

New Zealand Labour Party Submission to the Representation Commission

December 2019

Overview

The Labour Party thanks the members of the Representation Commission for their work in drafting the next set of electorate boundaries for New Zealand.

We are pleased to see the Commission's stated approach is to seek minimal change, a stance which we believe is appropriate and important in the current circumstance.

We note that the Commission has chosen to highlight that the splitting of small communities has been avoided where possible, and take this opportunity to remind the Commission of their obligation to give due consideration to all communities of interest, large and small, urban and rural, during this process.

As a political organisation with deep ties into communities across the country the Labour Party has naturally been the recipient of significant feedback regarding the proposed boundaries. A number of communities have drawn our attention to some aspects of the proposed boundaries which drastically and negatively affect them. We have collated these concerns here, and have attempted to suggest alternative courses of action to the Commission where possible.

We hope this submission is of assistance to the Commission in making its final determinations.

The Labour Party hereby notifies the Commission that it would like to have a representative present in person to the Commission regarding this submission in each of these following areas:

- Tāmaki-Makaurau
- Manukau East / Mangakiekie
- Flat Bush / Botany
- Manurewa / Flat Bush
- Christchurch East
- Dunedin South and Dunedin North
- Invercargill

Boundary Proposals

Tāmaki-Makaurau:

Commentary

Waiheke Island has undeniably its strongest link with the mainland via the heavily frequented ferry service into the Auckland CBD. Its Māori Electorate association should reflect this logistical tie in the same way that the General Electorate it is associated with is the Auckland Central electorate. In fact, the only ferry service connecting Waiheke to Hauraki-Waikato is the once-a-day ferry to the Coromandel.

People who live on Waiheke Island but do not work on the island are invariably commuting into Tāmaki Makaurau for work. Māori living on Waiheke have more common interests with urban Auckland and Tāmaki-Makaurau than with most of Hauraki-Waikato, which extends as far south as Te Awamutu.

The island's one Marae, Piritahi sits on Auckland Council reserve and is a nga hau e wha in that it welcomes peoples from all the four winds and is not a tribal Marae. The Mana Whenua, Ngāti Pāoa have interests spanning from Te Aroha to Warkworth, already across 3 Māori Electorates: Hauraki Waikato, Tāmaki-Makaurau and Te Tai Tokerau.

Recommended Changes

- We recommend the inclusion of Waiheke Island into the Tāmaki-Makaurau electorate.

Manukau East / Maungakiekie:

Commentary

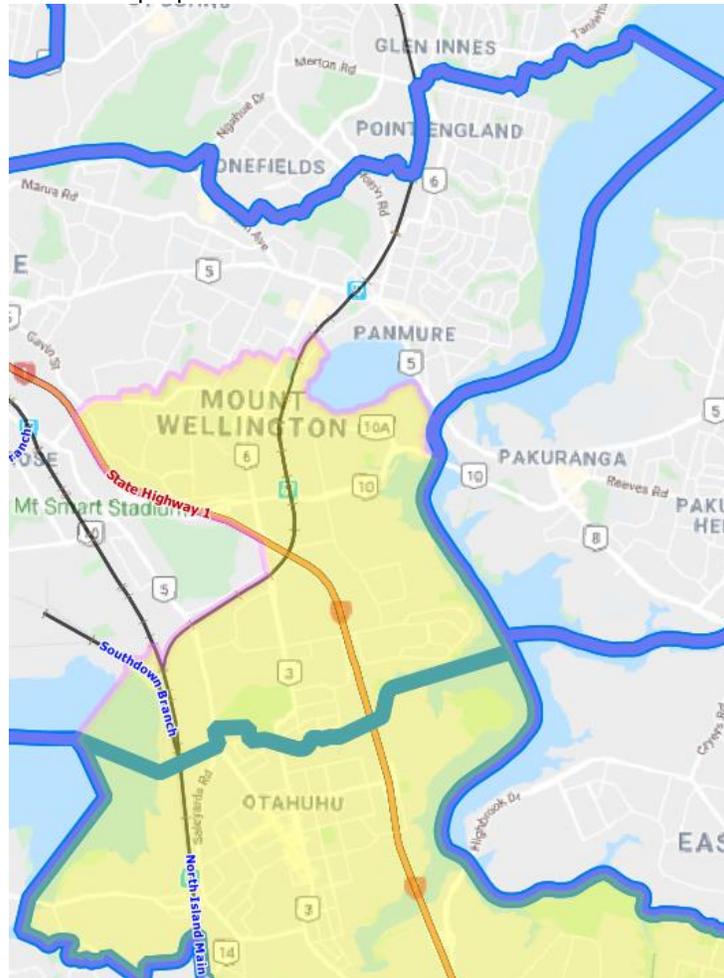
The knock-on effects of electoral population shifts caused by the introduction of new electorates are always a difficulty for Auckland. The geographical constraints are significant, especially in this Otahuhu/Mount Wellington area.

