



**The Federal Redistribution 2008
Tasmania**



Public Objection Number 48

Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmanian Division)

5 Page(s)

> Objections from the Liberal Party TAS Division



"Chantel Burton"
<chantel.burton@tas.liberal.
org.au>

19/09/2008 04:45 PM

To <tas.redistribution@aec.gov.au>

cc

bcc

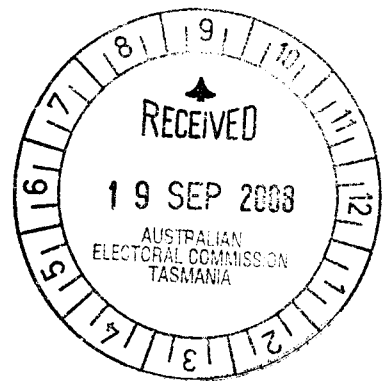
Subject Objections from the Liberal Party TAS Division

Please confirm you have received this email.

Executive Assistant
Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmania Division)
Level 1, 25 Davey Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Ph: 03 6224 1015
Fx: 03 6224 1474



Liberal_Party_TAS_Redistribution_Objections_2008.doc



> Objections from the Liberal Party TAS Division

Augmented Redistribution Commission for Tasmania
2nd Floor AMP Building,
86 Collins Street
HOBART TAS 7000
15 September 2008

Dear Committee,

LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA (TASMANIAN DIVISION)

The Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmanian Division) has reviewed the Report of the Redistribution Committee for Tasmania, released on 22 August 2008.

As per Section 69 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* 1918, the Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmanian Division) objects to the proposed boundaries contained within the Report.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmanian Division), I request the Committee's reconsideration of the Liberal Party submission, which more completely meets the requirements of the Electoral Act.

1. Quota Requirements – the primary consideration

As the Committee is aware, the quota requirements are spelt out in the Electoral Act as follows:

(3) In making the proposed redistribution, the Redistribution Committee:

(a) shall, as far as practicable, endeavour to ensure that, if the State or Territory were redistributed in accordance with the proposed redistribution, the number of electors enrolled in each Electoral Division in the State or Territory would not, at the projection time determined under section 63A, be less than 96.5% or more than 103.5% of the average divisional enrolment of that State or Territory at that time; and...

The Liberal Party notes the Committee's assessment of the relative hierarchy of statutory requirements contained within the Electoral Act. Per the Report (Paragraph 23), quota requirements are the primary consideration in the conduct of a Redistribution:

23. The statutory requirements described in paragraphs 21 and 22 are expressed in an hierarchical order which puts, "as far as practicable", the "endeavour to ensure" a division will fall within the projected enrolment range first."

The Liberal Party does not object to this interpretation of the Electoral Act. Accordingly, the Party submitted a proposal for boundaries which prioritised quota requirements.

To meet the requirements contained within (3) (a), the only adjustments required to boundaries are to meet quota requirements. Considering, and proposing, changes based on communities of interest considerations, elevates these above quota requirements.

2. Communities of Interest

Putting aside the primacy of quota requirements, the Liberal Party objects to inconsistencies in the interpretation of ‘community of interest’ within the Report.

In considering communities of interest criteria, the Committee states that, ‘LGAs provide a reliable indicator of local communities with common commercial, geographical and services links’. Whilst the Liberal Party agrees that Local Government Areas provide an important basis for communities of interest, the Party does not accept the Committee’s stated reasons for its proposed changes.

The Committee’s assessment of communities of interest in LGAs is unclear, with particular respect to proposed changes to the Lyons/Braddon boundaries. At paragraph 65 the Committee states that it was ‘persuaded by the evidence put forward by the Cradle Coast Authority that each of the West Coast, Kentish and Latrobe LGAs share a common community of interest’. However, in its Report, the Committee’s proposal is at odds with that statement and splits these communities between Divisions.

