



Comment on objections 27

Nicholas Weston

17 pages

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Why Chisholm must move south	3
3	Thoughts on objections	4
4	Alternative	7

1 Introduction

My comment on objections primarily concerns the boundaries of the proposed divisions of Chisholm, Deakin, Hotham, and Menzies. The objections I refer to are OB1, OB3, OB4, OB10, OB34, OB35, OB37, OB39, OB48, OB59, OB60, OB61, and OB63.

I was raised in Box Hill North and lived there for almost half of my life. With this experience, I want to offer my thoughts on the objections raised in relation to these divisions, and present an alternative that largely addresses these objections.

- In Section 2, I provide some background by explaining why numerical requirements necessitate that Chisholm move south. This is intended to be for the benefit of other contributors to the redistribution.
- In Section 3, I discuss objections to the Committee's proposal and state my own views on some matters raised in these objections.
- In Section 4, I present an alternative to the Committee's proposal, affecting the divisions Chisholm, Deakin, Goldstein, Higgins, Hotham, Kooyong and Menzies. I have included maps of the alternative divisions as well as enrolment data.

2 Why Chisholm must move south

I am sure many would have considered it ideal if only minor changes were to be made to Chisholm. I absolutely agree with this sentiment. Unfortunately, retaining the existing configuration of Chisholm is infeasible. Numerical requirements have forced the Committee to move Chisholm southwards. For the benefit of others contributing to the redistribution process, I will explain here why this is.

There are only so many degrees of freedom in how the Committee can draw boundaries in eastern Melbourne. The Division of Aston is coterminous with Knox LGA. The Division of Casey is almost coterminous with Yarra Ranges LGA and is fenced in by the Yarra Ranges National Park. These boundaries are virtually nonnegotiable. Further constraining factors include the Yarra River to the west, the clear boundary between the divisions of Gippsland and Indi, and obviously the coastline.

Let us imagine what would have resulted had the Committee made no changes to the northern and eastern boundaries (with Deakin and Menzies) of Chisholm. Perhaps this would have been realised by pushing part of the existing Waverley Road boundary south to the Monash Freeway, which would be sufficient to place Chisholm within numerical tolerance. What consequences would this have on Deakin, Menzies, and divisions across the rest of the state?

The consequences would be nothing short of catastrophic. Deakin and Menzies would need to fill up the remainder of Whitehorse LGA, as well as Manningham and Maroon-dah LGAs. The problem is that the projected enrolment of this area is around 204,000, which is 30,000 below the quota of two districts. This means that Menzies would need to extend even further into Nillumbik LGA (and possibly Banyule LGA) than it does on the existing boundaries. Aside from likely resulting in nonsensical boundaries for Jagajaga and Menzies, accommodating this would necessitate radical changes all across the western half of the state. The cascading effect would force a division close to the CBD to straddle the Yarra River, or for there to be significant disruption to boundaries in regional divisions.

If only minimal changes to Chisholm had been pursued, the resulting boundaries would have caused residents across the rest of the state to think that the Committee had lost their minds.

3 Thoughts on objections

The reality is that Chisholm must move south. The question is how this can be achieved in a way that preserves communities of interest as best as possible.

One of the most significant considerations is whether the northwestern suburbs of Whitehorse LGA should be united with suburbs in Manningham LGA or Maroondah LGA. From my perspective as a former resident of Box Hill North, the comparison is not even close. The answer is Manningham by a long shot. We travelled to Doncaster almost every week for shopping and other services. We never travelled to Ringwood or anywhere further east.

Given this, I was very concerned by a few suggestions that advocated for Box Hill North to be transferred to Deakin. I intended to lodge an objection if the Committee were to have proposed this. For Box Hill North to be placed in a division extending as far east as Kilsyth South would be indefensible. The Committee instead transferred Box Hill North to Menzies, so I did not feel the need to object to the proposal.

Whatever changes the Committee makes in response to objections, Box Hill and Box Hill North must not be transferred to a Maroondah-based division.

For this reason, I do not support the suggestions in OB60 and OB63. The assertions made in these objections concerning the relationship between Whitehorse and Manningham LGAs defy my own experience as a resident of Box Hill North. I wish to respond to a few points made in these objections.

In OB60:

“The existing Menzies/Chisholm boundary along Mullum Mullum Creek (which mostly coincides with the Eastern Freeway) is a strong boundary of very long standing: breaching it requires a strong justification.”

I am going to assume that the author is referring to Koonung Creek – not Mullum Mullum Creek – otherwise this statement does not make much sense.

Having Menzies cross the Eastern Freeway may be unprecedented. It is also unprecedented to have Box Hill placed in a Maroondah-based division. Avoiding the latter is a strong justification for the former.

In OB63:

“We acknowledge that the proposal of the Redistribution Committee does entirely unite Maroondah Council within Deakin. However, no matter how desirable that outcome, on community of interests grounds, it is overwhelmed by the poor outcome also on community of interest grounds of including parts of Whitehorse Council in Menzies.”

As pointed out in OB39, there is a strong desire for Maroondah LGA to be united within Deakin. The “poor outcome” of including parts of Whitehorse LGA in Menzies is miniscule in comparison. I again reiterate the point that during my time living in Box Hill North, we frequently travelled to Manningham LGA. We never travelled to Maroondah LGA.

