



The Federal Redistribution 2010
Victoria



Comment Number 7 on Public Suggestions

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5 pages

From: Charles Richardson [charlesr@ozemail.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 23 April 2010 4:38 PM
To: VIC Redistribution
Subject: Comments on submissions
Attachments: RE10COM.doc; CRTTable.xls

Dear Friends -

Please find attached my comments on the submissions received for the current redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in Victoria.

There is a Word file and an Excel table; please let me know if there are any problems in transmission or intelligibility.

All the best,
Charles

Charles Richardson, Philosopher

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**REDISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN VICTORIA:
COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED
BY
CHARLES RICHARDSON**

Most of the detailed submissions that the Committee has received, as expected, have come from political parties (Nos. 7, 9, 11 and 12). Since they have presumably been designed primarily for political advantage, there seems little point in engaging in an extensive critique of their shortcomings: they represent roads down which the Committee will have no reason to travel in the first place.

Instead, I propose to confine my comments to two general issues that are raised by the submissions, plus a brief supplementary comment on my own submission (No. 10).

Western Victoria

Most of the basic issues in the redistribution are obvious, and are not disputed among the major submissions: keep the Yarra and the mountains as boundaries through the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas respectively, and transfer electors from a northern division to a southern one in the area of the upper Yarra.

The controversial point arises at another long-standing boundary, namely the Little River, separating Corio and Lalor. This boundary divides greater Melbourne from greater Geelong. In contrast to the northern and eastern edges of Melbourne, where there are substantial bands of territory that could readily fit in either a metropolitan or non-metropolitan division, here there is quite a clear line between the two.

The township of Little River could be regarded as borderline (and could be moved without great violence to community of interest, as it is in Harkin and Hart's submission (No. 2), but also without much effect in numbers), but unless the whole of Geelong is to be regarded as part of the metropolitan area – an idea whose time has not yet come – then the areas south of Little River have to be regarded as non-metropolitan. It follows, in my view, that this boundary should be disturbed only as a last resort.

The consequences of this decision show up, interestingly enough, in northern Victoria. Because Wannon needs to gain significantly, it optimally wants to take one of the large towns just across its borders: either Colac to the east, or Horsham to the north. Taking Colac means shifting Corangamite and Corio northwards and therefore crossing the Little River. Taking Horsham means shifting Mallee eastwards, disrupting or abolishing Murray.

As explained in my submission, I consider that moving the Shire of Campaspe into Mallee, moving McEwen north and abolishing Murray constitutes the best strategy. The divisions all emerge very close to the projected average enrolment, and all with considerable freedom of movement. If Wannon and Mallee continue to undergo relative population

decline, it would be a simple matter, on my proposed boundaries, for them to take territory at the next redistribution from Ballarat and Bendigo respectively.

The opposite strategy – moving Colac into Wannon – is adopted in the ALP submission (No. 9), which shows that it is thereby possible to retain Murray in something like its existing shape. (Dr Mulcair's submission (No. 4) proceeds in similar fashion.) However, this strikes me as insufficient reason to breach the well-established Little River boundary; it also forces Mallee as far south as the Shire of Pyrenees, which fits much better, as I had suggested, in Ballarat (see the submission from the Youngs (No. 3)).

The Liberal Party submission (No. 12) proposes shifting the Lalor/Corio boundary in the other direction, creating room to move Horsham into Wannon while keeping Bacchus Marsh in Ballarat and Kyneton in Bendigo. It baulks, however, at the abolition of Murray, and the result is the grotesque shape into which its Indi is forced.

The submissions from both the National Party (No. 7) and the Greens (No. 11) avoid moving either Colac or Horsham, but only by laying up greater problems for the future. The Greens would shift the outer ring of divisions (Corangamite, Wannon, Mallee and Murray) very close to the suburbs of Ballarat and Bendigo, disrupting communities of interest and severely restricting the ability to adjust them in future redistributions. The Nationals would leave Mallee and Wannon (plus at least one of Corangamite and Corio) at very low projected enrolments, an undesirable and unsustainable distortion of fair representation.

South-eastern Victoria

The south-eastern edge of Melbourne offers no such neat or venerable boundary as the Little River, but after looking at the alternative solutions that have been proposed, I am more convinced than ever of the wisdom of my proposal.

The key to my suggestion is shifting Pakenham from a non-metropolitan division (McMillan) to a metropolitan one (La Trobe). This seems a clear gain for community of interest: Pakenham is a fast-growing commuter district, linked by suburban train to nearby Berwick and Beaconsfield, and quite different in character to communities such as Nar-Nar-Goon and Bunyip further east.

In addition to its intrinsic merits, moving Pakenham provides scope for McMillan to take the eastern parts of Flinders. The effects of this ripple northwards, allowing Flinders, Dunkley and Isaacs to all become more geographically coherent, aligning them very closely with the respective municipalities of Mornington Peninsula, Frankston and Kingston.

None of the other submissions make this move, and therefore they all leave Flinders as a division awkwardly straddling Western Port Bay. The ALP, the Liberal Party and Dr Mulcair all suggest taking it even further east to include Wonthaggi, a very different sort of community from urban districts like Mt Martha and Dromana.

My submission

Before concluding I wish to make two brief points on my own submission. One is typographical: the left-hand half of the summary table, giving enrolment figures for the existing divisions, has them slightly out of alignment (due to not allowing for the abolition of Murray). My apologies to anyone who was confused by this; a corrected version of the table is attached.

