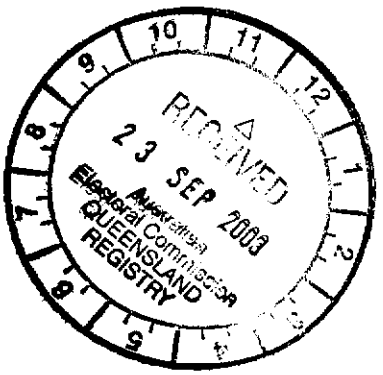
# Comment Number One on Public Objections

## Les Tyrell

## 3 pages

COMMENT
No - 81

THE CITY of THURINGOWA




YOUR REFERENCE:

PLEASE QUOTE MY REFERENCE A15(A) AJL:JMS 331216

18 September 2003

Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 2590
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Sir

**2003 PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF QUEENSLAND INTO ELECTORAL DIVISIONS**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed redistribution. Although the documentation provided indicates a number of factors have been taken into consideration when determining the position of the proposed new boundaries it would appear the main factor considered has been the number of electors required to be enrolled in each Electoral Division.

This is not considered appropriate by this Council and those other factors including:

- Community of Interest
- Means of communication and travel
- Physical features and
- Existing boundaries

deserve a far greater weighting than it would appear they have been given.

The concept of one vote one value which appears to be the foundation behind the current method of determining electoral divisions is antiquated and fails to take into consideration those more important factors listed above, and further discussed below;

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SENT 24/9/03

**Community of Interest**

Clearly those electors in the division of Herbert proposed to be relocated to Kennedy have no social, cultural or other community links with the wider Kennedy electorate. Those electors live, work, play and interact with electors in the division of Herbert.

It is considered the Committee determining the proposed new boundaries has looked at the number and physical features alone when deciding the Bohle as a natural divisional boundary and community of interest has been virtually ignored. Yes it could be argued that those electors North of the Bohle River have a community of interest with the balance of the Northern Beaches area currently in the division of Kennedy however this Council would continue to argue that the whole of the area of Thuringowa currently included in the Division of Kennedy should be in the Division of Herbert.

**Means of Communication and Travel**

Again it is not considered the committee gave due consideration to the issue of communication between the electors and the elected member. The office of the Member for Kennedy is in Innisfail. The office of the Member for Herbert is in Townsville.

Despite the improved means of electronic communication and increasingly lower travel costs clearly the ability to better represent those residents in Thuringowa north of the Bohle River remains with the Member for Herbert.

Face to face representation is the most preferred method when dealing with complex or sensitive issues and distance from the elected Member is a significant barrier to this occurring.

An elected Member with an electorate the size of Kennedy is clearly disadvantaged in fairly representing their electors. Those Members with an electorate of this size should have a reduced number of electors to compensate. Despite lower travel costs these remain a significant cost to the community, and increasing the Member of Kennedy's electorate to include a further 6000 to 7000 in the Thuringowa area, must place additional costs on the community.

**Physical Features and Natural Boundaries**

Definition of divisional boundaries by natural features are a nicety not a necessity. In this instance the Bohle River has been chosen in Council opinion to suit the numbers game. In Councils view the Local Authority Boundary is by far the better boundary to choose and although it does not satisfy the "numbers" requirement it clearly meets all the other criteria allegedly considered by the redistribution committee.

In summary this Council opposes the proposed changes to the boundaries of Herbert and Kennedy maintaining it severely disadvantages electors in the Thuringowa area and the elected Members of Herbert and Kennedy.

The Member of Herbert is in a position to better represent residents of Thuringowa being more aware of the social, economic and environmental issues of the area.

Transferring 7000 electors from the Division of Herbert to the Division of Kennedy merely to satisfy the number requirements of the Commonwealth Electoral Act does not recognise the rights of those electors to fair and equal representation.

Yours sincerely

**CR LES TYRELL**
**MAYOR OF THURINGOWA**