Manukau East must grow towards the north, however we are concerned with the proposal to make it such a long, narrow electorate with such a significant topographic barrier as the Panmure Basin. The proposed electorate is over 14 kilometres long and barely 220 metres wide at its narrowest point. We consider that a better solution is not to split Mount Wellington and extend Manukau East in that direction instead.

Recommended Changes

- We oppose the removal of Point England, Tāmaki and Panmure from the Maungakiekie electorate.
- We recommend instead the inclusion of Mt Wellington in the Manukau East electorate.

New proposal for the northern end of Manukau East



Flat Bush / Botany

Commentary

We commend the Commission on its decision to draw a new electorate focussed on Auckland's southern growth area. Some people who will vote in this electorate at the upcoming election will do so living in houses yet to be built. Inevitably their proximity as well as shared experiences in moving to these areas seeking new opportunities will mean they will face and overcome their challenges together – this is how strong communities are formed. Other communities in the proposed Flat Bush electorate, though older, share this history of opportunity presented by new suburban growth.

We question the proposal to leave the boundary at the southern end of the Botany electorate unchanged. The underlying areas have changed significantly since the electorate was originally drawn, and the inclusions and exclusions no longer make sense.

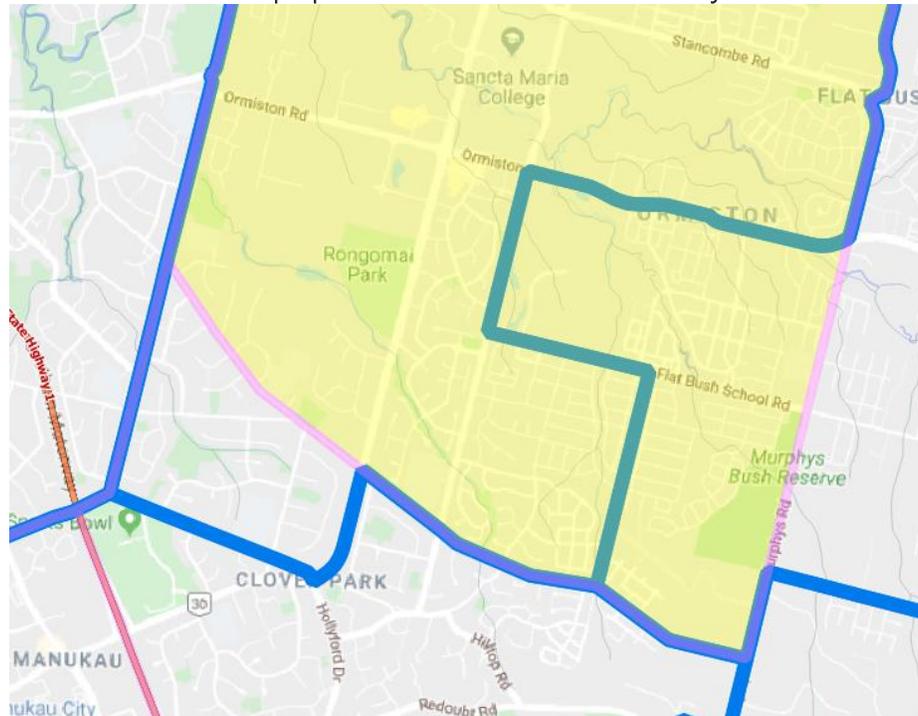
Electorates often have interesting shapes that reflect the quirks of geography and community that underpin them. However where an electoral boundary is oddly shaped without it being required by either geography or community, it invites questions at best and mistrust of our processes at worst.

Mere historic precedent should not be relied upon to dispell these concerns. This area should be redrawn to reflect the links between communitites now within it.

Recommended Changes

- We recommend the inclusion of the area south of Dawson Road into the Flat Bush electorate.
- We recommend the inclusion of the area around Murphy's Bush Reserve and Ormiston into the Botany electorate.

New proposal for the southern end of Botany



Manurewa / Flat Bush

Commentary

The area in the south-east corner of the existing Manurewa Electorate is a long-standing part of the original Manurewa suburban area from the days of the Borough in the 1950s and 60s, through to the Manukau City Council Ward and now as part of the Manurewa Local Board area of Auckland Council. This south-east area includes long-standing local Manurewa schools and is served predominantly by the Manurewa main-street and Southmall shopping and service area and includes the new Manurewa Fire Station and Te Mahia Railway Station.

The boundary proposed in the south-east of Manurewa cuts across and bisects cohesive local communities and extracts them from long-term inclusion in Manurewa. This affects strong church and school communities.