“[The existing southern] boundary [of Menzies] also contains significant parklands, including Boronia Grove Reserve and Koonung Creek Reserve. Moreover, the southern boundary of Menzies also contains, running through its parklands, the widest and busiest section of the Eastern Freeway.”

Some of my fondest childhood memories are family walks along Koonung Creek Linear Park, which runs alongside the Eastern Freeway. This narrow stretch of parkland is enjoyed by residents of both Whitehorse LGA and Manningham LGA. If anything, this appears to be an argument *in favour* of crossing the Eastern Freeway. I do not deny the fact that the Eastern Freeway makes for a strong boundary, but it is not strong enough to justify placing Box Hill in a Maroondah-based division.

“There are very strong reasons that previous Commissioners have never considered moving Menzies south into Whitehorse Councils.”

Previous commissioners have never considered moving Menzies south into Whitehorse LGA because there had been no reason to do so. The Committee of this redistribution faces a unique predicament. In the past, it was possible to locate a small portion of Maroondah LGA in Menzies and to locate only the eastern end of Whitehorse LGA within Deakin. The reality of *this* redistribution is very different, where crossing the Eastern Freeway is necessary to avoid a much more awkward split of Maroondah LGA and to avoid Deakin stretching all the way to Box Hill.

* * *

There are nine objections that refer to the divisions of Deakin and Menzies and the northern boundary of the Division of Chisholm. The two mentioned above (OB60 and OB63) are the only ones that express a preference for Box Hill to be transferred to Deakin. OB3 suggests that Box Hill should not be transferred to Deakin *and* Menzies should not cross the Eastern Freeway. As discussed in Section 2, this would be ideal, but unfortunately these criteria are mutually exclusive due to numerical requirements. All other seven – OB4, OB35, OB37, OB39, OB48, OB59, and OB61 – either express support for the Committee’s proposal in relation to these boundaries (OB4 and OB59), or describe an alternative where Menzies still crosses the Eastern Freeway and where Box Hill is located in Menzies.

I am generally supportive of the alternatives discussed in OB35, OB37, OB39, OB48, and OB61. Any of these would be immensely better than transferring Box Hill or Box Hill North to Deakin. OB35 and OB39 explicitly suggest reconfiguring Deakin and Menzies to a north-south alignment, which I strongly agree with. OB39 presents a thorough discussion of why such a change is justified, and I encourage the Committee and other contributors to carefully consider the arguments in this particular objection.

What all of these objections except OB4 and OB59 have in common is that they make the point that Blackburn and Whitehorse Roads are far from ideal boundaries. I agree that these boundaries can be improved upon.

There are also several objections to the southern boundary of Chisholm. The common theme is that the Monash Freeway or Ferntree Gully Road should be used as the boundary. OB1, OB34, and OB35 express a preference for the Chisholm-Hotham boundary to follow the Monash Highway and Wellington Road. OB37 and OB39 suggest that Police Road should be used (instead of Wellington Road). OB34 and OB35 express a secondary preference for this.

4 Alternative

I wish to present an alternative that addresses objections in relation to the Division of Chisholm and its neighbours. This alternative is largely inspired by alternatives presented in OB35, OB37, OB39, OB48, and OB61. Each of these alternatives either has some minor numerical problems (OB39 and OB61), or, in my view, features some minor oddities that could be improved upon. The alternative I am presenting also addresses objections concerning the Chisholm-Hotham boundary.

With respect to the Committee's proposal, this alternative involves changes to the divisions of Chisholm, Deakin, Goldstein, Higgins, Hotham, Kooyong and Menzies.

The starting point for this alternative is for all of Whitehorse LGA contained within the Division of Kooyong to be transferred out. In exchange, Kooyong extends south to High Street, becoming fully contained within and almost coextensive with Boroondara LGA. The rationale behind this is to rotate Kooyong, Higgins, Hotham, and Chisholm counterclockwise sufficient to bump the Chisholm-Hotham boundary north to the Monash Freeway. As will be demonstrated later, this also provides additional breathing room to address the northern boundary of Chisholm.

Higgins must then gain electors to its south. The simplest boundaries I can find to achieve this are as follows:

- Higgins retains Hughesdale. I note that this is suggested in OB10.
- The Grange Road boundary between Goldstein and Higgins is moved west to Booran Road, which is also a suburb boundary. This transfers all of Glen Huntly and part of Ormond from Goldstein to Higgins.
- The Tucker Road boundary between Goldstein and Hotham is moved east to East Boundary Road. This transfers part of Bentleigh East from Hotham to Goldstein.

The resulting enrolment deficiency in Hotham can be rectified by moving the Chisholm-Hotham boundary to the Monash Freeway until the interchange with Wellington Road, from whence it can follow Wellington Road to Dandenong Creek. These exact boundaries are suggested in OB1, OB34, and OB35.

The northern boundary of Chisholm can now be aligned to Canterbury Road, as suggested in OB35, OB37, OB39, OB60, OB61, and OB63.

Deakin and Menzies can then take a north-south alignment. A very clear boundary can be used here – Springvale Road, followed by Mullum Mullum Creek (north of Reynolds Road) and the Warrandyte SSC boundary. The use of Mullum Mullum Creek as a boundary is suggested in OB35 and OB39.

