



Comment on suggestions 46

Bill Shorten MP

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MARIBYRNONG



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Redistribution Committee for Victoria
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To the Victorian Redistribution Committee

The following comment responds to recommendations made in the following submissions:

- **Suggestion 7 (S7)** authored by Michael Hedger. This submission notes that in the upcoming Victorian redistribution of electoral boundaries the division of Maribyrnong should be abolished for the reason that: ***"[t]his would allow all of those fast growing western city electorates to move further east and also allow the outer and regional electorates to remain largely as they are."***
- **Suggestion 20 (S20)** authored by Cheston Mak. This submission notes that in the upcoming Victorian redistribution of electoral boundaries the division of Maribyrnong could be either renamed or abolished due to it not being a 1901 division and that it: ***"no longer covers the suburb of Maribyrnong nor the Maribyrnong LGA."***
- Furthermore, I would also like to address a recommendation made in the Liberal Party of Australia's (Victorian Division) submission that the: ***"three Divisions of Gorton, Fraser, and Maribyrnong be merged into two Divisions, resulting in the abolition of Maribyrnong."***

I note that the Liberal Party missed the 6pm deadline on 24 November for the lodgement of submissions, resulting in theirs not being available for viewing along with other submissions on the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) website. It has since been made available on the Liberal Party's [website](#). In relation to this failure to meet basic required deadlines adhered to by all other submitters, there has since been [commentary in the media](#) that AEC officials are understood to have told the Liberal Party that their submission would be published as a comment on suggestions, and would be treated the same as other submissions.

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The Maribyrnong Identity

As has been noted in other submissions, including that by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party ([S57](#)), the division of Maribyrnong has a strong and unique identity. This is especially so in areas such as Essendon, Aberfeldie, Niddrie, Airport West, Strathmore, Moonee Ponds, East Keilor and Avondale Heights. Many residents of Maribyrnong, particularly in the Moonee Valley LGA, have spent their entire lives living in the seat.

Maribyrnong is home to many public resources, including schools and community clubs that families and residents enjoy. The geography of the Maribyrnong River provides a connection to both sides of the seat. While there is a popular misconception that the River forms a natural boundary, in practicality it is actually seen by the local community as a central point of activity for both sides of the riverbank. This is highlighted by the multiple walking bridges, running clubs, rowing clubs and social activity groups that connect both banks – as do many of the sporting clubs that exist along the river.

In order for the residents of Maribyrnong to commute in any direction other than to their west, they would need to utilise major traffic routes within the Maribyrnong electorate, such as Military Rd, Milleara Rd, Keilor Rd, Buckley St or Mount Alexander Rd. Furthermore, while many residents work in either the CBD or at the airport, travelling through the electorate to get to their place of employment, Moonee Ponds provides a commercial and transport hub within the division of Maribyrnong. This is buttressed by other major local hubs for employment and services including Essendon Fields, Airport West Shopping Centre, Highpoint and Tullamarine.

Establishment of the seat of Maribyrnong

The AEC has made a point of not abolishing seats that were established at Federation due to the historical significance they hold for being contested in Australia's first federal election. The only Federation seats situated in metropolitan Melbourne are Kooyong, Flinders and Melbourne. The division of Maribyrnong was created shortly after in 1906, and remains one of the oldest divisions in Victoria and Australia, giving it a comparable historical significance.

Indigenous significance

The division of Maribyrnong has a long and enduring Indigenous history taking its name from "**Mirring-gnay-bir-nong**" in the Woiwurrung language, which translates to "**I can hear a ringtail possum**". Maribyrnong is [one of only 24](#) federal electoral divisions named for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or word. The tribes and clans of the Kulin Nation, including the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung Bunurong Peoples have always gathered in the area.

The point at which the Maribyrnong and Yarra Rivers meet is of special significance as it symbolises the point at which groups would meet as they travelled along the Maribyrnong River. The many unidentified sacred sites identified along this corridor are recorded in the Maribyrnong Aboriginal Heritage Study of December 1999.

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Maribyrnong's indigenous history is well documented in both the [Maribyrnong City Council Reconciliation Action Plan](#) and the [Moonee Ponds City Council's Bagarru Bagarru Djerring Reconciliation Plan](#).

Moonee Ponds' Reconciliation Action Plan includes both a commitment to:

- ***“Collaborate with Traditional Owners to develop a vision and shape a Master Plan for the Maribyrnong River Precinct, recognising connection to Waterways, and implementing actions from the Waterways of the West Action Plan and Healthy Waterways Strategy”, and***
- ***“Collaborate with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders and the Narrap team to deliver the Caring for Country Together Program”.***

Moonee Valley LGA

[The AEC states](#) that when developing a proposal the Redistribution Committee gives due consideration to ***“community interests within the proposed electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests”*** and the ***“existing boundaries of divisions in the state or territory.”*** The abolition of the division of Maribyrnong would result in the LGA of Moonee Valley, and the more than [120,000 people and 30,000 families](#) that reside within it, being split amongst multiple different electorates, as opposed to the current configuration which sees it largely fit within the division of Maribyrnong.

An additional consideration could also be made with regard to the different programs that are administered by State and Federal Governments. When a federal electorate is fragmented into many LGA's this can result in confusion for residents as to eligibility for state or federal payments, such as disaster payments.

The suburb of Maribyrnong

As noted in [other submissions](#) Maribyrnong is projected to be marginally under quota. One way to remedy this would be to return the suburb of Maribyrnong to the division of Maribyrnong. By doing this it would also reinforce the strong community connection with the surrounding suburbs and enhance the proud history of the name by allowing the Maribyrnong River to traverse the length of the electorate. The suburb of Maribyrnong has, with the exception of the last 18-months, been in the Maribyrnong electorate since 1906.

Practically, the shopping centre at Highpoint in Maribyrnong is heavily used by the residents of surrounding suburbs in the current electorate of Maribyrnong. There has previously been commentary with regard to the confusion over the division's name also being utilised as the name of a suburb, LGA and river. This argument becomes moot when we accept that abolishing the division of Maribyrnong would not change the fact that there is already multiple duplication of the use of the name.

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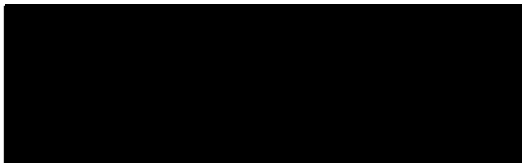


Conversely, and as addressed by the Australian Labor Party's submission, moving the suburb of Kensington back into the division of Melbourne would reunify the Melbourne City Council. Economically and culturally, the residents of Kensington share much more in common with the suburbs that sit within the City of Melbourne and the Division of Melbourne, making this course of action a sensible one.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above I strongly submit that the Division of Maribyrnong **should not** be abolished at the upcoming redistribution of Victorian electoral boundaries.

Yours sincerely,



Bill Shorten
Federal Member for Maribyrnong