Electoral Commission
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MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Email: vicredistribution@aec.gov.au;

Re. Changes to Electoral Boundaries – Jagajaga/Batman

At the Children's Protection Society (CPS) our vision is that all children live and thrive in safe families and communities. We are child-centred in everything we do, with a mission unchanged for 114 years to work with families and communities to prevent the abuse and neglect of children. A large number of our key programs are impacted by policy, funding and governmental programs in the community, particularly in the Northern Melbourne Metro region – it is in this capacity that I write to you today.

CPS has been part of the Victorian Community since 1896, originally known as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Since handing over responsibility for Child Protection Services to the State Government in 1989, we have continued to evolve and change in response to new knowledge and conditions, and in the past five years have been actively working to get upstream of the problem of child abuse and neglect.

For CPS the changes in electoral boundaries will mean that our local Federal Members, who are engaged with CPS and support our services, will no longer align to our catchment area for community services. As many MP's are advocates and promote community services to the community through their electorate office, this distortion means that some MP's will cover multiple Community Service (such as ChildFIRST) catchment areas, removing some of the clarity and benefits from the current systems in Child protection and community services.

From a social perspective, and our experience in the region, Heidelberg West (where we are located) and Heidelberg Heights (where many of our clients are) form part of the same community and should not be separated, this separation does impact service provision and clarity of promotional material, of which Federal politicians play a key role.

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The proposed division changes remove what has been a natural divide (a creek) into an artificial one. The current natural divide (the creek) is used for Child Protection boundaries, Human Services boundaries, Local government boundaries, and current Federal electorate boundaries, the proposed changes remove this significant interlock for services in the region. The division of two councils which currently each sit completely within their own Federal Member (and community service catchment), to having both split across two members further causes confusion and issues for service provision in this area.

Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and Bellfield have for a long time been part of a community intertwined with history and services, the very fact that so many State and Federal government services, including simple things like postcodes use the current dividing boundary, changes to this should be a cause for concern.

A number of vital services are performed by CPS each day, including sexual abuse counselling for children, treatment of sexually abusive behaviours in children and young people, community education, parenting services, early childhood services, as well as a number of counselling services across the region, and from three locations. I think it is an opportune time to highlight the happenings within these areas and their impact if proposed electoral changes in this space occurred. We rely heavily upon Federal Members, whose electorates align with our service provision, to promote and profile the services to the community, changes to this can have substantial impact on the promotion and awareness of community services including the work of CPS.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



Bernadette Burchell
Chief Executive Officer
Children's Protection Society