Among the advantages of this alternative are:

- Box Hill and Blackburn are no longer awkwardly cut. Canterbury Road is a much more appropriate boundary than Whitehorse Road, and Springvale Road more so than Blackburn Road.
- The Division of Chisholm no longer straddles the Monash Highway.
- Living in Box Hill North, the suburbs I felt the strongest affinity to (other than Box Hill North itself) were Blackburn, Box Hill, and Doncaster. All of these suburbs are now united within a single division.
- Residents of Whitehorse LGA can identify in which division they are located by considering their location only with respect to Canterbury Road and Springvale Road.
- Whitehorse LGA is split between only three divisions, down from four in the Committee’s proposal. (This addresses a criticism in OB63.)
- Maroondah LGA is fully united within Deakin.
- The boundary delineating Deakin and Menzies forms a very natural boundary within Manningham LGA, separating fully suburban areas from semi-rural areas. (This point is made about Mullum Mullum Creek in OB39.)
- It could be argued that with these changes, the boundaries of the divisions of Kooyong and Higgins are made clearer and easier to understand.

Division	Current		Projected	
	Enrolment	Dev. (%)	Enrolment	Dev. (%)
Chisholm	114,772	5.28	118,897	1.53
Deakin	114,631	5.15	119,302	1.87
Goldstein	111,928	2.67	118,665	1.33
Higgins	110,966	1.78	116,620	-0.42
Hotham	112,603	3.29	117,523	0.36
Kooyong	111,828	2.57	117,891	0.67
Menzies	108,012	-0.93	113,828	-2.80

Table 1: Enrolment in alternative divisions

Enrolment data for these divisions are tabulated in Table 1. Note that due to the splitting of SA1 2126903, the current enrolments of Deakin and Menzies have an error of ± 128 ($\pm 0.12\%$ deviation), and the projected enrolments an error of ± 122 ($\pm 0.11\%$). All other SA1 splits have been accounted for using data provided by the AEC.

There are many tweaks the Committee could make to this alternative to minimise enrolment deviations and accommodate other considerations. The general changes I am suggesting is the counterclockwise rotation of Chisholm, Kooyong, Higgins, and Hotham sufficient to push the Chisholm-Hotham boundary to the Monash Freeway and to align the northern boundary of Chisholm to Canterbury Road, and reconfiguring Deakin and Menzies to a north-south alignment.

Maps of the alternative are presented on the following pages. Figure 1 shows all affected divisions. The remaining figures show each individual district, with alternative boundaries in blue, and the proposed boundaries of the division in question in red for comparison.

