



Objection 58

St Kilda Hebrew Congregation

2 pages



ST KILDA HEBREW CONGREGATION INC REG. NO: A1256

ABN: 26 428 090 013

📍 12 Charnwood Grove, St Kilda VIC 3182

☎ +61 (0)3 9537 1433

☎ +61 (0)3 9525 3759

🌐 www.stkildashule.org.au

✉ office@stkildashule.org

Office hours Mon to Thu 9:00am - 5:00pm, Fri 9:00am - 1:00pm

📘 facebook.com/stkildashule

📺 youtube.com/user/stkildashule12

16/04/2021

Submission in objection to the proposed redistribution Rabbi Yaakov Glasman and Anton Block

Dear AEC Redistribution Committee Members,

We write to submit an objection to the AEC's proposed redistribution as it affects the federal electorates of Higgins and Macnamara.

For many years we have both been deeply involved in the leadership of the Jewish community, locally and nationally. Our names are Anton Block and Rabbi Yaakov Glasman. At present, we respectively are the President and Rabbi of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. Other roles in which we have served include, respectively, President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, which is the officially elected roof body and voice of the Australian Jewish community, and President of the Rabbinical Association of Australasia, the representative body of rabbis.

Our Congregation is one of Melbourne's leading synagogues. Established in 1871, our Congregation is an essential part of Jewish life in Melbourne. We are home to over 1,400 members, and during the pandemic lockdown our streamed services were watched online each week by over 7,000 locals.

Our synagogue is located at its historical location of 12 Charnwood Grove in St Kilda. Our members are located nearly entirely in the areas of St Kilda, St Kilda East, Elsternwick, Balaclava, Elwood, Caulfield and Ripponlea. The spread of our members in these areas reflects the spread of the Jewish community.

Our congregation and our synagogue represents one significant example of a clear, contiguous community of interest within the old boundaries of Macnamara. We would respectfully submit that your proposed redistribution fails to take this community of interest into account insofar as it proposes to divide us between electorates.

The Jewish community is a significant community of interest. At over 10% of the electorate of Macnamara, it is one of the most significant communities of interest locally. By contrast to its local presence, the Jewish community throughout Australia constitutes only 0.4% of the national population. Our community's concentration in the electorate of Macnamara and its predecessor electorate of Melbourne Ports is and has been essential to our community having the capability to effectively advance its interests on all sides of federal parliament.

One of Melbourne's leading communities since 1871



**ST KILDA HEBREW
CONGREGATION**

ST KILDA HEBREW CONGREGATION INC REG. NO: A1236

ABN: 26 428 090 013

📍 12 Charnwood Grove, St Kilda VIC 3182

☎ +61 (0)3 9537 1433 📠 +61 (0)3 9525 3759

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The interests of our community are wide-ranging across the federal sphere, for example as they relate to the laws governing racial discrimination and multiculturalism; funding for our community's security and integration with national security and counterterrorism services; national refugee and asylum seeker policy; freedoms, including religious freedoms; support for charitable organisations devoted to alleviating poverty, disadvantage, working with people with a disability and in aged care; support for projects in the community including Jewish educational, religious and historical institutions; and integrating Holocaust education into the national curriculum.

Moreover, the Jewish community's interests are often exclusive to the community. If the community cannot prosecute its own interests, it has no confidence that anyone else will.

It is for these reasons that we are profoundly concerned by the proposed redistribution. It will carve our community into two. Dividing our community across Higgins and Macnamara will adversely impact our capacity to advocate for ourselves. Our synagogue, to the west of Hotham St, will be divided from roughly half of its congregants – half in Higgins, half in Macnamara. And our synagogue will be in another electorate from the many other Jewish organisations with which we work every day.

We urge you to reconsider your proposed redistribution. The Jewish community of St Kilda, Elwood, Ripponlea, Balaclava, Elsternwick and Caulfield is a clear and connected community of interest and they should remain united within the single electorate of Macnamara/Melbourne Ports.

We understand that you need to make a redistribution as the electorate has too many electors. We urge you to consider proposals that do not divide our community. We understand that the redistribution can be achieved by other means that do not divide our community, and that only affect the electorates of Higgins and Macnamara. We wish to voice our strong support for any such alternate measure.

Yours sincerely,



Anton Block
President
St Kilda Hebrew Congregation



Rabbi Yaakov Glasman
Rabbi
St Kilda Hebrew Congregation

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