SUBMISSION ON WIGRAM ELECTORATE BOUNDARIES 2025 – Phil Clearwater

**My Background and Involvement with the Spreydon Community**

My name is Philip (Phil) Clearwater and I have been an elected Local Government member representing Spreydon for 27 years. I was first elected to the Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board in 1995. I was later elected as the Christchurch City Councillor for Spreydon Ward from 2013 to 2019. I was then elected to the Canterbury Regional Council representing the Owhanga/Christchurch South Constituency for three years until November 2022.

Over that time, I became closely involved with many local residents’ groups and social services, supporting their advocacy for local concerns and amenities. Accordingly, at a local government level, often working with the Member of Parliament for Wigram, I have been very aware of the make-up and needs of this community and the boundaries for both the Spreydon Ward and the Wigram electorate.

I wish to **oppose the proposed boundaries for the Wigram electorate** on the grounds that the proposal does not give due regard to **Communities of interest and to the existing general electorate boundaries.**

**Communities of Interest**

The proposed boundary changes remove about half of the suburb of Spreydon from the Wigram electorate, transferring these residents to Christchurch Central. The proposed boundary splits the residents on the eastern side of Barrington St off from the Wigram electorate when historically they have been and clearly remain a community of interest.

 (I do not oppose the area of Addington being moved to Christchurch Central as there has been a historical connection between Addington and Christchurch Central for many years.)

The Barrington Mall, the Spreydon Library, the Spreydon Tennis and Bowling clubs and Barrington Park besides the specialised children’s playground are central facilities and places for the whole suburb of Spreydon as well as the wider Spreydon Ward, including Hoon Hay and Hillmorton. In effect these facilities on Barrington St form a village centre. These important amenities are a focal point and are used by the wider community. Also the Metro bus layover for public transport on Athelston St / Barrington St is a centre-point of Spreydon. From the community’s perspective Barrington St is central to Spreydon – it is not a boundary.

**Local Boundaries and Community Organisations**

Over the last half century many local organisations such as Suburbs Rugby club (on Domain Tce) Whareora Community House (Athelston St), Project Esther and the Southwest Baptist Church ( Lyttelton St) have also provided social and sporting services to all the suburbs of the eastern part of the Wigram electorate. The division of Spreydon would impact on these important community networks, removing the opportunity for these organisations to advocate for all local residents besides potentially limiting the provision of sporting opportunities and social services for all Spreydon residents.

**Effective Representation at Local and Central Government level**

The proposed boundary does not align with the existing local government boundaries of the Spreydon Ward. The proposal would confuse advocacy work and complicate relationships between central and local government.

As a former Community Board, City and Regional Council representative, in my experience it is essential for the wellbeing of communities to have effective representation at both local and central government levels. Spreydon remaining in the Wigram electorate allows residents and local organisations to work with one Member of Parliament; in this case the whole of Spreydon being supported by one MP who can advocate for both Spreydon as a whole and the wider electorate. In effect, with large numbers of constituents within each electorate, the proposed boundary change would weaken representation at not only central government level but also at local government level, by making it more difficult to address community issues that affect Spreydon as a whole, including the provision of social services, education, housing and transport infrastructure for Spreydon.

**Suggested Solutions for Boundary Changes**

An alternative solution would be to move the Wigram – Christchurch Central boundary to Selwyn Street, while making adjustments in other areas so as not to disrupt the strong, well-established communities of Spreydon and the neighbouring communities of Hoon Hay and Hillmorton.

When population balances require changing electorate boundaries, these changes should be made in areas with less community connections to Wigram, ie rural or peripheral areas, instead of dividing the Spreydon Community.

The rural areas around Prebbleton would seem to be more aligned with the rural parts of the Selwyn electorate. This would obviate the division of Spreydon as a strong community within Wigram.

Thank you for considering my submission.