



Objection 76

Rose Iser

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Victorian Redistribution objections uploaded from the AEC website.

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Additional information: Please find my submission attached.

Objection to the AEC’s proposed distribution, Victoria 2018

Rose Iser

Former councillor at Moonee Valley City Council for Flemington/Travancore (March 2007 – Dec. 2010) and Kensington (2007 – 2008).

Flemington/Travancore

This is an objection to the transfer of Flemington/Travancore from the federal electorate of Melbourne to Maribyrnong.

‘Travancore’ is the small area bounded by Mt Alexander Road, CityLink, the rear of properties in Baroda St and Essendon Hockey pitches. This area is included in the AEC population data for Flemington as it is historically part of Flemington.

Part of Flemington is also occasionally referred to as ‘Newmarket’. To avoid further confusion, I haven’t used this term in this submission.

Summary

1. Despite strong historical links, shared services, and ongoing demographic similarities with Kensington, Flemington/Travancore has been progressively separated from Kensington as a result of local, state and now federal boundary reviews.
2. Flemington/Travancore is a quantitatively different neighbourhood to the Maribyrnong electorate – as evidenced by comparative census data examining Flemington vis-à-vis Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC).
3. Retaining Flemington/Travancore within the federal seat of Melbourne best meets the objective of keeping together the ‘Flem/Ken’ community of interest.
4. Flemington/Travancore can be retained within the seat of Melbourne without it exceeding the population threshold with small changes to the AEC’s proposed boundaries of Wills and Batman. Small adjustments to Maribyrnong’s proposed boundary can also be made to increase its voter population.

History of Flemington/Travancore and Kensington

5. Kensington, Flemington (incorporating what is now Travancore) have been partners since 1861 when they were both part of the borough of Essendon. Flemington and Kensington separated from Essendon in 1882 and had their own Council and Town Hall until 1905 – when they joined the City of Melbourne.
6. Together, Flemington/Travancore and Kensington were part of the City of Melbourne until 1995 when Flemington, Travancore and part of Kensington were joined with Essendon to create *Moonee Valley City Council*.
7. A timeline of Flemington and Kensington’s shared history is included on page 8. Flemington has historically included the area now known as Travancore.

2007: Flemington/Travancore & Kensington spilt by local government boundary

8. Following a review conducted by a panel, established by the Minister for Local Government, the suburbs of Kensington and North Melbourne, each previously split across two municipalities were reunited and the whole of each suburb moved within the City of Melbourne boundary.
9. The panel considering the boundary review received submissions highlighting the historic community links and shared amenities between Flemington/Travancore and Kensington. These submitters requested the united community of Flemington/Travancore and Kensington not be divided by a local government boundary.
10. However, the panel concluded that it could not recommend this to the Minister primarily because under the terms of reference of the Panel, the area subject to review did not extend to Flemington/Travancore. The area of review constituted only the suburb of Kensington and the part of North Melbourne within the MVCC boundary.
11. The panel was also concerned that *“removing such a large area [Kensington and Flemington] out of MVCC may present a too great an impact on its future service capacity”*.¹
12. In addition, the community of Kensington had campaigned at the 2006 state election for the State Government to review the municipal boundary with the intention of being reunited within the City of Melbourne. This well organized campaign continued throughout the panel review period and the Flemington/Travancore community, having been excluded from the terms of reference of the review panel, found it difficult to campaign with matching force to alter the area subject to review to include Flemington/Travancore.
13. Hence, the decision to separate Flemington/Travancore and Kensington at the local government level was made despite significant recognition of the strong historical links connecting the ‘Flem/Ken’ community, and despite the Panel acknowledging that a Racecourse Rd boundary line would be detrimental.

Option 3: Reunite Kensington and North Melbourne under the CoM at Racecourse Road

This boundary realignment reflects the strongest community sentiment in that the entirety of both suburbs and their communities are placed under the one municipality. This option would however clearly cause significant detriment to the Racecourse Road retail precinct by dividing it in the same way as the Macaulay Road shopping centre, and is not supported. The Flemington community to the north of Racecourse Road would not be detrimentally affected but their historic connection to Kensington would not be addressed.

From Local Government (Kensington Boundary Review) Panel, (2007)

2013: Flemington/Travancore and Kensington spilt by state electoral boundary

14. In 2012, the state district of Melbourne was 9.59 per cent above the allowable population threshold. A significant section had to be shed from the Melbourne electorate. Essendon's enrolment was 2.95 per cent below the average district population and declining.
15. Therefore, the Victorian Electoral Boundaries Commission proposed moving Flemington/Travancore from Melbourne to Essendon.
16. Again, submitters pointed out the historic links between Flemington/Travancore and Kensington and that this –

*'... proposed change to the State district boundary would compound the mistake made in the 1990s when Flemington was transferred from the City of Melbourne to the City of Moonee Valley, and that on both levels of government Flemington would be a misunderstood and neglected minority.'*²

18. However, the EBC relied on the municipal boundaries between the City of Melbourne and Moonee Valley – with no reference or acknowledgement of their recent transformation in 2007 – and separated Flemington/Travancore from Kensington and the district of Melbourne.

