

16 April 2021

Redistribution Commissioners for Victoria

Australian Electoral Commission

Objection to Proposed Redistribution: Deakin / Chisholm / Menzies Boundary

Dear Commissioners

My objection relates to the proposal made by the Commissioners in their draft redistribution proposal for Victoria to split the suburbs of Box Hill and Mitcham into two (Menzies and Chisholm) and Blackburn into three (Menzies, Chisholm and Deakin).

By splitting the suburbs in the way proposed, the Redistribution Committee have failed to recognise the community of interest that exists within those areas. Furthermore, some simple rearrangement of the boundaries would resolve the issue without compromising the community of interest and with comparatively minor movements of electors between the divisions.

It is proposed that Whitehorse Road form the boundary between Menzies and Chisholm in Box Hill. This largely divides the suburb of Box Hill and the immediate business centre into two. The Box Hill shopping centre and railway station are the common focus for both sides of the divide.

The proposed divide in Mitcham is similar to that for Box Hill. Again the shopping centre and station are the focal points of the suburb but have been bifurcated.

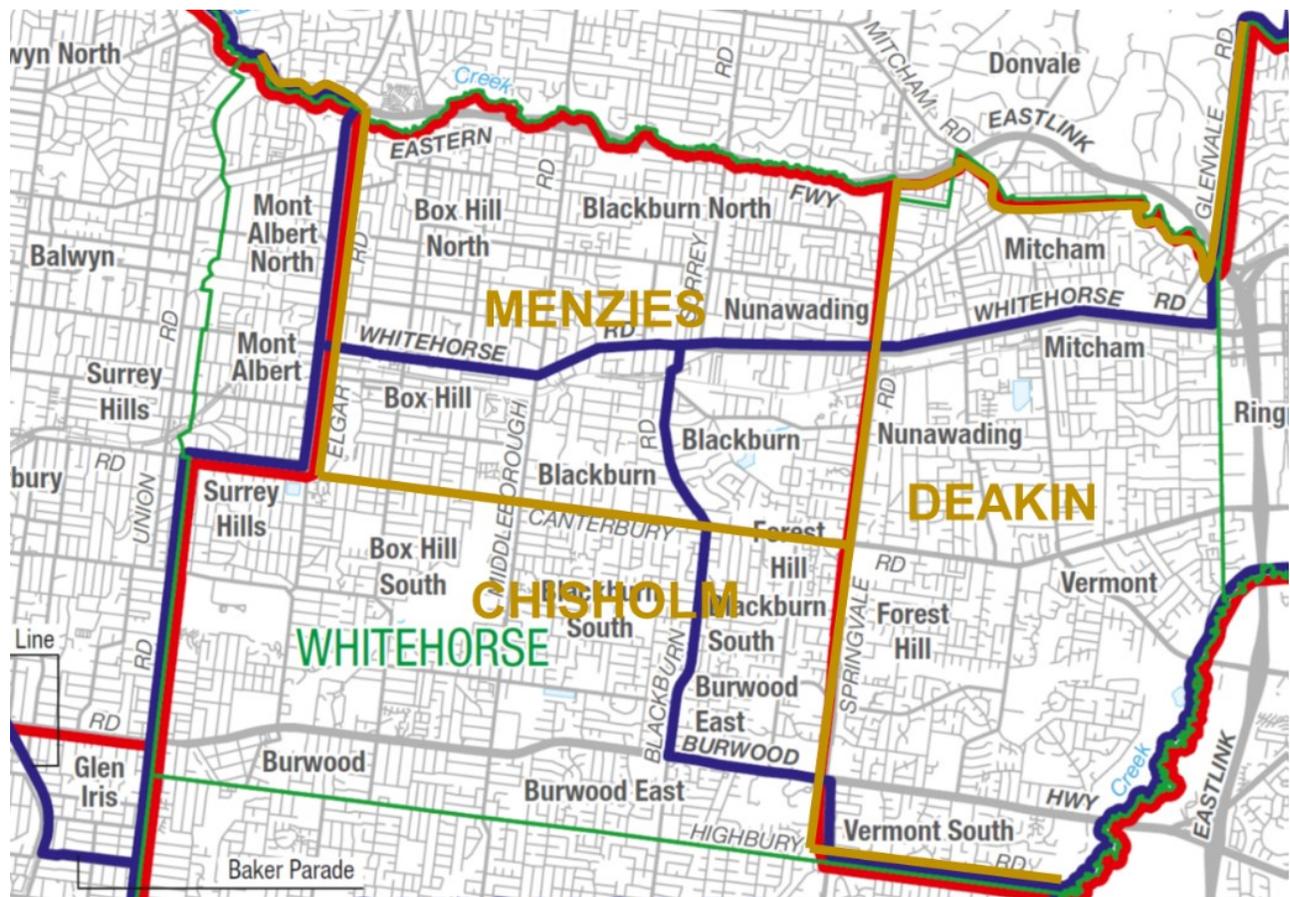
In Blackburn, it has been proposed that the suburb be divided into three. The area north of Blackburn Road to be in Menzies, the area west of Blackburn Road to be in Chisholm and the area east of Blackburn Road to be in Deakin. The Committee is proposing to divide between three federal divisions cohesive local civic, sporting, school and church communities that serve all of Blackburn and contribute to the strong community of interest. The proposed boundaries will also make the exercise of democracy more difficult as local politicians often campaign outside Blackburn Station. In future, this heavily trafficked and convenient location will effectively not be available as the potential audience will be split between three electorates. In Blackburn, north of Canterbury Road, Blackburn Road has two lanes only and has considerably less traffic than south of Canterbury Road. It has more of the character of a suburban main road than a major arterial. The character of one side of the road is indistinguishable from the other.

In Box Hill and Mitcham, though Whitehorse Road is a major arterial, it does run through the shopping centres of those suburbs.

The Redistribution Committee describes boundary determination themes as being “suburb boundaries, along with major roads, rivers and freeways, where community interests could be preserved and numerical requirements met”. In the cases objected to here, the Committee have misunderstood the nature of the roads chosen as the boundaries and ignored the community of local interests that exist.

The issues outlined above can be solved in a more rational and cohesive manner through an adjustment of the boundaries. This can be solved by having Menzies, south of the Eastern Freeway be bounded by Elgar Road to the west, Canterbury Road to the south and Springvale Road to the east. All areas to the east of Springvale Road would be included in Deakin, and Canterbury Road would become the boundary between Menzies and Chisholm. If this revision is to be accepted, all of the defined suburbs of Box Hill and Blackburn would be in Menzies, all of Mitcham in Deakin. The existing Springvale Road electoral boundary would remain.

The proposed change is shown on the map below with the revised boundaries shown in gold.



The changes outlined above would require a movement of electors. In the above proposal, Chisholm and Deakin would each 2,000 - 2,500 electors fewer than projected in the original proposal and Menzies approximately 4,500 more. In each case, the divisions would be within the allowable quotas. This does not include any additional changes of boundary such as moving Warrandyte North from Menzies.

For the reasons stated above, I urge the Redistribution Committee to review and reconsider the proposed boundary proposals for Menzies, Chisholm and Deakin.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Lamond