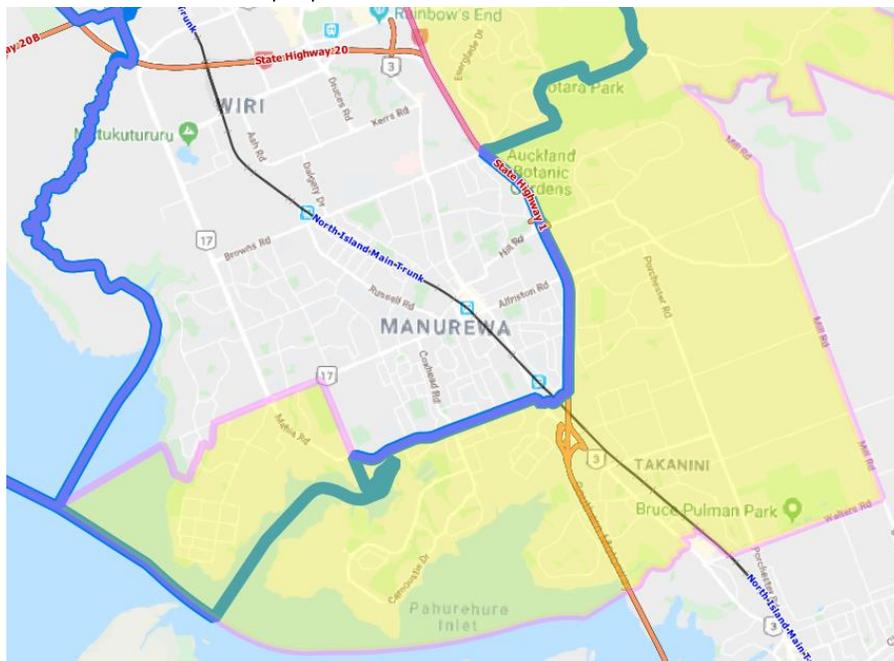
The Weymouth area over the same historic period was a more separate community and now includes that long-term Weymouth community along with relatively new and very new housing subdivisions. It has retained a sense of independence as a community and supports a vocal and effective Residents and Ratepayers Society. The Weymouth area has remained relatively separate from Manurewa and is served predominantly by the Clendon shopping mall and service area which borders on Palmers Rd – one of the boundary lines proposed here. Moving Weymouth into the proposed Flat Bush Electorate would include in the proposed new electorate a whole distinct area which would not be divided or otherwise fragmented.

This would also serve to unite the three similar and adjacent areas in the south of Manurewa (Weymouth, Heron Point and Wattle Downs, each being a peninsula into the Manukau Harbour) within the proposed Flat Bush Electorate and thus add a cohesion to this part of the new electorate that the proposed extraction of communities from the south east of Manurewa does not have.

Recommended Changes

- We oppose the removal of Greenmeadows and Manurewa South from the Manurewa electorate and urge that the south-eastern boundary of Manurewa remain at Mahia Rd and SH1.
- We recommend instead the inclusion of the Weymouth Peninsula into the Flat Bush electorate.

New proposal for the southern end of Flat Bush



Christchurch East

Commentary

We oppose any change to the southern boundary of Christchurch East. There appears to be no necessity to make any changes to the Christchurch East electorate. The electorate is projected to grow by several thousand people, and fall only 692 people shy of remaining within the 5% quota by 2023.

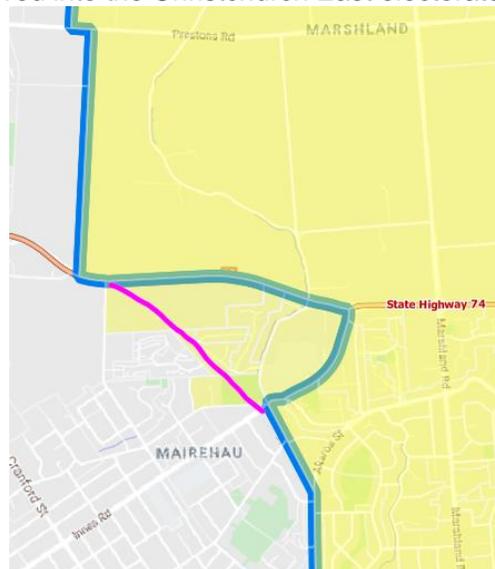
The Commission's reasoning for this change, that it will put the electorate more 'comfortably' within quota, we do not find to be compelling enough to disrupt the representation of these people and strike a line down the middle of this community. The proposal is at odds with the Commission's stated desire to seek minimal change – at most the Commission should be seeking simply to achieve the 5% quota by 2023. We note that the Commission has chosen not to pursue the same approach for other electorates close to the 5% quota limit (e.g. Rongotai, which is projected to be further under it's quota by 2023). Accordingly, we encourage the Commission to take a consistent approach.