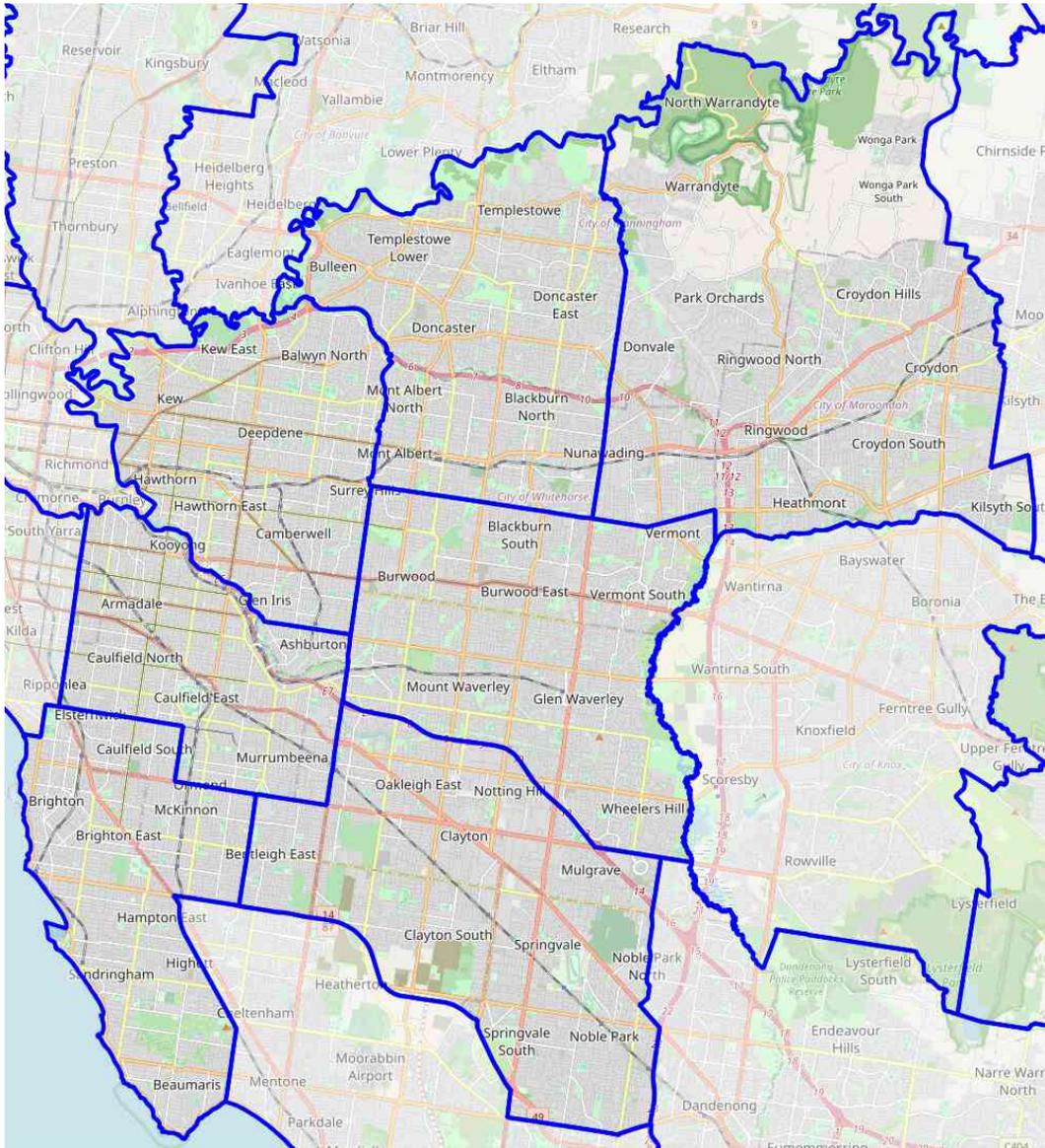


Figure 1: Alternative (overview)

