



Objection Number 97

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SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ELECTORATE OF CORANGAMITE

The proposal to shift the Federal Electorate of Corangamite to the west would result in the incorporation into the Electorate of communities with contrasting interests.

This submission asserts that the principle of community of interests is better served by retaining the existing boundaries of the Federal Electorate of Corangamite.

An investigation of industrial, economic, sporting and social activities indicates the clear distinction between communities west of Colac and those to the immediate north-west and west of Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast.

Communities west of Colac have a different industrial base from those currently existing within the Federal Electorate of Corangamite. Corangamite is currently dominated by manufacturing (high and mid-level timber production), tourism and retail – Geelong, Surf Coast and Colac. A significant proportion of Corangamite electors work in the city of Geelong or Geelong suburbs in these occupations. As a consequence, transport and communication issues are directly related to the migration of workers on a daily basis.

The major population centres within Corangamite – southern suburbs of Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula, Surf Coast and Colac / Winchelsea, are all major labour source providers for Geelong industry.

The retention of all these communities within the Federal Electorate of Corangamite is a preferable option from a public policy point of view as it permits the one parliamentary member to have coverage over the issues which affect the different communities in a similar manner.

Communities to the west of Colac have dramatically different industrial, recreational and social characteristics. The communities of Camperdown, Terang, Timboon and Cobden look toward the growing regional City of Warrnambool in respect to industry, education, employment and social and recreational opportunities. Those communities have a different industry base with dairy farming being the dominant agricultural interest. The communities west of Colac do not provide a source of labour for Geelong industries such as Ford, Shell, Alcoa, that the communities within the existing Electorate of Corangamite demonstrate.

As a consequence of communities west of Colac orientating toward Warrnambool, the significant transportation issues for those communities involve public and private transport links to Warrnambool.

As an example, persons injured or requiring hospitalization in the areas west of Colac are generally currently accommodated at either of the hospitals in Warrnambool, being South West Health Care or St John of God. In contrast, the Geelong hospitals cover the communities currently within the Electorate of Corangamite.

Sporting links are often given insufficient weight by regulatory bodies seeking to examine appropriate communities of interest. In the case of the suggestions for alteration of the Federal Electorate of Corangamite, sporting links are extremely illustrative of how the communities themselves view their relationships.

Approximately ten years ago the Colac Football Club played in the Hampden Football League alongside teams from Warrnambool, Terang, Camperdown. Analysing the clear trend of community links toward Geelong and in particular, the way shopping and education were focused toward Geelong for members of the Colac community, a determination was made by the Colac Football Club to transfer to the Geelong Football League. All other teams to the west of Colac including Camperdown, Terang, Timboon continue to participate in either the Hampden League (majority of teams in Warrnambool) or the Warrnambool District League. The example given by Australian Rules Football is reflected in other sporting codes including baseball, netball, soccer and reflects the reality that Colac is the accepted dividing line for the population in western Victoria between an orientation toward Geelong and an orientation westward.

The suggested expansion of Corangamite to the west would completely ignore the reality which has been demonstrated by the communities themselves that they do not accept any link to the outer suburbs of Geelong, the Surf Coast or the Bellarine Peninsula.

With the utmost respect, it is an absurdity to infer that there is a community of interest between places as economically diverse as Surf Coast (Corangamite) and Camperdown (Wannon) or Bannockburn (Corangamite) and Timboon (Wannon). Even a cursory analysis of agricultural pursuits in the two electorates reveals that there is little commonality of interest. Dairy farming makes up a relatively small component of agricultural activity in the Federal Electorate of Corangamite (chiefly to the south and immediate west and north of Colac). A geographic-based analysis of agricultural pursuits demonstrates grain farming and sheep and cattle grazing together with timber production to be the dominant agricultural industries of Corangamite.

Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula have an economic base substantially underpinned by tourism. This is not the case for the communities west of Colac which it is suggested ought be incorporated into Corangamite.

I submit that there is no economic, social, sporting, health or educational characteristic which supports the contention by the committee that "Corangamite's community of interests is better served by shifting west to gain the entire Corangamite LGA from the Division of Wannon."

In reality such a movement would bundle together communities with contrasting economic, social, sporting, health and educational interests and would result in unnecessary difficulties toward the application of good public policy for the entire region.

Richard Morrow