



Objection 229

Jahangir Hosseini

2 pages

Dear Committee,

I am writing to you about the proposed redistribution related to the Federal division of Wills, as per the 31 May 2024 report.

I have been a local resident of Wills for most of my life in Australia. My family and I sought refuge in Australia, since arriving as political refugees in 1989 from Iran. We have lived in Wills for nearly all of this time and feel strongly connected to the area. I don't agree with the removal of Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick West and Glenroy from our electorate.

Since leaving all of my family and friends behind in Iran, it has always been important to me to form connections with my local community and neighbours. I feel connected to those within my suburb of Pascoe Vale, but also more broadly to those within nearby suburbs such as Oak Park and Glenroy.

There are many reasons for this opposition – I will outline some of these below:

- Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy are important suburbs in Wills – they are culturally and linguistically diverse, and I feel connected to many of the community members living in these areas. As a proud Muslim man, I feel strongly connected with others in the community who share my cultural values.
- I have been a refugee advocate for the last 30 years in Australia – I have formed long standing friendships with the local Nepalese and Bhutanese communities who are continuing to grow in Oak Park and Glenroy. I am also connected with the Kurdish community who are spread across Wills. Although we are from different multicultural groups, I have always felt a strong sense of connection to other cultural and religious groups in Wills and I do not want to see them split across suburbs. I have worked alongside these communities to organise forums and events that support the needs of refugees. I am part of these communities of interest who will be impacted as a result of this proposed re-distribution.
- The diversity within Glenroy, Oak Park and Pascoe Vale can be seen within the local stores, medical centres, restaurants and cafes. Community groups are successfully growing and giving back in the form of culturally and linguistically diverse products and services. The community has embraced the new and emerging groups that exist and continue to grow.
- I know how it feels to be separated from my friends, family and community, and I understand the importance of supporting communities to prosper and grow. These communities of interest should not be split across two LGAs and Federal electorates – it will severely impact their sense of connection to one

another and their local community. It will also prevent them from advocating as one community to their local and Federal representative. After all, there is strength in numbers, and this proposed redistribution looks to weaken this growing cohort of diverse communities.

- From a natural boundaries perspective, it is smart to keep the borders as they are. Part of the border between the electorate of Wills and the electoral Division of Melbourne, which runs along Park Street and up Lygon street acts as a suitable and recognisable border, separating the two divisions.

The changes being proposed to Wills will not support community harmony or the sense of connection many of us have developed within the suburbs of interest. I understand how it feels to be split from my closest friends, family and community – I have built this again in my home of Wills and do not wish to see this be diminished for myself or any of the community groups I have grown to embrace.

I ask that Wills remains as it is. Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

Jahangir Hosseini