

Submission on electorate boundary review 2019-2020

1. My name is Dominic Tay. By way of background and disclosure, I was the deputy electoral officer for Wellington City at the 2019 local elections and have worked as an issuing officer for each general election since 2011.
2. This submission is made in a personal capacity. I do not need to speak to my submission.
3. I grew up and studied in Dunedin and now live in Wellington. These areas are the focus of my objections to the proposed boundaries.

General comments and statements of support

4. Before I present my objections, I would like to make some general comments.
5. Although it is not an explicit criterion the Commission may use when it makes decisions, I believe that 'voter experience' should be a key determining factor in all election management decisions. That is, we should consider whether the proposed change makes it easier for the voters to participate in the election.
6. To a degree, the idea of 'voter experience' is captured within the existing boundaries criterion (simplicity of understanding) and the communities of interest criterion.
7. I notice that the Commission has made efforts to align, where possible, more of the proposed electorate boundaries with local authority boundaries (in particular, the Selwyn District/Christchurch City boundary and the Dunedin City/Waitaki District boundary).
8. Implementing consistent boundaries between electorates and local authorities can improve the voter experience at both local and general elections and I support these changes. I encourage the Commission to continue aligning electorate and local authority boundaries in future, and make suggestions to this effect below.

Objection to Ōhāriu/Mana boundary

9. The north Wellington suburbs of Linden, Lindenvale and Greenacres are closely connected with the suburb of Tawa, and all part of the Tawa Community Board area. This is a distinct community within Wellington City and has its own community board (one of only two in the Wellington City Council area). However, Linden, Lindenvale and

Greenacres are in the Mana electorate while Tawa and the remainder of northern Wellington are in Ōhāriu.

10. Although this boundary has existed continuously since at least 2007, uniting the Tawa Community into a single electorate would align with the ‘communities of interest’ principle.
11. Ōhāriu as proposed is slightly below quota and Mana as proposed is slightly above quota. I recommend aligning the boundary between Ōhāriu and Mana with the boundary between the Wellington City Council and Porirua City Council areas – transferring Linden, Lindenvale and Greenacres into Ōhāriu.

Objection to Dunedin North name and boundary

12. I support the realignment of the northern boundary of Dunedin North to the Dunedin City Council area but object to the realignment of the southern boundary as proposed.
13. I disagree that the Otago Peninsula shares a stronger community of interest with northern Dunedin than with southern Dunedin. Communities particularly at the southern end of the peninsula, such as Waverley and Shiel Hill, are more closely connected with communities such as Andersons Bay, Musselburgh, and Tainui. However, I agree that Dunedin North needs to gain population and that transferring the Otago Peninsula is the easiest way to add to the existing electorate.
14. While Dunedin North as proposed is slightly above quota, I notice that its population is expected to decline slightly in 2023, which may make further growth to this electorate in 2020 more palatable.
15. I recommend realigning the boundary between Dunedin North and Dunedin South such that Dunedin North takes in more of the south Dunedin area, including the suburbs of Musselburgh, Andersons Bay and Tainui. This would maintain these communities of interest in the one electorate.
16. With or without my proposed changes, I believe the name of the electorate is no longer suitable. I propose this be changed to ‘Dunedin’ (preferred), ‘Dunedin Central’ or ‘Ōtepoti’.

Objection to Dunedin South name and boundary

17. See also my comments on Dunedin North regarding communities of interest in the south Dunedin area, suggesting the transfer of Musselburgh, Andersons Bay and Tainui into Dunedin North and associated renaming.

18. Given that Dunedin South as proposed is slightly below quota and is projected to lose population in 2023, I recommend either:
 - adding central Otago communities around Clyde, Alexandra and Roxburgh from Clutha-Southland; or
 - adding the balance of the Clutha District from Clutha-Southland.
19. Either of these changes would also offset my proposed changes in Dunedin North and Clutha-Southland.
20. With or without my proposed changes, the addition of the Balclutha area and loss of the Otago Peninsula area means that the name of this electorate is no longer appropriate. I propose the name of Dunedin South be changed to ‘Taieri’, ‘Clutha-Taieri’ (preferred) or ‘South Otago’.

Objection to Clutha-Southland name and boundary

21. The Queenstown Lakes District Council area is divided across two large electorates. Given that this area is predicted to be a high-growth area, it would be sensible to consider uniting this community of interest into a single electorate.
22. I recommend the transfer of the communities around Wānaka, Arrowtown and Lake Hāwea into Clutha-Southland so the electorate aligns with the Queenstown Lakes District Council boundary.
23. If a consequential population loss is required, I recommend either:
 - returning the communities around Clyde, Alexandra and Roxburgh from Clutha-Southland to Waitaki;
 - transferring these same communities from Clutha-Southland to Dunedin South; or
 - transferring the balance of the Clutha District from Clutha-Southland to Dunedin South (preferred).
24. With or without my proposed changes, the loss of Balclutha to Dunedin South means that the name for this electorate is no longer suitable. Options for names could include ‘Milford’, ‘Wakatipu’ (preferred) or ‘Southern Lakes’.

Objection to Flat Bush name

25. The Commission states that the impact on existing electorates of the creation of the new Flat Bush electorate is best mitigated by moving boundaries in a north-westerly direction. I agree.
26. I object to the proposed name of the new electorate, and suggest 'Takanini' (preferred) or 'Manurewa East' as alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dominic Tay

14 December 2019

Encl. objection forms for Ōhāriu, Dunedin North, Dunedin South, Clutha-Southland and Flat Bush