



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
QUEENSLAND

Comment on suggestion 6

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9 pages

COMMENTS ON SUGGESTIONS FOR THE 2017 QUEENSLAND REDISTRIBUTION

(MARK MULCAIR)

There are a wide variety of Suggestions for this redistribution, both from political parties and individuals. I am particularly pleased to see some more independent individuals making suggestions; in addition The Usual Suspects (Jeff Waddell, Martin Gordon, and Darren McSweeney), there are submissions from Mark Yorke, Andrew Kamler, and Dean Ashley.

All of the suggestions seem to propose different arrangements for the state, although there are a few proposals that are common to all suggestions. With most Divisions predicted to be within or very close to tolerance, there is no requirement to make major changes purely for quota purposes. This means that the differences in suggestions come down to different ideas about community of interest; people made proposals based on what they genuinely believe are the best boundaries. While I don't agree with all of these ideas, I am pleased that people have been willing to explore different options and arrangements.

Rather than attempt to discuss any of the individual suggestions in any detail, I think the best approach is to work seat-by-seat.

LEICHHARDT AND KENNEDY

Surprisingly, most of the Suggestions propose radical change for these two Divisions, with urban Cairns united in Leichhardt and Cape York being transferred to Kennedy.

In principle, I don't have a big objection to this change in isolation, and it makes sense for all of the Cairns area to be in a single Division. However, the flow-on effects cause great problems elsewhere throughout the state:

- Most submissions are forced to remove either Mount Isa or Charters Towers from Kennedy. These are the two major inland centres in the Kennedy that serve as the key focus of the smaller towns and communities within the Division. At previous redistributions, many locals as well as MP Bob Katter has emphasised the very strong east-west communication links within Kennedy, and the lack of strong links to the south.
- Placing Mount Isa in Maranoa causes significant changes to Groom, Wright, and/or Blair. The former does not need any change (nor does Maranoa), and the Divisions further east can adjust among themselves. This change also greatly increases the size of Maranoa, which is already an enormous Division.
- Placing Charters Towers in Dawson or Capricornia means that Rockhampton cannot be united, and causes problems further south in the Burnett and Sunshine Coast Districts.
- Most submissions are forced to make significant adjustments around Townsville, with further parts of the city cleaved off to Kennedy, Dawson, or even Capricornia(!). Herbert is within tolerance, and contains the vast majority of the Townsville area, so there is no need for major change here.

The ALP, Greens, Martin Gordon, Bob Katter, and I have shown that these two Divisions can be adjusted fairly simply by transferring Bentley Park. This provides the right number of electors, and the northern boundary of this suburb runs along a creek and open space, making a clear divide.

I personally still believe that Kuranda should be transferred as well, to unite Mareeba Shire in Kennedy. However this is not necessary for quota, and if the locals prefer remaining in Leichhardt, I would have no problem with that.

If the Committee did decide to transfer Cape York to Kennedy, then I would prefer the LNP's suggestion over all others. This does not require Charters Towers or Mount Isa to be removed, and has no direct flow-on effects (discussed below).

HERBERT

The City of Townsville cannot fit in a single Division, so some outer parts of the city will be forced to overspill into other seats. Many of the suggestions that propose radical changes for Kennedy are also forced to make major adjustments to Herbert, with more of Townsville being placed in either Dawson or Kennedy.

I don't really agree with any of these proposals. Herbert is within tolerance and contains the vast majority of the Townsville urban area. I have proposed a minor adjustment between Kennedy, Herbert and Dawson that involves a small number of electors, and leaves all three Divisions within tolerance.

I specifically would oppose the Greens' suggestions for this area. They produce a very stretched and awkward Capricornia that wraps from Rockhampton right around Mackay and into the southern fringes of Townsville. There would be very little direct connection throughout this Division.

DAWSON AND CAPRICORNIA

Again, there are considerable differences in how boundaries are drawn around Rockhampton and Mackay. Some suggestions, including from the ALP and LNP, suggest placing more of urban Mackay into Capricornia, and leaving everything else unchanged. This is the "minimalist" proposal, which the Committee could consider.

However, I think it makes enormous sense to unite Rockhampton in Capricornia if at all possible. My proposals show how this can be done in a fairly logical way, by exchanging urban Rockhampton with the Mackay hinterland, and transferring Collinsville to Dawson. Jeff Waddell and Darren McSweeney also unite Rockhampton in Capricornia, albeit in a different way to me.

If the Committee decided to adopt the LNP's proposal for Leichhardt and Kennedy (discussed above), then transferring Collinsville to Dawson would prevent many of the flow on effects to Herbert and Dawson in the LNP's suggestion. This provides a way to unite Cairns in Leichhardt if desired, without causing any major changes elsewhere.

