



# Comment on suggestion 34

Sophie Stuart

5 pages

## **COMMENT ON SUGGESTIONS – SOPHIE STUART**

I make this comment as a third-generation life-long resident of the Dunkley electorate. The purpose of this comment is to highlight the advantages of a redistribution of the electorate to create and reinstate a more cohesive community in our area. This electorate is my home. As a young 21-year-old member of the community, I would like to focus on the wonderful resources our electorate has to offer, and what our electorate can become by reverting to the inclusion of Mornington and (at least part of) Baxter in Dunkley. My view reflects submissions made in Suggestions 13, 34 and 101.

Dunkley was formed in 1984 as a Frankston and Mornington Peninsula electorate, particularly to cope with the overpopulation of Flinders. It should therefore be imperative that the Dunkley electorate reverts to reflecting its origins of being a Frankston and Peninsula based electorate with a balanced demographic, being coastal and with a balance between city and country. The following reasons help demonstrate this point.

### **Redistribution of Mornington Back into Dunkley:**

The Peninsula population is increasing at a rapid rate, faster than the population within Dunkley, therefore the redistribution of Mornington back into Dunkley is imminent in the near future in any event. In the interests of combining strong communities of interest, and practicality, it is only reasonable to move the boundaries back in this redistribution, instead of having to repeat the same process of having to move Mornington back into Dunkley at the next redistribution. I note that last time Mornington was redistributed out of Dunkley, it was promptly readded to the Dunkley electorate, so there is history in this regard.

The Mornington Peninsula is becoming increasingly popular as a place of residence and business. Due to the nature of the land being surrounded by water, there is no geographical space to further expand Dunkley (or Flinders) to the west. Additionally, any expansion to the east or north of the current boundaries would mean including parts of new Local Government Areas that traditionally have not been part of Dunkley. Any move of the electorate therefore needs to go south. In doing so, it makes sense to reabsorb Mornington back into Dunkley (which with Mount Eliza is in Briars Ward of the Mornington Peninsula Shire and has previously been in Dunkley for much of its existence).

Having Mornington, the original Dunkley electorate before the 2018 redistribution had a cross-section of demographics. However, the current Dunkley boundaries do not have an adequate representation of a wide enough spread of socio-economic backgrounds.

Placing Mornington back into Dunkley reprises the socially equitable and diverse electorate that was intended with Dunkley's creation. It will also create a more cohesive and symbiotic relationship with Flinders, due to this equitable blend and the connection enabled with the

rest of the Mornington Peninsula. The current boundaries, on the other hand, help perpetuate a division of socio-demographics by largely having an electorate separation between the Frankston City Council and Mornington Peninsula Shire LGAs. It is important therefore that Dunkley's boundaries regain Mornington to accurately represent everything the electorate was initially intended to be.

Statistically, if the boundaries for Dunkley and Flinders were to remain in their present state, the Flinders electorate would have more than the 'average allowable range', as noted in Suggestion 101 by Justin Lamond. Suggestion 101 states that Dunkley's forecast electors would be in the 'middle of the allowable range'. With the movement of 19,515 electors to Dunkley from Flinders by reabsorbing Mornington (and consequent changes to Flinders and Isaacs), the distribution of constituents in Dunkley will be more equal and representative of the area, and cater for future higher population growth on the Peninsula. Given the higher growth of the population in Flinders, the 2025 projections for Flinders should ideally be at the lower end of the allowable range.

It is important to also acknowledge the connectivity between Mornington, Mount Eliza and Frankston. Residents of Mount Eliza depend on both Mornington and Frankston for healthcare, welfare, shopping, sport and business. Currently, Mount Eliza is isolated as the only Mornington Peninsula Shire locality in Dunkley, which recognises its northern but not southern community links. Frankston Hospital is the primary provider of world-class healthcare for Frankston, the Mornington Peninsula and surrounding suburbs and towns to Dunkley. With the Peninsula Health group having rehabilitation and palliative care centres, in addition to Frankston Hospital, it is only fair for members of the northern Mornington Peninsula (especially the ageing population) to have the best possible healthcare in their electorate, instead of having to go to an adjoining electorate as Mornington residents now have to do (and having to advocate to two different MPs for their services).

With respect to the importance of welfare services in Mornington, the current Federal Member for Dunkley highlighted earlier this year how the constituents of Dunkley utilise the Mornington Centrelink offices, in her campaign to keep that office open, despite the Mornington Centrelink office being outside of her current electorate. She would not have advocated for this if it wasn't important that this Centrelink remain open for the people of Dunkley, as it is clear that residents of Dunkley depend on this essential service in Mornington. Thus, the fact that Mornington is a hub for Dunkley residents, particularly in the south, is another reason to support Mornington being reincluded in Dunkley.

I am therefore supportive of arguments raised in Suggestions 13 and 101, which also both recommend redistributing Mornington back into Dunkley.