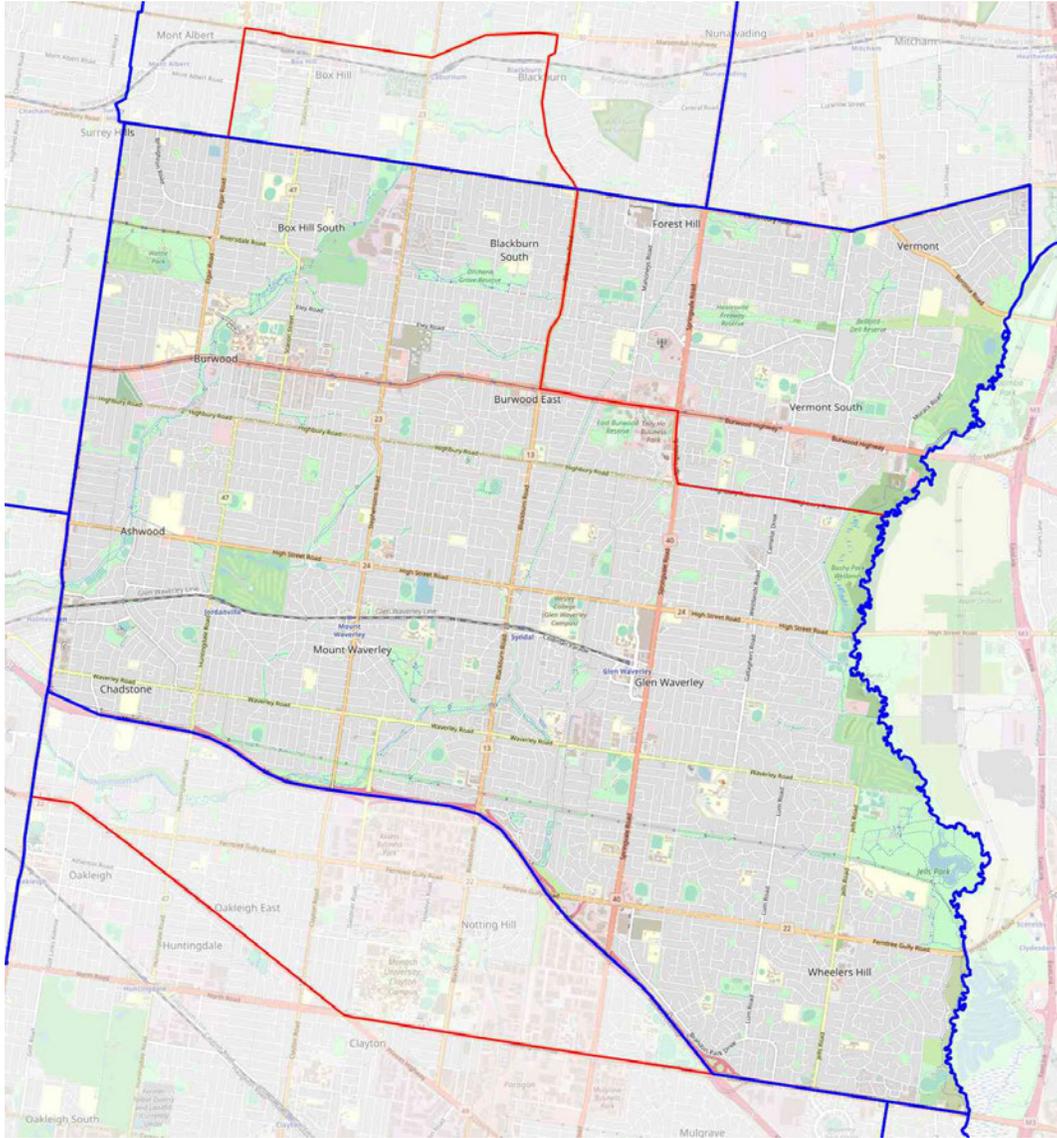


Figure 2: Alternative Chisholm

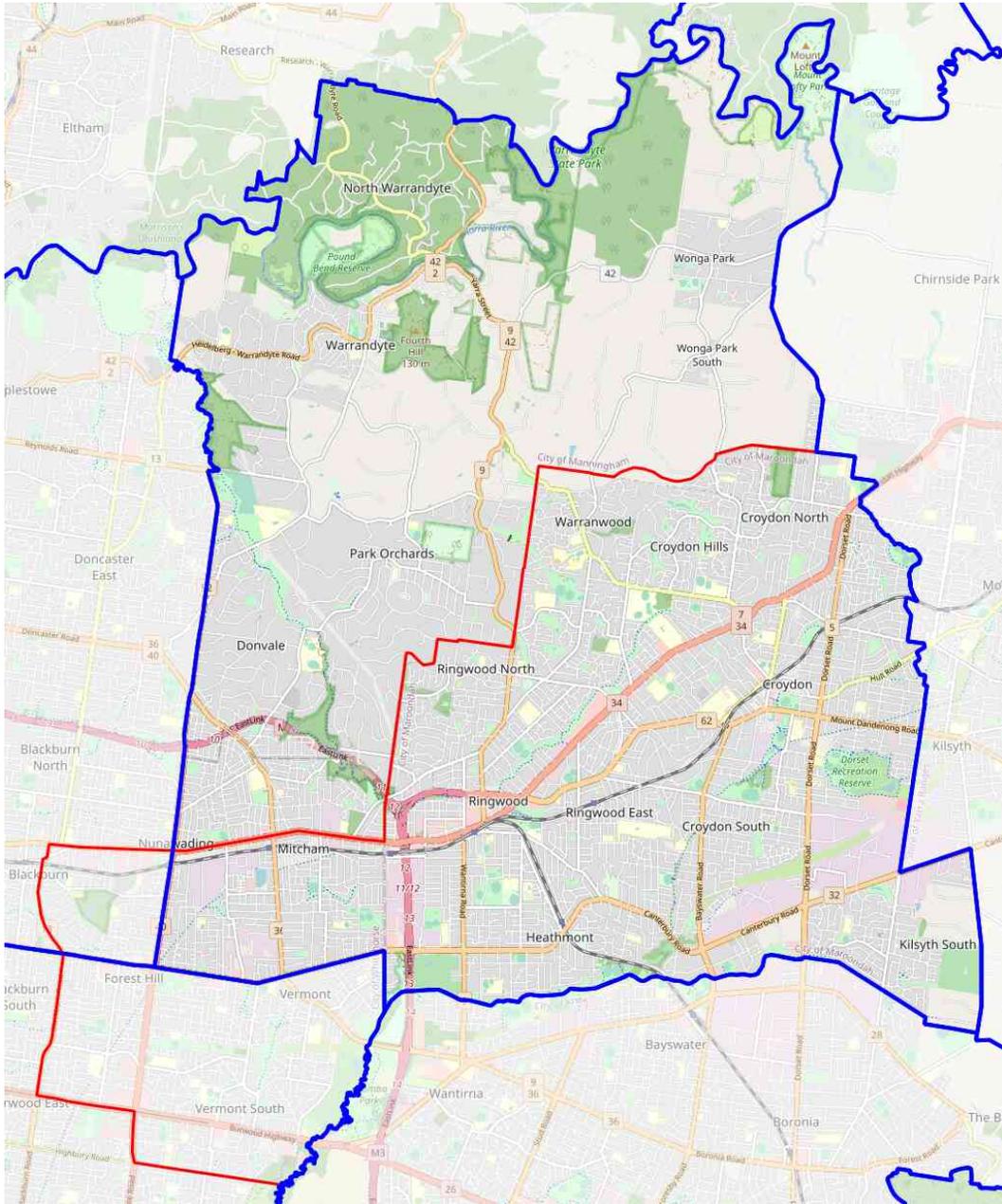


