

1. **Objections and Reasons**

Project Esther Trust has been operating as a community outreach for 30 years. Our vision is “to see women valued, respected and reaching their full potential”.

The women we work with are largely from the Spreydon, Hoon Hay and Hillmorton communities. We work with women in these communities who are parenting alone and facing significant hurdles: low incomes; social isolation; inadequate housing conditions; mental health concerns; gender discrimination… to name a few. We now have temporary/emergency accommodation for women who face difficulties and have little support.

We have strong connections to many other organisations working alongside women in our local community. Our work includes (but is not limited to) assisting women reintegrating into the community after prison, refugees and migrants, women with mental health challenges, women dealing with debt issues, women facing family violence, young mothers, and more.

Having a strong and consistent relationship with one local MP has been critical to our work.

The commission’s proposed boundary changes in Spreydon effectively splits our community and a recognisable community of interest in half. The proposed boundary along Barrington/Neville/Lyttelton St is not one that has any meaning or coherence from the community’s perspective. For those of us who work and provide social services in the community Spreydon is a cohesive community which is understood to be south of Brougham St and to run from Selwyn and Strickland St in the east until it meets Hoon Hay west of Lyttelton St. Furthermore, for those of us working in the local area there is a strong connection between Spreydon, Hoon Hay and Hillmorton. The needs and issues of our communities are similar and are best served in the single electorate of Wigram.

Located in Lyttleton St Christchurch, means that many of the women who use our services (from Spreydon, Hoon Hay and Hillmorton) are able to walk to us. This speaks to our organisation being at a centre of a community of interest rather than located on the boundary and separated from parts of our community as the commission’s proposed changes would bring about.

Additionally, many of the women we work with have children attending West Spreydon School and Hillmorton High. The changes would put us in a separate electorate than our local schools.

The Boundary changes would place our organisation in Christchurch Central and many of the women we work with in the Wigram electorate (specifically in the Wigram part of Spreydon along with Hoon Hay and Hillmorton). As a suburban-based community organisation this makes no sense and having a single relationship with a single local MP is critical for the well-being of the women we work with.

1. **Proposed Solutions**

We propose that both the existing electorate boundaries and the communities of interest be given due consideration and that the eastern boundary between Wigram and Christchurch Central run south from Brougham St along its existing eastern boundary (Selwyn and Strickland Sts).