

27 May 2010

Mr Robin Scott MP
Chair
Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament House
Melbourne Vic 3000.

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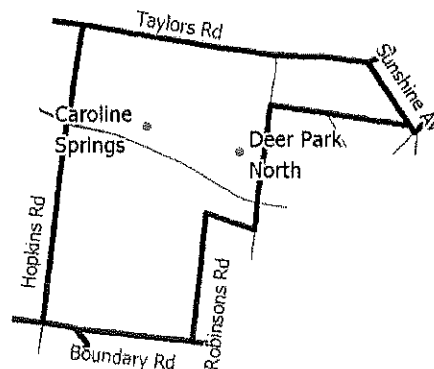
Dear Mr Scott

This submission details the concerns I wish to raise in respect to the **inquiry into the functions and administration of voting centres (including joint voting centres) giving consideration to issues of location, accessibility, participation and transparency** as it relates to the State District of Kororoit.

Background - District of Kororoit

Listed below is geographic and demographic data for Kororoit which is provided in support of the issues raised in this submission.

Kororoit Geographic Details
(Data collected from the 2006 Census)



Map of Kororoit District showing the suburbs of Caroline Springs and Deer Park North. The district boundaries include Taylors Road in the north, Sunshine Avenue and Robinsons Road for parts of the east, Boundary Road in the south, and Hopkins Road in the west.



Location: Kororoit District is a metropolitan electorate located approximately 13 kilometres west of Melbourne.

Area: 62 square kilometres.

Region: Western Metropolitan Region

Suburbs: Albanvale, Caroline Springs and Kings Park. Parts of the suburbs of Deer Park, Rockbank, St Albans and Truganina.

Features: Kororoit District includes residential and industrial areas, with rapid development around Caroline Springs. The southern part of the electorate is sparsely populated.

Member: Marlene Kairouz MP

(Above details inserts from VEC website <http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/KororoitDistrictprofile.html>)

With a population of 60,400 Kororoit is not only one of Victoria's fastest growing regions in the west (13 kilometres west of Melbourne), but also one of the most culturally diverse.

There is only a small population of Indigenous persons - 254 (0.4%)

The Medium age group in the area is 33 years, with over 44.9% residents being in the 25/54 year age bracket. Other age percentages are as follows.

0-4 years	7.4%
5-14 years	13.9%
25-54 years	44.8%
55-64 years	10.4%
65 years +	9.2%

Whilst 82.4% of residents have Australian Citizenship almost half were born overseas (44.3%). Of this 44%, 7.7% were born in Vietnam, 4% Malta, 3.2% Philippines, 2.3% former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and 1.8% in Croatia.

In relation to the above, it is recorded that only 39.8% of residents speak only English at home. The most common other languages other than English spoken at home were: Vietnamese 11.1%, Maltese 4.6%, Macedonian 3.5%, Spanish 2.8% and Greek 2.7%.

The Catholic faith remains the most prominent religion in the region with 38.4%, followed by Buddhism and Eastern Orthodox (both 10% each). There is 5.6% following of Islam and 9.8% don't follow any religion at all.

51.4% of residents aged over 15 are married.

26,100 people aged over 15 years are in the labour force. Of this amount, 60.6% work full-time and 23.1% part-time. The unemployment rate was 9.3% which at the time of census was 4.1% higher than the national average.

Kororoit does not have a dominating industry for its workers. However the most common industries for workers in the region include cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services and Motor Vehicle and Part manufacturing both at 3.8% each; followed closely by Road Freight Transport 3.7%, supermarket and grocery stores 2.7% and hospitals 2.6%

The medium individual weekly income was \$366, \$100 less than the national average. The combined family income was \$1008, \$163 less than the national average.

There are over 16,296 families in Kororoit. 50.5% of these are couples with children, 27.2% are couples without children. 20.4% are one parent families which is 4.6% higher than the national average.

84.7% of residents live in a separate house, which is 10% above the national average. 10.2% live in a semi-detached or townhouse and a mere 4.9% living in a unit (10% lower than the average).

71.5% of residents either own or are paying off their residence, with only 19.2 renting. Of this 19.2% of rental properties, 12.7% were state housing which was 2.2% lower than the national average.

With a population of 60,400 Kororoit is not only one of Victoria's fastest growing regions in the west (13 kilometres west of Melbourne), but also one of the most culturally diverse.

44.3% of all residents were born outside of Australia with a large Vietnamese, Maltese, Filipino, Macedonian and Croatian population.

Due to the areas housing affordability, a large proportion of residence either own or are paying off their property (71.5%). This percentage is not to be mistaken as to assume a high social economic community. In fact the medium income for the area is \$366 per week, \$100 less than the national average and the unemployment rate (9.3%) is 4.1% higher than the national average (based on 2006 census)

With the above background in mind the concerns I would like to bring to your Committee's attention are as follows:

Proposed location of booths

I have noted that the VEC submission to the enquiry includes their draft proposition in relation to the allocation of booths for Kororoit District is as follows:

- no booths allocated for Burnside
- no booths allocated for Burnside Heights
- Of the 13 booths, 7 are proposed to be shared with the abutting District.
- The abutting District of Derrimut has 19 booths
- 5 booths are not accessible to people of all abilities.
- The issue of accessibility for the pre-poll venue is also an important consideration for people of all abilities to actively participate. This needs consideration by the VEC.

With respect to the proposition of sharing booths I am opposed to this. People have a history of going to a particular booth at a particular entrance when voting. Coupled with a high proportion of peoples from CALD communities, shared booths would only confuse them.

Accessibility of and within booths

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 forbids direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of disability including access to public facilities.

As a basic human rights issue - all polling booths should be accessible to all people of all abilities.

With building works that are being undertaken in our schools at present, it is critical that there is safe access for all and that there is adequate signage.

With a diverse multi cultural community, signage and information must be concise and accurate.

All entry to polling places should be through the one gate only.

Some polling places have huge waiting queues whilst other polling places, which are close by, have no waiting queue's at all. Signage that would advise voters of other polling places within the same Electorate may help in reducing this as a problem if they are given this option. This would also enhance voter participation.

I sincerely ask that the Committee takes on board these issues of concern in the interest of access to all and community safety.

Marlene Kairouz MP
Member for Kororoit

Note: Hard copy submission in the mail (including maps of VEC draft proposed polling booths).