



The Federal Redistribution 2003
QUEENSLAND



Public Objection Number 22

Australian Labor Party (Queensland Branch)

6 pages

OBJECTION

12-22



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19 September 2003

Redistribution Committee for Queensland
Australian Electoral Commission
7th Floor
488 Queen St
BRISBANE QLD 4000



**Attention: Anne Bright
Australian Electoral Officer For Queensland**

Dear Ms Bright

Please find attached the Australian Labor Party's (Queensland Branch) objection to the proposed boundaries from the AEC's redistribution of Queensland's Federal electorate boundaries in 2003.

If you require further information or clarification regarding anything contained in the submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on 3844 8101.

Yours sincerely

Linda Holliday
Assistant State Secretary

encl

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SENT 19/9/03

OBJECTION

№ - 22

Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch

Objections to the Proposal of the Redistribution Committee

19 September 2003

Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch
PO Box 5032
WEST END QLD 4101

Introduction

The ALP welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Redistribution Committee's proposed boundaries and names of federal divisions in Queensland.

We seek to make specific comment in relation to a number of proposed divisions, with a view to enhancing the proposal's compliance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*. Our submission also adopts and supports individual submissions lodged by the Labor Federal Members for Brisbane and Griffith.

We also seek to provide some commentary on the published methodology of the Redistribution Committee with a view to enhancing public confidence in the redistribution process.

General Commentary*Overall Strategic Approach*

The Australian Labor Party notes that unlike previous proposals, the Redistribution Committee has not clearly set out a guiding strategic approach.

The Redistribution Committee commences its consideration at the northern extreme of the state and works down to the Sunshine Coast before jumping to the Gold Coast.

The decision of the Redistribution Committee to accept the Gold Coast hinterland as a "natural limitation for the [Gold Coast] divisions in the west" and a preference for observing local government boundaries seem to be the basis (although not explicit) for the decision of the Redistribution Committee to create the proposed divisions of Fadden and Bowman.

The Committee then moves to a broader deliberation of greater Brisbane by jumping to a consideration of the CBD.

The decision of the Committee to move from a consideration of the impacts of its deliberations on the Gold Coast and bay side region and jump to the CBD is not clearly reasoned by the Redistribution Committee. The report jumps from paragraph 54 concerning the Divisions of Bowman and Fadden to paragraph 55 which considers the Divisions of Brisbane and Griffith.

The decision of the Redistribution Committee to excise the area of the existing division of Brisbane south of the Brisbane River is described at paragraph 55:

55. The Committee acknowledged that the large growth occurring with the CBD of the City of Brisbane had made Brisbane grow to be the second largest division numerically in Queensland at the date of setting the quota. The Committee in turn recognised the need for the proposed Brisbane to return to the north of the Brisbane River and for the areas vacated on the south to be transferred to the proposed Griffith.

The decision of the Committee to move the boundary of the division of Brisbane across the river and transfer the displaced electors from south of the Brisbane River

to the proposed Griffith is not explicitly justified and seems to set up by default the circumstances in which the proposed new division of Bonner is created.

The Committee then moves to the proposed division of Rankin and then Moreton before mentioning changes to the divisions of Lilley, Oxley, Petrie and Ryan as a causal outcome of the decisions taken to that point.

We note that the challenges facing any Redistribution Committee are substantial, and the nature of this redistribution is certainly no exception. Significant changes in the south east of the state were unavoidable. However, precisely because of the magnitude of changes, the Redistribution Committee should take care to ensure the legislative obligation to provide reasons is fully discharged.

The ALP is concerned that, in the absence of explicitly reasoned justification, the proposed boundaries are open to question and public confidence in the redistribution process undermined.

Local Government Boundaries

The Redistribution Committee appears to have placed substantial weight upon local government boundaries as indicators of a community of interest.

The report states:

- 34. A key indicator of community of interests as defined by LGA boundaries was used in provincial and/or rural Queensland to a significant extent. In metropolitan Divisions, it was used to the greatest extent possible. The Committee was able to accommodate boundaries of most LGA's entirely within a single Division. Only rural boundaries of eight LGA's could not be accommodated within a single electoral Division and these generally reflect existing boundaries.*

The ALP's original suggestion to the Committee supported the use of LGA boundaries as "useful guides".