A number of proposals suggest pushing Capricornia even further north into Charters Towers (e.g. Martin Gordon) or Townsville (Greens), which I cannot agree with. Capricornia is already stretched as far from Rockhampton as it can realistically go.

FLYNN, HINKLER, AND WIDE BAY

Several suggestions are in agreement to transfer the Murgon area from Wide Bay to Flynn, the rural areas north of Maryborough from Wide Bay to Hinkler, and the Peregian/Doonan area from Fairfax to Wide Bay. These are all small, logical gains that can bring all three Divisions up to quota without the need for major changes around Bundaberg and Maryborough.

A couple of the suggestions, including the LNP, propose to place semi-rural areas north of Bundaberg into the Division of Hinkler. Most of the individual submissions make a similar proposal. In isolation, this seems sensible, but whether this can be done without radical changes to Kennedy and Maranoa is the question.

SUNSHINE COAST

Most of the suggestions agree that the semi-rural parts of Longman should be transferred to Fisher, to bring this Division up to quota. This is a logical transfer that allows Longman to consolidate as an entirely urban Division. Jeff Waddell offers an alternative suggestion of transferring Bribie Island, but I don't think the connections to Fisher are particularly strong.

There are several proposals for adjustments in the Maroochy hinterland, around Palmwoods. I proposed that this area be united in Fairfax, but if the numbers worked I would have no problem uniting this area in Fisher (as suggested by Dean Ashley). Either way, it makes sense to me to unite all of the Palmwoods area in a single seat, instead of maintaining the current split.

RYAN

Ryan does not require any change, although I proposed a very minor adjustment with Brisbane. Both the ALP and Jeff Waddell propose using the Metroad 5 corridor as the new boundary between the two Divisions. This has some merit provided it doesn't cause any flow on effects to other Divisions.

The more extensive changes proposed by Andrew Kamler and The Greens are not necessary, and I don't believe such major changes should be made.

BRISBANE, LILLEY, PETRIE AND DICKSON

There are a surprising number of different proposals for Brisbane to shed electors. It seems very logical to me for Kedron Brook to be used as a clear and strong new northern boundary, with the remainder of Stafford and Gordon Park transferred to Lilley. The LNP and Jeff Waddell agree, while a couple of the other suggests make a partial transfer in this area.

The Greens' proposal to return the Clayfield area to Lilley has some merit in isolation, but they are forced to make some significant changes to all of Ryan, Brisbane, Lilley and Petrie. This does not seem worth the trouble, since these Divisions can be brought within quota with more minor adjustments.

Similarly, Andrew Kamler's proposal to push both Brisbane and Bonner across the river seems excessive. While there is some logic to linking the South Brisbane area with the CBD in the Division of Brisbane, his proposals for Bonner cross the river at a point where there is limited community of interest between each side.

I recommended that Lilley shed the Bridgeman Downs area to Petrie, but most of the other suggestions propose transferring it to Dickson. This does have the advantage of leaving Petrie and Longman mostly unchanged, although it does force Dickson down into the City of Brisbane. Either way, there seems a general consensus to remove part of Lilley's western 'tail'.

Other proposals to remove the Brighton/Sandgate area from Lilley failed at the last redistribution, and would likely be objected to again this time.

GOLD COAST

There are a wide variety of approaches for Divisions south of the Brisbane River. For some suggestions, their decisions for other parts of the state (such as dragging Maranoa northwards) has a major impact on their boundaries here.

I propose that all of the Gold Coast hinterland region be joined with the coast, instead of being placed in the Division of Wright. These areas have much stronger connections with the coast, and are largely cut off from the rest of Wright by mountains and parklands.

The flow on effects of this change then allows:

- Forde to push southwards and become an entirely Beenleigh/Northern Gold Coast based Division
- The western 'tail' of Forde to be divided naturally between Rankin (urban) and Wright (rural)
- Wright to be redrawn as a Division focussed more clearly on the rural parts of Ipswich and Logan.
- Logical flow-throughs to Blair, Oxley and Moreton, without the need for major disruptive changes to any of these seats.

The only negative in my proposals is the transfer of Hope Island to Forde. I acknowledge that this is less than ideal, and would fit better with Fadden than Forde. However, I think the benefits of this change will significantly outweigh this one drawback.

Jeff Waddell proposes an alternative arrangement that allows Hope Island to remain in Fadden, which is something the Committee could consider. The question is whether this can be done without the major changes to Blair, Wright, and Maranoa that he proposes (which I don't really agree with).

Several of the other suggestions, such as Andrew Kamler and the ALP, seem to do the opposite of what I suggest, and place MORE of the Gold Coast area in Wright. This further splits the hinterland from the coast, and I can't agree with it.

