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Committee Members,

I write with comments on the various public submissions made on the redistricting of Victorian Divisions in 2023.

Many electorates are safely within tolerable deviation, and to save confusion should not be redistributed at this time. Redistributing electorates already within tolerance creates knock-on effects felt hundreds of kilometres away.

The main pivot point for the deliberations of the committee seems to be where to cross the Yarra river. The Yarra river has served as Melbourne's southern boundary since the division's establishment in 1900. This is since the river impedes travel between Melbourne's CBD and the areas of South Wharf and Southbank. The river is a strong natural barrier with sparse crossing points, something which is particularly significant in the inner city which is generally very well connected with walkability and transportation links.

In addition to acting as a strong physical boundary, the Yarra river divides the low income community in Melbourne's CBD from the high income community of Southbank. This is due to the higher proportion of part-time workers that reside in Melbourne's CBD. In regards to income and proportion of part-time workers, Melbourne shares more in common with Flemington than Southbank. These economic communities of interest should be united, Melbourne with Flemington, North Melbourne and West Melbourne and Southbank with Port Melbourne and Albert Park.

Having Melbourne cross the Yarra necessitates changes being made to the boundaries of Macnamara. Macnamara is currently within quota and efforts should be made to retain its current boundaries to avoid confusion for electors created by changes to its boundaries. For all of these reasons, the Yarra river should be retained as the boundary between Melbourne and Macnamara.

The suburb of Gowanbrae has a much stronger Commonality of Interest with Tullamarine (a couple of hundred metres drive) and Airport West (500m drive) than any part of Wills (nearest point of entry: 4km drive). The Moonee Ponds Creek severs Gowanbrae from suburbs to its east.

In the case of Aston, it is required to expand across the boundaries of the City of Knox. This should be done where freeways, main roads, train lines or water courses can be used as boundaries to reduce confusion for electors. Aston expanding to encompass Upwey and Tecoma creates a scenario where local roads have to be used as boundaries for the division. Local roads as boundaries cause confusion for electors as it can be difficult to immediately know which side of the boundary one is on. The current Aston boundary aligns with local roads but it coincides with the local council boundary between the City of Knox and Yarra Ranges Shire. Electors are familiar

with which council area they belong to and, as such, the existing boundary between Aston and Casey should be preserved.

The majority of electors moved by shifting the boundary between Casey and Deakin to Colchester Road belong to the community of Kilsyth South and have only one route to the rest of Casey via Colchester Road itself. Casey's single transport connection to Kilsyth South makes it a poor inclusion in the division. Instead, the current boundary between Casey and Deakin which follows the local council boundary should be retained. Local council boundaries act as simple boundaries between divisions for electors.

The current boundaries of Fraser should be retained, as it is within quota. Fraser's boundary with Maribyrnong, the Maribyrnong river, impedes travel between the two electorates and acts as a strong natural barrier. The Maribyrnong river has only four crossing points that are accessible by car between Fraser and Maribyrnong. Fraser currently falls within the projected enrolment quota and changes to its boundaries would create confusion for electors. Changes made to Fraser would have flow on effects to the nearby divisions Gellibrand, Lalor and Gorton, all of which also currently fall within the projected enrolment quota.

In changing Cooper, historically there is precedent for expanding southward, as Cooper and its predecessor have many times extended almost as far south as the Central Business District. Clifton Hill shares more transport links with the rest of Cooper than Bundoora, and Clifton Hill matches both Kingsbury and Northcote in its high proportion of renters.

There is a proposal to substantially redraw the boundaries of Higgins, Macnamara and Goldstein to create a Community Of Interest of the significant Jewish population centred around the Caulfields. Given that Macnamara is within quota (and as a matter of principle ought not be changed, given that), and both Higgins and Goldstein are close to it, such a radical redrawing of these boundaries merely to unite a single group as a political unit would seem to have questionable motivations, such as snuffing out that group's voice in multiple other electorates. These are dangerous times, and this is a dangerous path that could draw unwanted attention to what should be a straightforward redistribution. Dandenong and Punt Roads create a clear and simple boundary and should be retained. Equally, within the context of retaining Macnamara's boundaries it has been suggested that Goldstein should encroach into Elwood. There are few transport links between Elwood and Goldstein, sharing a single intersection; as such residents of the area look northward for services such as supermarkets, recreation and schooling. Expansion of Goldstein should happen elsewhere, given such encroachment would necessitate otherwise unnecessary expansion of Macnamara.

-- Josh Parris