The Tasmanian Division of the Liberal Party also contends that the proposal to move Latrobe LGA from Braddon into Lyons is at odds with the reasoning given at the last redistribution in 1999. According to the Report of Proposed Boundaries for the redistribution at that time:

32. ***The Committee is particularly of the view that the community of interest between the Latrobe LGA and the Devonport area was more clearly identifiable than that which might exist between the West Coast LGA and the North-West generally [emphasis added]. The latter being the main alternative option canvassed or opposed within suggestions received.***¹

Further, the decision of the 1999 Redistribution Committee noted that the community of interest factor was more strongly evident between the Latrobe and the Devonport LGAs than compared to any community of interest between the West Coast LGA and the north-west generally.

Furthermore, population figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics do not support a contention that population movements have altered communities of interest.²

ABS Regional Population Growth series 3218.0 indicates that, between 30 June 1999 and 30 June 2007, the population of West Coast LGA has declined by over 500 people, lessening the links between the West Coast and the North West region.

¹ http://www.aec.gov.au/Electorates/Redistributions/1999/Tasmania/Final_Report.htm. Accessed on Tuesday 9 September 2008.

² *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 3218.0 • 2005–06*, ABS, 2007.

Furthermore, the same ABS figures demonstrate that the estimated residential populations for both the Kentish and Latrobe LGAs have grown, further strengthening the ties between these two LGA's and that of the Devonport area.

3. Existing Divisional Boundaries

The Liberal Party appreciates that the Commission's Proposed Redistribution meets the quota provisions contained within (3) (a).

The Liberal Party questions, however, the necessity of the Report's recommendations for changes to the Bass-Lyons and Braddon-Lyons boundaries.

The Report recommends changes over and above those necessary to meet the requirements of the Act. In addition to the required change to address the quota provisions in Franklin, the report also recommends changes to the boundaries of Bass, Braddon and Lyons that are not necessary to meet the requirements of the Act.

Indeed, the Commission acknowledges as much at Paragraph 33, observing that, on the projected enrolment figures, only the division of Franklin would be 'outside the target range of average divisional enrolment'. The Committee goes on, at Paragraph 37:

37. *Four of the five existing divisions have projected enrolment that is within plus or minus 3.5% of average. Only the Division of Franklin is projected to have enrolment outside that range. In this context the Committee could meet the numerical requirements of the Electoral Act with minimal change to Franklin's boundaries, by moving electors into either Denison or Lyons.*

We contend that the Party's original submission more closely fulfils the requirements of the Act, especially in relation to Section 66(3) (b) (v), which required due consideration of 'the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory.'

4. Elector 'dislocation'

The Tasmanian Division of the Liberal Party of Australia believe that any changes beyond those required to meet the enrolment quotas will result in a greater than necessary electoral disruption, resulting in confusion by voters as to which electorate they are entitled to vote in.

In its Report, the Committee appears to accept this contention, noting at both Paragraphs 77 and 87 that the Liberal Party's proposal 'would achieve more balanced elector numbers while minimising elector disturbance'.

The Proposed Boundaries have the effect of unnecessarily dislocating 16,687 Tasmanian electors from their existing Divisions. In proposing to make changes only in order address the over-enrolment of Franklin Division, the Liberal Party's original submission avoids this outcome.

Summary

To summarize, the Liberal Party's objections are:

1. The changes proposed by the Redistribution Committee go beyond the statutory requirement of bringing Franklin Division within the quota range. In conducting the Redistribution, quota requirements are the primary consideration.
2. The Committee's assertions in relation to 'communities of interest' are not sufficiently coherent as to justify the significant changes which it proposes. At the same time, the Committee has sought to elevate 'communities of interest' criteria above the primary consideration of quotas.
3. The extensive changes proposed are disruptive of existing electoral boundaries and increase the instance of voter confusion, potentially lowering voter turnout.
4. Finally, the proposed changes to the boundaries of Braddon, Lyons and Pass are both unnecessary in quota terms, and, as the Committee itself notes, result in substantial elector dislocation, having the potential to cause confusion with a large number of electors.

It is for these reasons the Tasmanian Division of the Liberal Party reaffirms its original submission based upon the primary requirement of meeting enrolment quotas.

The Liberal Party requests that the Commission reconsider its original submission, the effect of which was to move electors within the locality of Bridgewater from the Division of Franklin into the Division of Denison.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this objection as part of the Redistribution process in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Hawkes
State Director
Liberal Party of Australia (Tasmanian Division)