'It comes down to Flemington and Travancore, as the only area that has enough electors to solve Melbourne's numbers problem, while complying to some degree (through its position outside the City of Melbourne and in the City of Moonee Valley) with community of interest.'

19. An imperfect decision to disconnect Flemington/Travancore and Kensington in 2007 has had a subsequent impact on state district boundaries – and is now inadvisably influencing the revision of federal boundaries.



The Flemington/Travancore community has strong ongoing connections to Kensington and the centre of Melbourne at all levels of government

20. Flemington/Travancore and Kensington share:
- an RSL
 - a community legal centre
 - a local newspaper
 - a junior sports club
 - a library
 - a Bowling Club
 - a main shopping precinct in Racecourse Rd
 - a secondary school (Mt Alexander College)
 - a Catholic parish incorporating St Brendan's (Flemington) and Holy Rosary (Kensington)
 - a postcode.
21. The AEC proposes moving Flemington/Travancore to the Maribyrnong electorate on the basis that this will unite the municipality of Moonee Valley in a single federal electorate.
22. Census data reveals strong similarities between Flemington/Travancore and inner urban communities, and demonstrable differences between Flemington/Travancore and the City of Moonee Valley as a whole.
23. The following information is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016)³ and summaries of ABS data produced by .id.⁴ There were some small discrepancies between the ABS and .id. data, and some data includes Flemington, but not Travancore. In these cases, an average of the figures was taken, or the discrepancy noted. (See next page.)
24. Some data gaps exist, but the general pattern is evident. Flemington/Travancore is closer demographically to Kensington than to Moonee Valley as a whole. Specifically:
- a. Flemington/Travancore has a younger population than the rest of MVCC.
 - b. Flemington/Travancore has fewer couples with children than MVCC.
 - c. More residents in Flemington/Travancore are born overseas and speak a language other than English.
 - d. More residents in Flemington/Travancore have no religious affiliation.
 - e. More residents in Flemington/Travancore identify as Muslim.
 - f. More residents in Flemington/Travancore rent their homes.
 - g. Population density in Flemington/Travancore is much higher than MVCC.
 - h. More residents in Flemington/Travancore use public transport, walk and cycle, than use car to get to work.
25. On nearly all of these measures, Flemington/Travancore is closer in demography to Kensington and the City of Melbourne than to Moonee Valley as a whole (Moonee Valley data is more relevant given the new boundaries of the federal seat of Maribyrnong will largely mirror the boundaries of Moonee Valley.)

Census data

	Moonee Valley	Flemington (some data excludes Travancore)	Kensington	Federal electorate of Melbourne
Mean Age	38 yrs	33 yrs	33 yrs	30 yrs
24-35 year olds	16%	21%	28%	30%
Couples with children	48%	35%	37%	28%
Born overseas	27%	40%	35%	60%
From non-English background	23%	29%		48%?
Speak English only	65%	52%	67%	58%
Speak a non-English language	30%	37%	30%	40%
Religious affiliation	64%	51%	40%	40%
No religious affiliation	26%	34%	47%	45%
Nominated Islamic religion	3%	13%		4%
SEIFA Index	1046	918		1051 (City of Melb only)
Rent home	32%	56%	52%	62%
Medium to high density homes	44%	79%		
Population density	29	68.7	51	
Own 2 or more vehicles	46%	20%	30%	19%
Catch public transport to work	20%	34%	34%	31%
Drive to work	63%	39%	37%	31%
Cycle/Walk to work	4%	11%	11%	24%

26. Flemington/Travancore sits between Kensington/North Melbourne and Ascot Vale/Moonee Ponds. Some characteristics of the area are recognizable as natural transitions from the inner-city to more suburban Moonee Valley. However, the census data reveals the quantifiable and significant differences between Flemington/Travancore and Moonee Valley, and the greater affinity between Flemington/Travancore, Kensington and the City of Melbourne.
27. This is important with respect to service provision. Residents in Flemington/Travancore have a greater need for the following infrastructure than residents in the whole of the Moonee Valley area:
- a. Cycling infrastructure
 - b. More frequent public transport
 - c. Public recreation and open space (given high density)
 - d. Services for younger residents
 - e. Services for residents who speak languages other than English
 - f. Services to support people living in rental accommodation
28. Generally, these service needs are in line with those of residents living in Kensington and inner-urban areas within the City of Melbourne.

