

Melton City Council Public submission for electoral boundaries redistribution

On behalf of Melton City Council, I write to provide a submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission as part of the 2021-2022 Victorian State Boundaries Redivision.

Council has reviewed the proposed amendments for the electoral boundaries within the Melton Local Government Area (LGA) and agrees that they align with the urbanisation of the City and the needs of representation by our residents.

Melton City Council would like to make some additional recommendations for amendments for your consideration that better align strategically to the urban growth corridor within the municipality. The City of Melton's population is projected to grow from 185,971 in 2021 to 264,651 by 2031 and then to 448,053 by 2051. Our population is increasing rapidly with diversity and participation requiring considerable community and transport infrastructure delivery over the coming years. It is through our advocacy with local members that we achieve this as a Council to create a liveable community. As such, consideration to the following recommendations, that centre on the removal of the fast-growing Melton residential areas from the Macedon District (Lower-House) and Western Victoria (Upper-house) electorates with significant rural populations, are appreciated.

1. Melton - Lower House District

The area of Toolern Vale (as highlighted below in the image) within the Melton metropolitan municipality currently resides within the Macedon rural district boundary. However, the Toolern Vale area is the only City of Melton geographical district currently under the Macedon boundary. With the removal of Bacchus Marsh from the Melton District, incorporating Toolern Vale into the Melton District is a better alignment with the electorate given that Melton is predominantly a metropolitan electorate and Macedon rural.

Importantly, the MacPherson Park sporting precinct is currently within the Macedon District boundary in Toolern Vale. This is a significant sporting precinct with strong alignment and connection to the Melton community, used primarily by local sporting groups. MacPherson Park is situated within the planning area in the western section of the municipality known as 'Melton Township' (the eastern growth corridor is the 'Melton East' planning area). The residential area north of the Western Highway in the Melton Township planning area, is the area considered as the main local catchment for MacPherson Park. This sub-precinct of the Melton Township planning area comprises of the following suburb areas: Melton, Melton West, Kurunjang, Harkness and Toolern Vale – all areas that have stronger alignment to the Melton District electorate than the Macedon District.

Between 2011 and 2016, the MacPherson Park catchment area population increased by 4,569 people (from 31,889 people to 36,468 people), or by 14%. Of note is the fact that a majority of this growth occurred in Harkness, the suburb in which MacPherson Park is located.

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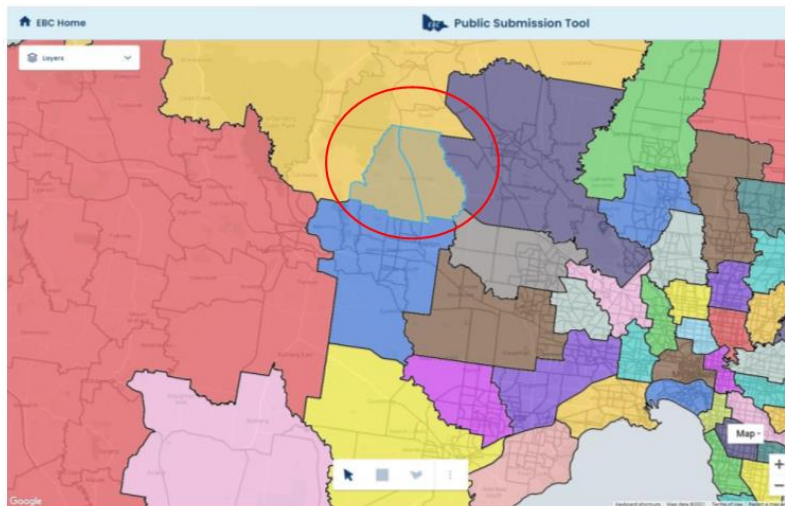
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The catchment population is projected to increase to more than 52,000 people by 2036, or an increase of 15,896 people. There is a strong diversity in the catchment community that participate in the many sporting activities in MacPherson Park, predominantly residents in the Melton District. There is a natural alignment of the residential location of voters with the Melton District that use sporting precinct. For these strategic alignment reasons, Melton Council recommends that all areas currently included in the Macedon District be included in the Melton District electorate as indicated in the map below.

This strategic realignment (includes 647 voters) will create a Macedon deviation -4.54% and Melton deviation -7.32%, within the acceptable 10% deviation.



2. Western Metropolitan Electoral Boundary – Upperhouse Region

The existing Western Metropolitan electoral boundary ends at Mount Cottrell Road in Rockbank in a significant urban growth corridor of the municipality. However, parts of the municipality including the Melton Township and the Cobblebank Metropolitan Activity Centre fall within the Western Region electorate. The Western Region is a significant rural electorate covering an area of 79,438 square kilometres of largely rural districts. The electorate stretches west from Melton to the South Australian border and north to regional areas including Donald, Horsham and Warracknabeal.

The Melton township and the areas of Cobblebank, Weir Views, Brookfield and Eynesbury represent a minor geographical component and the only metropolitan part of this vast rural electorate. The Melton township and the areas of Cobblebank, Weir Views, Brookfield and Eynesbury are part of a large urban growth corridor with significant connections to metropolitan Melbourne and would be better aligned within the Western Metropolitan electorate. The City of Melton is projected to grow from 185,971 in 2021 to

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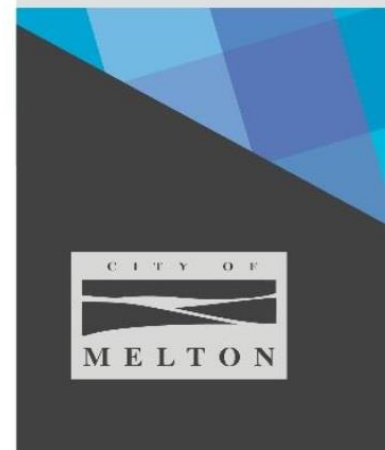
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264,651 by 2031 and include a significant Metropolitan Activity Centre in Cobblebank. Given Melton's urbanisation, it is considered appropriate to realign this area away from the Western Region that is an electorate that is for all intent and purposes rural in nature. Council is therefore proposing that the boundary for the Western Metropolitan Region be extended to the boundary of the City of Melton Local Government Area being the Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve and Toolern Vale.

Conclusion

Melton City Council is appreciative of the time taken by the EBC for drafting a redistribution of the electoral boundaries and for the opportunity to provide a submission for the redistribution. Commercial and residential development in the City of Melton will be significant and rapid, and the inclusion in rural electorates is no longer relevant. We need consolidated representation for these fast-growing urban communities into metropolitan electorates that better reflect and represent the needs of the urban communities.

Kelvin Tori
Chief Executive Officer

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