



Objection 40

Natalie Ragg

2 pages

Submission to the proposed ACT Federal Electorate Redistribution

23 April 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions to the currently proposed ACT Federal Electorate Redistribution.

It is completely disappointing to see that the proposed electorate redistribution map splits up the Woden and Belconnen communities, to now include the 'inner' suburbs of each area in the electorate of Canberra. The various communities of the ACT have been built around a number of town centres, and the proposed redistribution map shows a complete lack of understanding of the various communities that make up the ACT. There is absolutely no way that the redistribution to include a third electorate for the ACT is unable to proceed correctly without splitting up the Belconnen and Woden communities. Belconnen is a fantastic community to live in and be a part of. I have intentionally chosen to live in Belconnen and I want to continue voting in elections as part of my immediate Belconnen community.

I currently live in Page in Belconnen. If this proposed redistribution goes ahead, I will no longer be able to literally walk across the street (Belconnen Way) to vote at one of my local public schools in Hawker or Weetangera. I will instead have to drive into 'West Belconnen' to vote. The ACT Government has so far not ensured that there are sufficient safe and continuous walking paths linking the areas of Scullin, Page, Hawker and Weetangera etc to West Belconnen, so the means of travel between these two areas of Belconnen to access the correct voting stations on voting day is instantly reduced (if the currently proposed redistribution goes ahead). Leaving the Belconnen and Woden town centres intact within the electorates, will avoid unfairly disadvantaging people who would be living along electorate boundaries within their own town centre under the proposed redistribution, in terms of travel options to voting stations.

The proposed redistribution of electorates demonstrates no common sense and even appears to attempt to shape the voting of electorates for political advantage. The Greens have already issued a number of public statements that have been quoted in news articles stating, for example, that "the new boundaries of the electorate of Canberra had created one of the "greenest" seats in the country, for which the party would make a strong play" (Sydney Morning Herald, 6 April 2018). If political parties are already able to recognise the bias created by the currently proposed redistribution of electorates, and are already making public statements about the proposed redistribution benefiting their political party, then the proposed redistribution is clearly not fair or democratic.

In regard to the suggested name of Canberra's third electorate, the choice of Bean appears to have completely ignored any public consultation, as naming the new electorate after Charles Bean was not one of the suggested names in the 16 submissions received by the AEC. It is not appropriate to name an electorate after Australia's official WWI historian just because the ACT is getting a third electorate in the final year of the commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac (2014-2018). This kind of decision making is short-sighted and shows a lack of respect for the ACT community. Surely it is more important to acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous culture and history in such decision making! An Indigenous name with a sincere connection to the area, chosen after respectful consultations with elders and Indigenous community members, would be far more sensitive, inclusive and appropriate.

Thank you for your time.

Natalie Ragg