Figure 3: Alternative Deakin

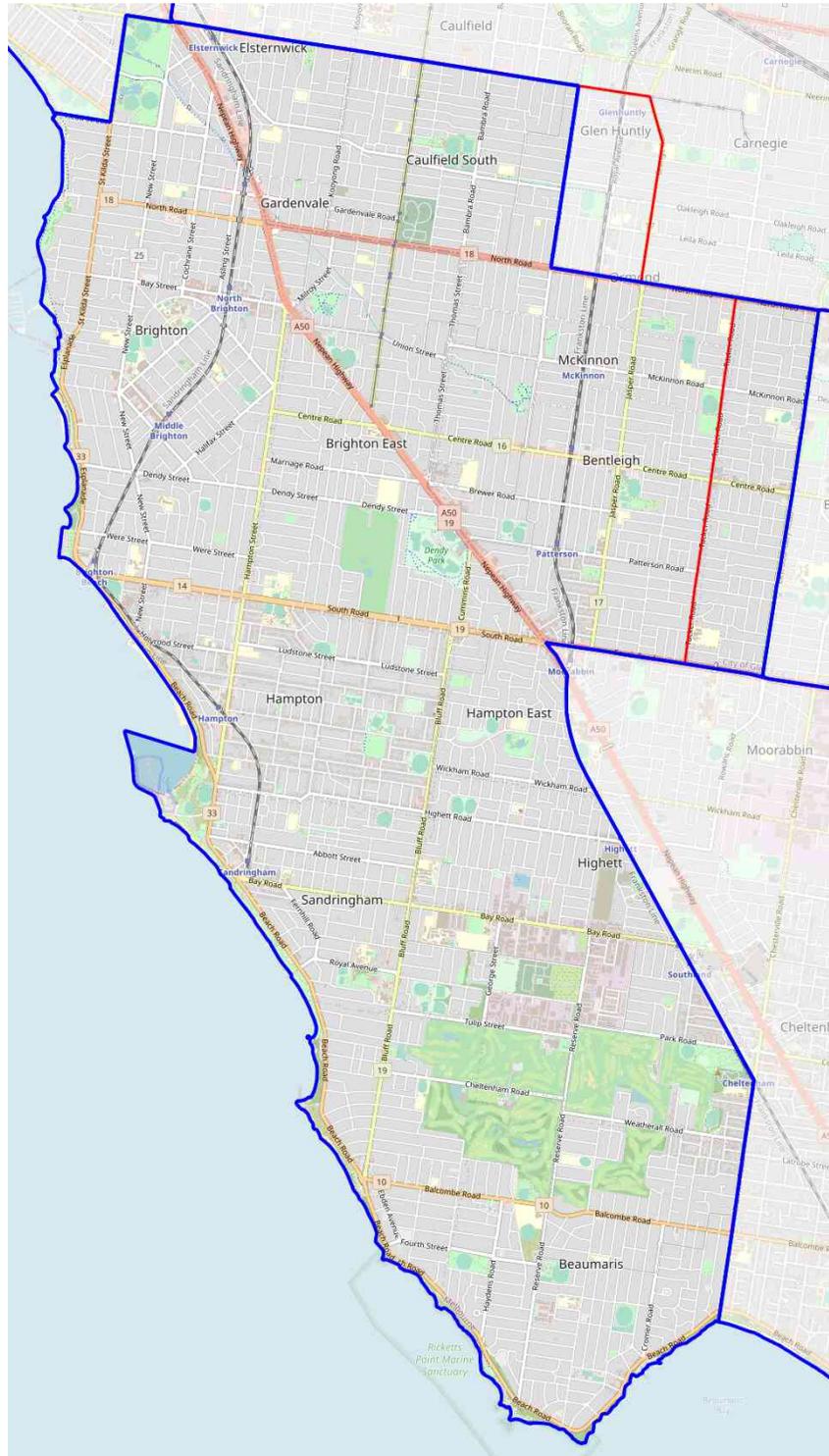


Figure 4: Alternative Goldstein

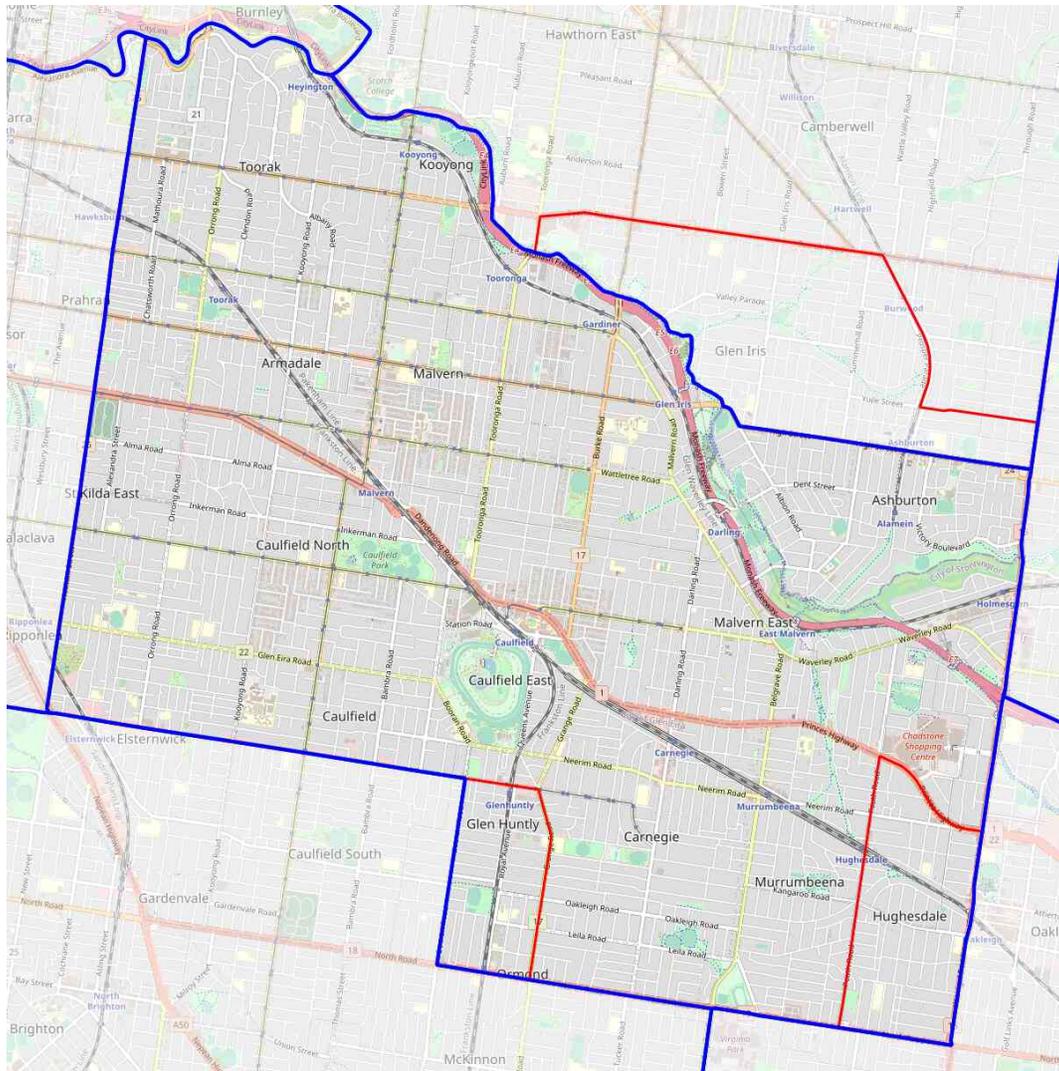