The second point concerns my proposed divisions of Calwell and McEwen. Both involve to some extent a mix of metropolitan and non-metropolitan territory – obviously so in the case of Calwell, less so in McEwen, which is mostly non-metropolitan but touches the metropolitan area at its southern end, around Mernda and Kalkallo. While I accept that this is less than ideal, I think it is a better solution than the alternatives.

However, it is worth pointing out that if this was seen as a major problem, it is very simple to fix: move the Shire of Macedon Ranges into McEwen, and move McEwen's share of the City of Whittlesea plus the southern SLA of the Shire of Mitchell into Calwell. The two areas balance almost exactly (there is a small net movement to McEwen on actual enrolments and to Calwell on projected enrolments).

It strikes me that this is not as good an option as what I proposed: the east-west transport and communication links are not as good as those running north-south, and the southern parts of Macedon Ranges share a strong community of interest with neighboring Sunbury. But if the long north-south stretch of my McEwen is to be avoided, that would be an easy way to do it.

REDISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN VICTORIA
SUBMISSION BY CHARLES RICHARDSON

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROPOSED DIVISIONS

	<u>Current Boundaries</u>				<u>Proposed Boundaries</u>			
	<u>2010 Electors</u>		<u>2014 Electors</u>		<u>2010 Electors</u>		<u>2014 Electors</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of avge</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of avge</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of avge</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of avge</u>
Aston	92,463	98.3%	98,260	97.1%	95,411	101.5%	101,634	100.4%
Ballarat	95,003	101.0%	100,786	99.6%	95,786	101.9%	101,293	100.1%
Batman	86,701	92.2%	93,702	92.6%	94,266	100.2%	100,583	99.4%
Bendigo	98,034	104.2%	104,722	103.5%	95,931	102.0%	102,399	101.2%
Bruce	87,909	93.5%	91,795	90.7%	95,376	101.4%	101,095	99.9%
Burke		<i>[new division]</i>			85,413	90.8%	100,703	99.5%
Calwell	99,284	105.6%	109,034	107.7%	90,324	96.0%	101,524	100.3%
Casey	90,677	96.4%	95,903	94.7%	96,884	103.0%	101,782	100.6%
Chisholm	85,187	90.6%	91,635	90.5%	95,947	102.0%	101,447	100.2%
Corangamite	98,348	104.6%	106,032	104.8%	92,454	98.3%	100,032	98.8%
Corio	90,111	95.8%	95,139	94.0%	95,250	101.3%	100,441	99.2%
Deakin	86,751	92.2%	90,731	89.6%	96,318	102.4%	101,177	100.0%
Dunkley	93,049	98.9%	97,784	96.6%	93,252	99.2%	100,177	99.0%
Flinders	97,816	104.0%	102,669	101.4%	96,516	102.6%	101,575	100.3%
Gellibrand	93,812	99.8%	102,248	101.0%	93,652	99.6%	102,068	100.8%
Gippsland	95,721	101.8%	102,038	100.8%	95,721	101.8%	102,038	100.8%
Goldstein	92,138	98.0%	97,749	96.6%	94,340	100.3%	99,981	98.8%
Gorton	110,342	117.3%	126,751	125.2%	95,198	101.2%	100,870	99.7%
Higgins	88,723	94.3%	95,284	94.1%	92,523	98.4%	100,480	99.3%
Holt	105,318	112.0%	121,943	120.5%	85,832	91.3%	101,233	100.0%
Hotham	88,722	94.3%	93,256	92.1%	95,866	101.9%	101,727	100.5%
Indi	91,168	96.9%	95,386	94.2%	96,942	103.1%	101,473	100.2%
Isaacs	100,173	106.5%	109,577	108.3%	94,093	100.1%	99,630	98.4%
Jagajaga	94,015	100.0%	96,909	95.7%	95,448	101.5%	100,398	99.2%
Kooyong	87,846	93.4%	92,087	91.0%	96,191	102.3%	100,903	99.7%
Lalor	94,961	101.0%	105,762	104.5%	85,574	91.0%	101,241	100.0%
La Trobe	89,016	94.7%	91,721	90.6%	88,445	94.1%	101,686	100.5%
McEwen	110,515	117.5%	129,351	127.8%	94,356	100.3%	102,001	100.8%
McMillan	89,917	95.6%	97,313	96.1%	96,423	102.5%	101,192	100.0%
Mallee	96,966	103.1%	112,694	111.3%	99,084	105.4%	102,333	101.1%
Maribyrnong	87,615	93.2%	88,363	87.3%	100,097	106.4%	100,437	99.2%
Melbourne	110,741	117.8%	122,829	121.3%	85,404	90.8%	101,163	99.9%
Melbourne Ports	94,525	100.5%	107,152	105.9%	89,497	95.2%	101,148	99.9%
Menzies	90,218	95.9%	92,932	91.8%	98,387	104.6%	101,352	100.1%
Murray	88,778	94.4%	92,402	91.3%		<i>[abolished]</i>		
Scullin	89,896	95.6%	94,598	93.5%	93,567	99.5%	101,352	100.1%
Wannon	91,107	96.9%	96,331	95.2%	96,569	102.7%	101,832	100.6%
Wills	95,910	102.0%	102,337	101.1%	97,139	103.3%	102,805	101.6%