BOWMAN, BONNER AND GRIFFITH

There is general agreement that Bowman be left unchanged, although Labor's suggestion to add Carbrook is worth considering, as it allows the Logan River to be used as the boundary.

Likewise, there is general agreement to add the remainder of the Mount Gravatt area to Bonner. Labor's proposal to use more of the Gateway Motorway by transferring Murarrie also seems sensible. A couple of suggestions propose a more radical realignment of Bonner and Griffith, which has some merit but involves too much change.

There is also strong agreement that Griffith shed the remainder of Adderley and Tarragindi to Moreton, making use of the strong boundary of the Pacific Motorway in this area.

RANKIN AND FORDE

The boundaries for these Divisions largely depend on how the Gold Coast seats are proposed to be drawn, and there are a wide variety of different proposals here. Despite the differences, most suggestions have a common approach of trying to deal with the existing western 'tail' on Forde.

It seems very sensible to me for Rankin to gain the Boronia Heights area. This area forms Forde's western 'tail', and the surrounding suburbs are already in Rankin, so the suburb would fit better in Rankin than in Forde. Similarly, the parts of Brisbane City currently in Rankin are somewhat cut off from the rest of the Division, and would fit better in Moreton. My proposed changes to Forde, Wright, and the Gold Coast seats allow all these changes to be made.

If my proposals were not adopted, then Darren McSweeney's suggestion to realign Forde and Rankin either side of the motorway might be something worth considering.

WRIGHT, GROOM AND MARANOVA

In my opinion, Maranoa and Groom do not require any significant change. I proposed a couple of options that involved small transfers of territory between the two Divisions that the Committee could consider.

Following on from this, if we assume no changes to the Groom/Wright or Maranoa/Wright boundary, then the Division of Wright can simply make a small adjustment with Blair around Ipswich. This compensates Wright for the loss of the Gold Coast hinterland, and expands the narrow connection between the Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim areas. My proposed Wright would have a clear focus on the more rural parts of Ipswich, Logan, and Scenic Rim.

Most of the other suggestions recommend major changes to Kennedy and/or Flynn, so this flows through to Maranoa, Groom, Blair, and Wright. Some suggestions recommend pushing Maranoa north into the Gulf Region, some recommend Southern Downs be placed in Wright, and some recommend pushing Groom down the escarpment into the Lockyer Valley.

I don't really support any of these proposals. Adding Mount Isa and surrounds would make Maranoa an enormous Division, and much has been said at previous redistributions about the lack of connection between the Gulf Region and the South West. There is some connection between Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley, but the escarpment is a very strong natural boundary.

If a major re-arrangement in rural Queensland was undertaken by the Committee, then I would support the general principle of the LNP's suggestions for Maranoa above the others. This proposal simply exchanges the South Burnett area for the remote western shires, and does not require Maranoa to push into the Gulf Region. However, I would not make the more extensive changes between Groom and Maranoa as proposed by the LNP.

BLAIR, OXLEY AND MORETON

This area seems to be the “final piece of the puzzle” for most submissions, including my own. The boundaries here seem to depend on what decisions have been made in other parts of the state. If Blair moves into the Lockyer Valley, then all three of these Divisions move westwards, if Rankin pushes southwards into Forde and Wright, then Oxley and Moreton move south and east. Other submissions propose more significant changes to these seats, such as Martin Gordon and Andrew Kamler.

There are therefore too many differences to discuss each suggestion in any detail. However, some general trends are noted:

- If Blair moves westwards, then Bundamba Creek is the most logical boundary.
- If Blair moves eastwards, then I strongly recommend the opportunity be taken to unite Collingwood Park and the Redbank area.
- Whatever the proposals for Blair and Oxley, there seems general agreement to tidy up the boundary between the two Districts at Springfield, to make greater use of the motorway as a boundary in the area.
- If Oxley needs to expand to the east, then Oxley Creek is a very strong and clear boundary. I recommend using it as the boundary for as far as possible.
- I believe the most logical gain for Moreton (if it needs gains) is the Algester/Stretton area, as I’ve explained above. A couple of suggestions try to push Moreton westwards, but they run into trouble when they are forced to split the Centenary Suburbs and/or the Inala area.
- Martin Gordon has an interesting variation on the above problem, by redrawing Oxley and Moreton as east-west Divisions, split by the Ipswich Motorway. This has a lot of merit, aligning Moreton as a riverside Division and Oxley as an ‘inland’ one. If my proposals in this area are not adopted, I would recommend that Martin’s suggestion be seriously considered.
- Dean Ashley’s suggestion to transfer Acacia Ridge and surrounds, using the railway as boundary, was something I considered. However, I think Oxley Creek is a better boundary.