Figure 5: Alternative Higgins

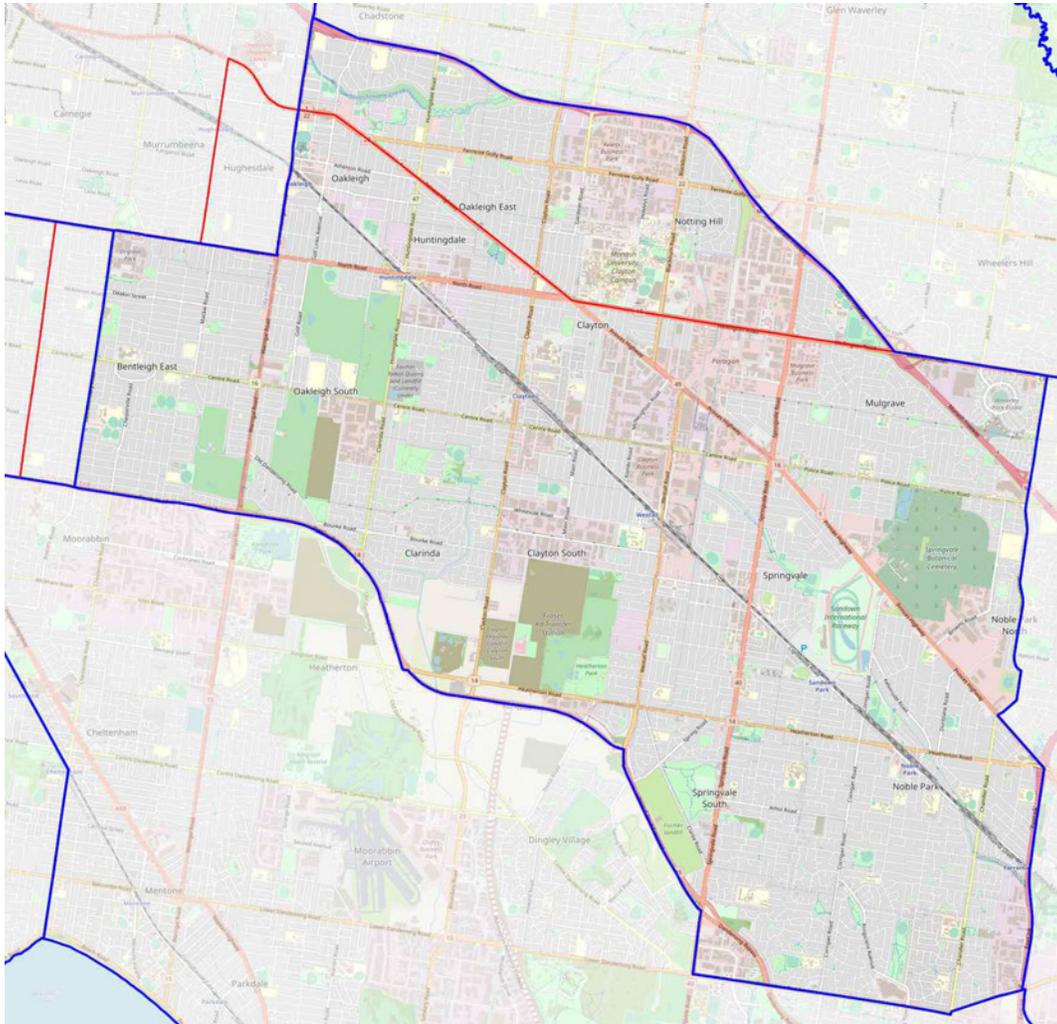


Figure 6: Alternative Hotham

