



Objection 298

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2 pages

WARRANDYTE diary

for the community by the community

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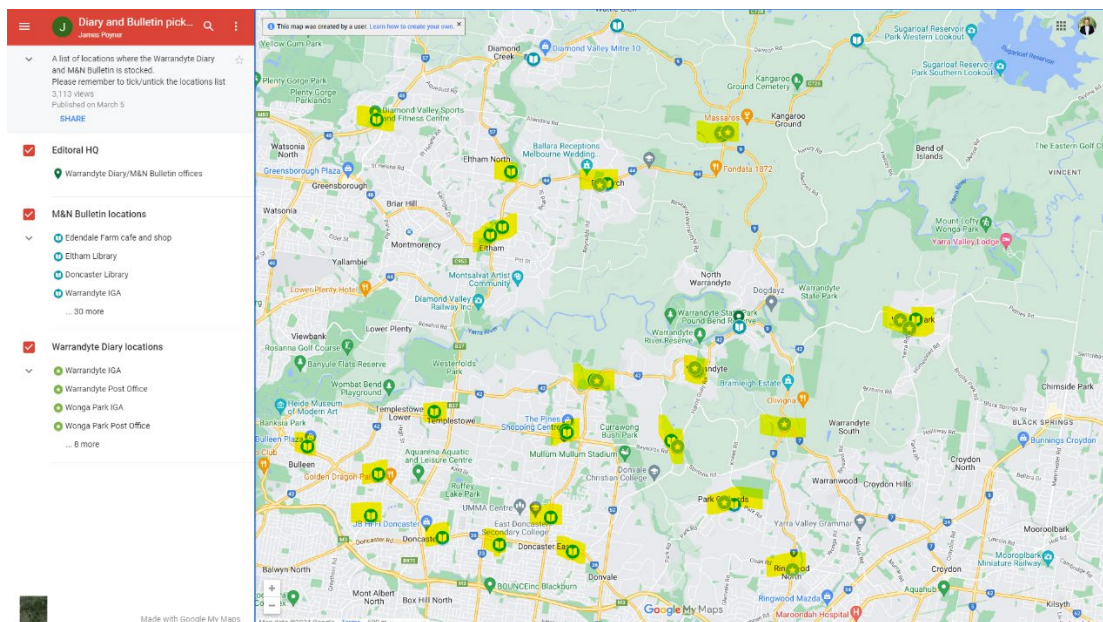
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To the Victorian Redistribution Committee of the AEC,

As the editor of the *Warrandyte Diary* and the *Manningham Nillumbik Bulletin*, understanding the local community is my business. I am a firm believer that strong local communities create strong residents and are a key component of living a fulfilling life.

I am writing to the AEC today because I believe their redistribution proposal draft boundary is not consistent with the creation and sustainability of our local community. The green wedge is synonymous with Manningham City Council, which is synonymous with Menzies. This community been broken up by the AEC proposal to place Donvale and Park Orchards in Deakin.

The *Warrandyte Diary* seeks to be a voice for the green, commuter villages of Warrandyte and surrounds. Our offices are located in Warrandyte, but we speak for the wider area. The map below shows our distribution locations for our publications. These include Wonga Park, Templestowe, Park Orchards, Warrandyte, Ringwood North, Research and Kangaroo Ground.



These areas have common interests. They share a commitment to maintaining low density, significant green space, and limiting development. They have unique wildlife and unique histories, with a rich indigenous heritage and each playing a part of in the Victorian gold rush. This context gives rise to unique needs and priorities, especially in regard to bushfire response, infrastructure, zoning, and services.

To give a brief example of each of these:

- Bushfire response: All of the above listed green-wedge villages are located within CFA district zones, as opposed to Fire Rescue Victoria districts, which serve suburban areas.
- Zoning: All the above villages have significant areas zoned Rural Conservation Zone (Schedule 3), Low Density Residential Zone, and Public Conservation and Resource Zone. Our activity zones are low profile, without multi-storey apartments or shopping centres. We shop in local shopping strips, not malls.
- Infrastructure: As commuter belt suburbs that nonetheless retain a rural character, our arterial and residential roads are rural roads, and new developments such as North-East link will have a significant impact on how residents of all the green-wedge suburbs commute to their jobs in Melbourne. Also, none of these towns are serviced by a rail line and are reliant on the bus network.
- Services: Zoning that restricts development means that green-wedge suburbs often need to use shopping centres, recreational facilities, medical facilities, and other services that are located outside the suburb. Given transportation networks are set up in an east-west manner, this tends to be in Doncaster, Bulleen or Heidelberg.

When green wedge suburbs can act as a block within an electorate, their interests can be adequately represented. This is currently the case, with the Manningham Green-Wedge located in Menzies and the Nillumbik Green-Wedge located in Jagajaga.

The current AEC draft maps break up this block by isolating Park Orchards and Donvale within Deakin, and Wonga Park is removed to Casey. These suburban electorates have little in common with their peri-urban communities in the green wedge.

Moreover, the township of Warrandyte itself has been split, dividing North Warrandyte from the rest of Warrandyte. The residents of this community see itself as one but are repeatedly split when boundaries are drawn along the river, which is not the edge of the community, but its heart.

As Yarra River Keeper Charlotte Sterrett said, *“If you look at maps, the river or the tributaries always form boundaries because they’re a natural boundary, but that means people don’t see the river because it’s at the edge of their governance area — so, we need to put the river back at the centre of the decision-making.”*

The only way the Manningham Green-Wedge can remain united is within Menzies. To do otherwise, by for example placing the entire Green-Wedge section within Deakin, would be impossible, since Templestowe could not feasibly be placed within Deakin. The AEC would be merely swapping one seat with another. It would also be incredibly disruptive to the 40%+ of Menzies electors would have come from different seats and would run contrary to the east-west direction of transport in the area.

In conclusion, Deakin is a fundamentally suburban seat, centred on Whitehorse and Maroondah municipalities, Whitehorse Rd, and the metro train line to Lilydale.

If Deakin needs to pick up more electors, I suggest the AEC instead consider somewhere along existing east-west lines of transport near Whitehorse Rd and the metro trains line. This would be consistent with previous boundaries.

Sincerely,

Sandra Miller

Editor, *Warrandyte Diary, Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin.*