An alternative redistribution

29. In order for the electorates of Melbourne and Maribyrnong to meet the quota and threshold requirements, it is necessary to remove some voters from Melbourne and bring some voters in to the seat of Maribyrnong, which has lost a significant number of voters to the new seat of Fraser.
30. Instead of solving this numerical problem with the transfer of Flemington/Travancore to Maribyrnong, the following is proposed:
- a. Transfer Ascot Vale to Maribyrnong
 - b. Retain Flemington/Travancore in Melbourne
 - c. Retain Clifton Hill in Batman (rather than reversing a change made in 2010)
 - d. Retain Fitzroy North in Wills (rather than reversing a change made in 2010)
 - e. Retain Coburg North in Wills
 - f. Transfer 7500 voters into Maribyrnong from Wills in the Oak Park area using the Craigieburn train line as the boundary.

This would result in the following new projected populations for 2019:

2019	Proposed	Add	Remove	Total
Melbourne	111,134	6334 (Flem/Trav)	3027 (Fitzroy Nth) 1211 (Yarra Nth)	113,230
Maribyrnong	111,765	7497 (Oak Park)	6334 (Flem/Trav)	112,928
Wills	110,841	3027 (Fitz Nth) 3053 (Coburg)	7497 (Oak Park)	109,424
Batman	112,299	1211 (Yarra Nth)	3053 (Coburg)	110,457

31. This proposal results in 14,000 voters in Flemington/Travancore, Fitzroy North, Yarra Nth and Coburg North remaining within their current electorates of Melbourne, Wills and Batman, and 7500 voters in Oak Park moving with Strathmore and Essendon Fields voters to Maribyrnong from Wills.

Alternatively

32. 2159 Gowanbrae voters have been transferred from Wills to Calwell. These voters could be transferred to Maribyrnong instead of Calwell.

The Coburg transfer of 3053 voters between Batman and Wills could go ahead

2019	Proposed	Add	Remove	Total
Melbourne	111,134	6334 (Flem/Trav)	3027 (Fitzroy Nth) 1211 (Yarra Nth)	113,230
Maribyrnong	111,765	2159 (Gowanbrae)	6334 (Flem/Trav)	107,591
Wills	110,841	3027 (Fitz Nth)		113,868
Batman	112,299	1211 (Yarra Nth)		113,510
Calwell	110,464		2159 (Gowanbrae)	108,305

Conclusion

33. The Flemington/Travancore area has a long association with Kensington that has been impacted by local and state boundary reviews. Flemington/Travancore continues to be more closely aligned with Kensington and the federal electorate of Melbourne in demographics, built form and service needs.

34. For these reasons, I object to the removal of Flemington/Travancore from the federal electorate of Melbourne and have proposed two alternative redistributions that meet the quota and threshold requirements.

Timeline of Flemington/Travancore and Kensington

The following timeline has been drawn from the *Flemington Heritage* website⁵ and other sources as indicated.

Flemington has historically included the small area now known as 'Travancore'.

- 1861:** The *Borough of Essendon* was proclaimed.
- 1862:** The *Borough of Essendon and Flemington* was proclaimed.
- 1881:** Residents of Flemington and Kensington commenced revolting against the *Borough of Essendon and Flemington*
- 1882:** Official severance of Flemington and Kensington from the Essendon and Flemington Council, with the *Borough of Flemington and Kensington* subsequently formed.
- 1883:** Flemington and Kensington Library Opened.
- 1888:** Flemington and Kensington Bowling Green opened.
- 1891:** Flemington Court House and Police Station were completed servicing Flemington and Kensington.
- 1892:** Land for Flemington and Kensington Town Hall was purchased.
- 1890s:** Flemington and Kensington Junior Football Team began.
- 1901:** Flemington and Kensington Town Hall completed.
- 1905:** Flemington and Kensington residents voted in favour of unification with the City of Melbourne.
- 1908:** Kensington Junior Cricket Club became Flemington Kensington Junior Cricket Club.
- 1930s:** Flemington and Kensington Junior Football team one of eight original teams in EDFL.
- 1932:** Flemington and Kensington RSL was formed.
- 1968:** Flemington and Kensington Library opened on Racecourse Rd.
- 1978:** Flemington Kensington News established.
- 1980:** Flemington and Kensington Legal Service began.
- 1995:** Flemington and part of Kensington were joined with Essendon to create *Moonee Valley City Council*.

2005: Junior Sports Club incorporated as **Kensington Flemington Junior Sports Club** playing as Flemington Junior Football Club and Kensington Junior Cricket Club.

Location of services

The location and name of services reflects the combined history of Flemington and Kensington:

- Flemington Library is in Kensington.
- Flemington Telephone Exchange is in Kensington.
- Flemington UFS Dispensary was in Kensington.
- Kensington Fire Station was in Flemington.
- Kensington Masonic Hall was in Flemington.

¹ Local Government (Kensington Boundary Review) Panel, (2007) *Review of Municipal Boundaries Kensington, (2003) Report on the 2001 Census division of electoral boundaries*, Victorian Electoral Commission: Melbourne

³ The Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

⁴ id. Population Experts, <https://home.id.com.au/>

⁵ <http://www.flemingtonheritage.org.au/>