### **Redistribution of Baxter (or part thereof) back into Dunkley:**

Federal funding for the Frankston to Baxter Rail electrification and duplication was secured in 2018, with the intention to create a more effective link via public transport between Baxter and Frankston, right through to Melbourne's CBD. There is a strong link between the Frankston line and the Mornington Peninsula, and this metro rail extension will provide quicker and easier access to Frankston Hospital, Monash University (Peninsula Campus), the Frankston Central Activity District, and the CBD. With the implementation of this project, public transport in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula will be transformed, creating new jobs and reducing congestion on roads. See the map **below** showing this rail line, as well as interconnecting major roads like Nepean Highway which connect Seaford to Mornington.

In addition, the existing railway line runs between Frankston, Baxter, Mount Eliza and Mornington, with the historical railway line currently operating between Mount Eliza and Mornington. The historical rail society (with many young people involved) wish to run their train from Baxter station through to Mornington once electrification to Baxter is completed. There is also the wish by many to electrify the rail between Baxter and Mornington as well, after the electrification to Baxter, meaning there would be a metro rail connection on one train between Melbourne CBD, Seaford, Frankston, Langwarrin South, Baxter, Mount Eliza and Mornington.

This common railway line is therefore a strong reason that both Mornington and Baxter, or at least the northern part of Baxter containing the Baxter railway station, should be reincluded in Dunkley. Recombining Baxter into Dunkley is also reflected in submissions made in Suggestion 34.

### **Consequential boundary changes to Flinders and Isaacs:**

It is important to note that the residents of the most recent rendition of the Dunkley electorate in the suburbs of Carrum Downs, Skye and Sandhurst are largely dependent on resources further north of the Dunkley electorate. For example, Carrum Downs is home to a large Hindu religious temple, in fact the biggest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere, and many worshippers travel to this temple, mainly from suburbs north and to the north-east of the Dunkley electorate. Only a small proportion of worshippers reside in Dunkley itself. This is similar for other connections between Carrum Downs, Skye, Sandhurst and areas north of the electorate, such as residents of Sandhurst often shopping at the nearby Marriott Waters Shopping Centre in Lyndhurst.

Reflective of arguments made in Suggestions 13 and 101, it would make sense for Carrum Downs, Skye and Sandhurst to be redistributed back north (as they were prior to the 2018 redistribution), noting that these areas north of Ballarto Road (which also are in close proximity to Dandenong) hadn't been part of Dunkley until 2019.

Additionally, as a consequence of Dunkley regaining Mornington and Baxter (or part thereof) from Flinders, Flinders would need to move back around Western Port to have an acceptable number of constituents. This makes sense given these areas were historically in Flinders and have very strong community interests with one another. For example, there are very strong links between Hastings, Cannons Creek, Tooradin and other communities around Western Port. Towns like Western Port have less connection with suburban areas to the north like Cranbourne, which they were connected to in the last redistribution. Thus, communities of interest around Western Port are currently divided, being split by LGA.

Therefore, I also agree with Suggestions 13 and 101 which recommend Western Port communities being reincluded as a cohesive unit in Flinders.

Also applicable is Waddell's point in Suggestion 13 that communities of interest can sometimes be stronger across LGAs, as opposed to just combining a whole LGA into one electorate, as occurred with Dunkley and Flinders at the last redistribution. He states that:

*"The re-drawing of Dunkley...to contain all of the Frankston LGA...was an error...in that it set a boundary based on LGA's rather than communities of interest which run deeper than LGA boundaries. The affect this had on...Flinders was to separate the communities based around Western Port by LGA instead of recognising that...Tooradin, Blind Bight, Warneet & Pearcedale have similar communities of interest to Tyabb, Hastings & Crib Point. They are far closer to these communities than they are to the likes of Cranbourne, Clyde and Narre Warren South."*

As previously noted, by making these changes to Dunkley and Flinders now (restoring much of the pre-2018 boundaries), the redistribution committee will not have to repeat this process at the next redistribution for both electorates. It is better to restore a greater continuity and connection of strong communities of interest now, as opposed to having several years where Mornington and Western Port communities are excluded from Dunkley and Flinders, only to be later reinstated in each electorate once again.

**Conclusion:**

With due consideration for the boundaries and the original nature of the Dunkley electorate, and strong communities of interest, it is appropriate to restore much of the Dunkley and Flinders electoral boundaries as existed prior to the last redistribution. The relationship between Dunkley and Flinders has been one of great benefit to both electorates over many years and the change of boundaries to reinclude Mornington, and at least part of Baxter, in Dunkley (as well as recombining Western Port towns in Flinders) would provide a better bridge between our city, country and coastal towns.

## National Rail Program

Project Name: Frankston to Baxter Rail Upgrade

Date: TBC

Type: Rail

Australian Government Commitment: \$225,000,000

Status: Not started



### Project Results

Infrastructure Investment	1
National Rail Program	1

