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Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Cooper
Multiple Signatories: No

Submission:

Dear Commissioner,

This submission expresses my personal views, as a lifelong resident of Ashgrove, about the proposed changes to the electoral boundaries affecting the Cooper district. I want to specifically raise the suggestion to address the current underpopulation of Cooper, as indicated in recent ECQ documents, and returning former Ashgrove electorate areas back to Cooper.

My suggested change would be to expand Cooper to cover the area east of Gallipoli Barracks, extending northward to include suburbs such as Dorrington, Alderley Heights, and southern Enoggera, which are currently part of Ferny Grove electorate.

Having lived here for many years, I remember well that from at least 1991 to 2017, the former Ashgrove electorate which largely became Cooper, included Alderley, Dorrington, and Enoggera. These suburbs share longstanding community ties and were represented by the same Member of Parliament for nearly 30 years. Bringing these areas back into Cooper would restore a sense of historical continuity and strengthen our community representation.

There are also practical benefits to this proposal, particularly concerning public services and infrastructure. For instance, Oakleigh State School's catchment currently straddles both the Cooper and Ferny Grove electorates. Bringing the whole catchment into Cooper would make administrative responsibilities simpler and help us better address local issues, such as recent traffic concerns around schools. Previously, having the school community divided between two electorates has complicated efforts to solve these problems. Additionally, for community safety, including all of Dorrington within Cooper aligns with our existing police divisional boundaries, covering Ashgrove and The Gap. This would give residents like me one clear, understood contact for community concerns.

Many people from Enoggera, Dorrington, and Alderley regularly commute to work in areas already part of Cooper, like Paddington, Ashgrove, and Milton. Our existing transport infrastructure naturally supports this boundary adjustment. Metropolitan Road 5, a key north-south route running through Cooper, directly links these suburbs. Including Waterworks-Musgrave Roads and significant portions of Metropolitan Road 5 underlines the strong community and economic connections already in place.

From a geographical viewpoint, extending Cooper northward into Dorrington,

Alderley, and Enoggera makes the boundaries more balanced and sensible. Expanding into the McConnel electorate, for instance, would make Cooper too elongated, creating difficulties in effectively representing different communities, like The Gap and inner-city areas. Hale Street already provides a clear natural boundary that helps distinguish these communities.

In contrast, incorporating areas from Ferny Grove into Cooper clearly aligns with practical considerations and established electoral principles. Ferny Grove, being farther from the city centre, can more flexibly accommodate changes from neighbouring electorates.

Overall, I believe that my proposal for Cooper's boundary unifies our communities' representation, reconnecting historically linked suburbs with strong economic and social ties. I believe the proposal also aligns well with legal guidelines on electoral quotas, community interests, transport infrastructure, and natural geographic boundaries as taken into consideration by your agency. I genuinely believe this is a thoughtful, balanced solution should any changes be required and that they would benefit the residents of Cooper as well as those in Dorrington, Alderley, and Enoggera.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Yours warmly,
Paula