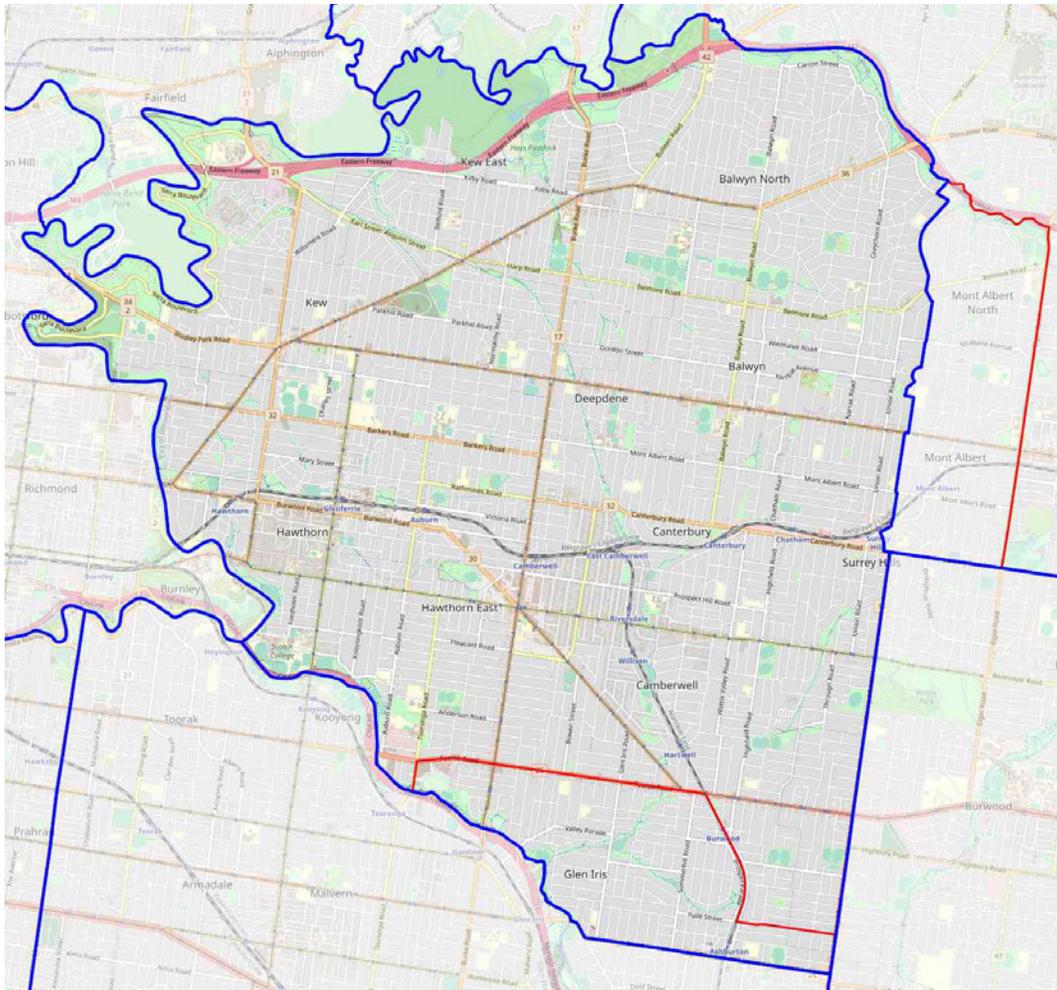


Figure 7: Alternative Kooyong

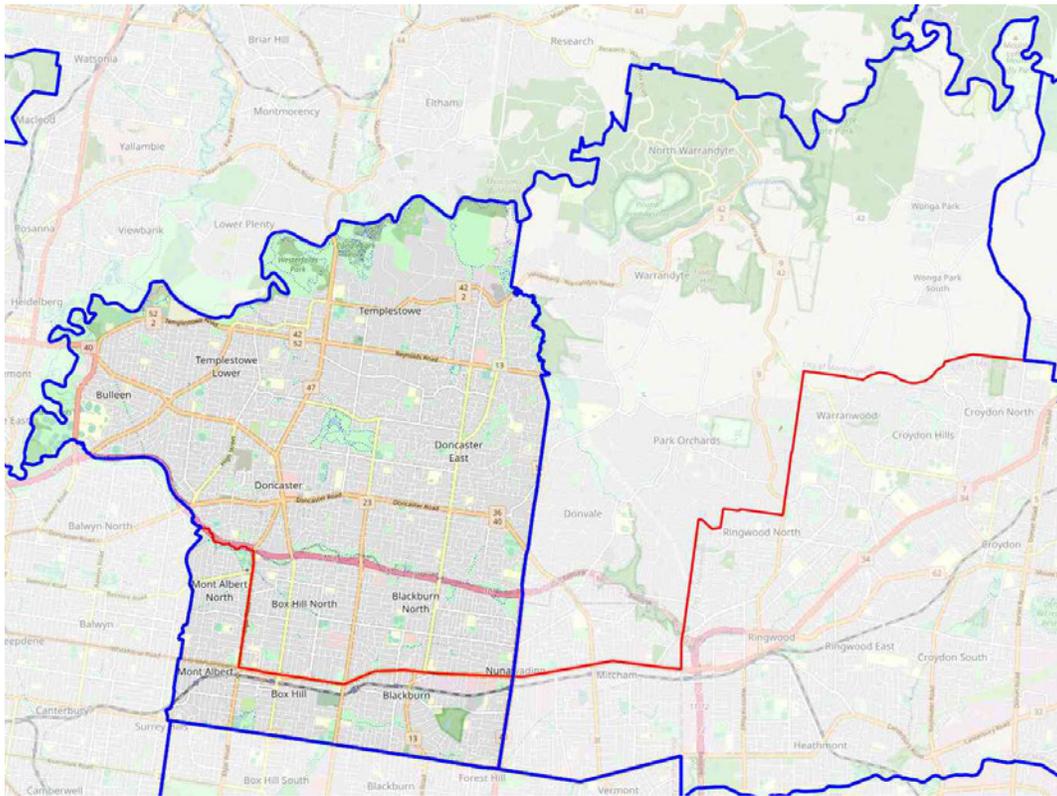


Figure 8: Alternative Menzies