If the Commission prefers to ensure that the projected population for Christchurch East remains within the 5% quota in 2023, we suggest instead that a much smaller and less disruptive change could be made. The small area around Mairehau School on the boundary of Christchurch Central could be moved into Christchurch East. The new boundary between the electorates would run along Dudley creek as it passes through Walter Park – a much more natural boundary than the existing one.

This would be significantly less disruptive than the proposed division of Bromley, as it does not sever a cohesive community in two. It also relocates less people, just enough to bring Christchurch East within quota on 2023 projections, and much more in line with the aim to create minimal changes.

Recommended Changes

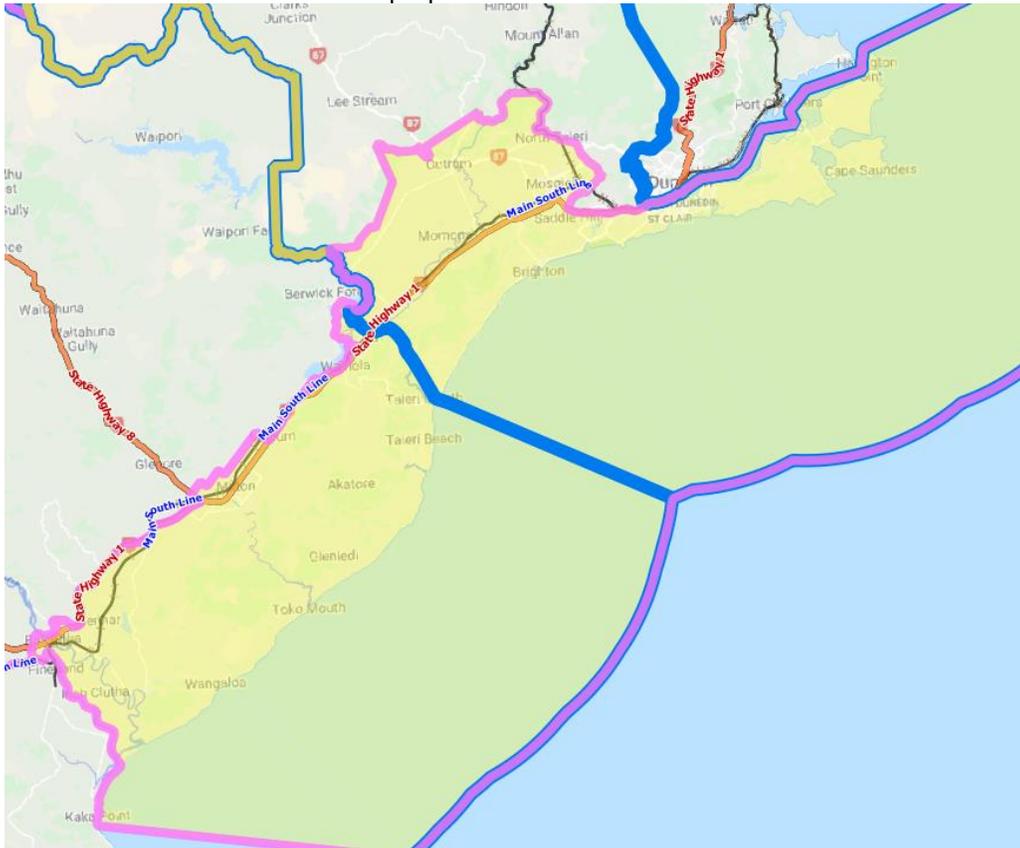
- We oppose any change to the southern boundary of the Christchurch East electorate.
- We recommend the entirety of Christchurch East remain unaltered.
 - Failing this, we recommend instead the small area around Mairehau School, bounded by Dudley Creek, be moved into the Christchurch East electorate.



Inclusion of Fairfield and Abbotsford in Dunedin North



New proposal for Dunedin South



Invercargill

The proposed boundaries of Invercargill recognise the strong links between Invercargill and the Catlins and shifts the Invercargill electorate significantly north-eastward to include them.

The close proximity and significant connections that exist between Matura and the Edendale and Wyndham communities (which are currently in the Invercargill electorate) should also be recognised. The inclusion of Matura would fit well with this north-eastward shift.

To accommodate the inclusion of Matura within the new boundaries of the Invercargill electorate we propose that Winton remain in Clutha Southland, given the significant connections Winton has with Dipton, Ohai, Nightcaps and other Southland communities.

Recommended Changes

- We recommend the inclusion of Matura into the Invercargill electorate.
- We support the status quo of Winton remaining in Clutha-Southland.

New proposal for Invercargill