In rural and provincial Queensland LGA boundaries generally reflect distinct communities of interest, means of communication and travel and physical features by virtue of geography. In urban areas, LGA boundaries sometimes reflect arbitrary lines of division rather than communities of interest. Overall, LGA boundaries can certainly be useful, but should not be determinative.

LGA boundaries are not included in the Act and while they tend to reflect communities of interest there isn't an immutable link between the criteria of s 66 and LGA boundaries. As such Redistribution Committees should not unduly rely on LGA boundaries, especially in metropolitan areas.

The utilisation of the LGA boundaries between the City of Brisbane and the Shire of Pine Rivers as the boundary between the proposed division of Brisbane and Dickson is a case in point.

It is submitted that Redistribution Committees should be careful when utilising LGA boundaries to ensure their adoption reflects the requirements of the Act.

Proposed Divisions of Brisbane and Griffith

The ALP refers the Committee to the individual submissions lodged by Arch Bevis MP and Kevin Rudd MP and endorses the proposals contained in those submissions.

Proposed Hinkler

The Redistribution Committee states that it sought to achieve as little disruption as possible to electors in proposing new electoral boundaries.

In this regard the ALP views the transfer of electors in the shires of Mundubbera, Gayndah and Eidsvold as counter-productive from this stated intention.

These electors have been transferred from Wide Bay to the proposed Hinkler when their retention in the proposed Wide Bay would meet statistical requirements and ensure fewer voters were transferred between divisions.

Proposed Hinkler
Actual enrolment - 88 788
Projected enrolment - 94 524

Suggested Hinkler
Actual enrolment - 84 877
Projected enrolment - 90 618

Proposed Wide Bay
Actual enrolment - 83 953
Projected enrolment - 90 610

Suggested Wide Bay
Actual enrolment - 87 864
Projected enrolment - 94 516

The ALP submits:

Electors in the shires of Mundubbera, Gayndah and Eidsvold be retained in the division of Wide Bay.

Proposed Bonner and Proposed Bowman

There is a portion of the Burbank SLA that is proposed to be transferred from the existing Fadden to the proposed Bonner. This area was previously contained in the same electorate as most of the Redlands Shire in one existing division (Fadden).

The Redistribution Committee's proposal seeks to incorporate the Redlands Shire within the proposed division of Bowman and de-coupling this area of Burbank from its association with the Redlands Shire by transferring it into the proposed Bonner.

The reasons for this change are not detailed by the Redistribution Committee. One possible explanation may be that the Committee was pursuing its stated preference for observing local government boundaries.

With reference to the commentary above, the ALP submits that the requirements of the Act are better observed by letting the existing divisional boundary between the existing divisions of Griffith, Bowman, Fadden and Moreton stand as the boundary between the proposed Bowman and Bonner.

Constituting the divisions in this manner better observes the requirement of the Redistribution Committee to have regard to the existing divisional boundaries and meets the statistical criteria of s 66, demonstrated below:

Proposed Bonner

Actual enrolment - 84 311
Projected enrolment - 95 968

Suggested Bonner

Actual enrolment - 83 690
Projected enrolment - 95 290

Proposed Bowman

Actual enrolment - 81 718
Projected enrolment - 93 842

Suggested Bowman

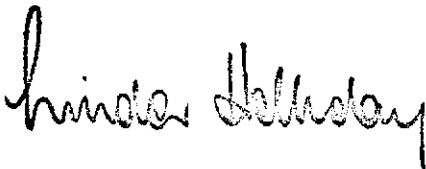
Actual enrolment - 82 339
Projected enrolment - 94 520

The ALP submits:

Electors in the part of the Burbank SLA proposed to be incorporated into the proposed division of Bonner from the existing division of Fadden be retained in the same division as the rest of the Redlands Shire and the existing divisional boundary in this area be reinstated.

Conclusion

The ALP submits these objections to the proposal of the Redistribution Committee for consideration by the Augmented Committee and looks forward to the opportunity to comment on other public objections submitted.



Linda Holliday
Assistant State Secretary
Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch
19 September 2003