



Objection 251

Craigieburn Residents' Association

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CRAIGIEBURN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Victorian Redistribution Committee
Level 1 Urban Workshop
50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

3 May 2017

Dear Commissioners

The Craigieburn Residents Association has resolved to lodge an objection to the proposed boundaries for the Victorian Federal electorates of McEwen and Calwell. This objection is based on the principle of communities of interest and also seeking to draw the Committee's attention to an unintended consequence of the proposed boundaries.

Our community in Craigieburn is part of a larger community of shared interest with our northern neighbours. We share economic, social, sporting and regional interests.

As the Committee has recognised, Melbourne is growing faster than ever before, with population figures reflecting some of the fastest growing regions in the nation. In 2012, Wallan became the last suburb in the outer north of Melbourne and the projected growth from Craigieburn to Wallan is significant. This growth follows the Hume Highway north, as does the current boundary of the McEwen electorate.

As a growing suburb, Craigieburn shares much in common with the areas to the north; much more than established suburbs to the south such as Roxburgh Park and Broadmeadows.

Craigieburn is a developing multicultural community. We value our diversity and the new people making their homes in our suburb value that aspect of our community life. This is in contrast to the relative homogeneity of the established suburbs to the south.

Craigieburn is the de-facto capital of the growing northern suburbs and towns and has always been a town of regional significance. Regional facilities such as the new \$50 million aquatic and leisure centre, the Regional Tennis Centre, department and specialty stores and professional services within Craigieburn are relied upon by the other residents of the outer north. This creates a community of interest and means that the needs of residents in the areas north of Craigieburn would be best-served by having a continuity of representation which takes in this important social, sporting and service centre.

Regarding economic interest, the suburbs and towns of the outer north have been anticipating the development of the Merrifield Business Park and the employment opportunities it will bring. In establishing Merrifield, the developers noted that it provides an alternative to employment in the CBD providing high-tech industries, factories, warehouses and manufacturing sites, improving the work-life balance of residents in the northern corridor.

Further, the planned Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal demonstrates that an economic growth region has been established which takes in Craigieburn, Donnybrook, Beveridge and Wallan.

These developments will create an employment cluster in our region. The Victorian Planning Authority has a comprehensive North Growth Corridor Plan, with Craigieburn, Donnybrook and surrounds as the central hub in a zone which takes in Wallan, Beveridge and Wollert. Removing Craigieburn as the central suburb of this zone compromises the capacity of this community to see through on this plan.

It is clear from the above examples that a north-south economic corridor has been established and is being pursued by government, developers and business alike. Removing the heart of that corridor from the McEwen electorate will reduce the effectiveness of representation.

For the most part the existing McEwen electorate runs on a north-south axis, this takes in existing transport corridors. The proposed redistribution with an east-west axis would ignore these travel routes and not include any major transport corridors. This factor also demonstrates that there is not a natural fit between the communities, the proposed electoral boundaries and the existing means of transport.

Finally, the Association wishes to draw the Committee's attention to a potential unintended outcome of the proposed redistribution in excising Sunbury from the remainder of the City of Hume, placing all of Hume in the seat of Calwell with the exception of Sunbury.

Over many years there has been a highly politically contentious local issue regarding the separation Sunbury from the City of Hume – with a push to establish a local government area based on the suburb of Sunbury.

In 2014 the then Napthine Government approved the separation of Sunbury from the City of Hume and thereby fulfilling a 2010 election commitment. In 2015 the Andrews Government quashed the separation through a transition audit which reaffirmed Sunbury's place in the City of Hume. In January 2018 the Victorian Liberal Party again reaffirmed their commitment to establish Sunbury as a standalone municipality if elected in at the state election in November 2018.

The unintended consequence of the proposed redistribution is for the Committee to stray into this contentious local political issue without due regard to the history or indeed the perception created by excising the suburb of Sunbury alone from the City of Hume. A far better outcome would be for Sunbury to remain with the City of Hume in the seat of Calwell and for Craigieburn reunite in the seat of McEwen. This would avoid the unintended outcome.

The Association thanks the Committee for this opportunity to respond to the proposed redistribution and looks forward to the outcome of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely

CRA SUTHERLY
DENIS MOORE

