



The Federal Redistribution 2003
QUEENSLAND



Public Suggestion Number 23

Australian Labor Party (Queensland Branch)

7 pages

SUGGESTION

#-23



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20 June 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

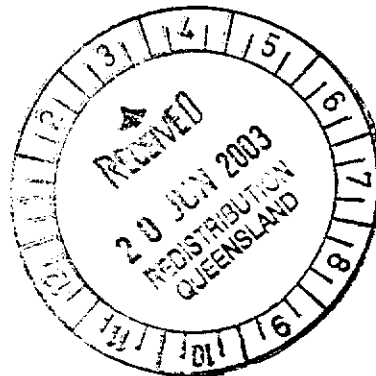
Please find attached the submission for the Australian Labor Party (Queensland Branch) on the redistribution of Queensland's Federal electorate boundaries in 2003.

Also enclosed for your convenience is a cd rom containing our submission.

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

Cameron Milner
STATE SECRETARY



encl

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SENT 20, 6, 03

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Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch

Submission to the Redistribution Committee

20 June 2003

Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch
PO Box 5032
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Overview

The 1997 Redistribution Committee noted that its task shared similar hallmarks to the 1991 and 1994 redistributions. Those characteristics again form the context of this redistribution, namely:

- an increase of one division;
- continuing high rates of growth, especially in the south-east corner;
- uneven rates of growth across the state.¹

Accordingly we take guidance from the approach of the Redistribution Committee in 1997 in making our suggestions.

This submission does not propose twenty-eight individual maps but seeks to expound a general strategy that provides for an efficacious application of the criteria set down in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*.

Necessary Changes

In reviewing the enrolments at the time of the determination of the redistribution, together with projected enrolments, there are a number of divisions requiring change.

Only Brisbane and McPherson currently exceed the permissible maximum number of electors - 92 485. No divisions are currently below the permissible minimum number of electors - 75 671.

Projected growth figures however indicate a range of seats requiring a net loss of electors.

The Divisions of Moreton, Ryan, Bowman, Fadden, Fairfax, Petrie, Longman, Herbert, Fisher, Griffith, Dickson, Moncrieff, Forde, Brisbane, McPherson all require a negative transfer of electors to satisfy s 66 (3) (a) *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* ("the Act").

While no division requires additional electors to sit within the window of the allowable number of electors as at the time of the determination, a number of divisions require additional electors to meet the projected enrolment requirements, namely: Blair, Capricornia, Maranoa, Kennedy, Hinkler and Wide Bay.

All seats requiring a net loss of electors are in the southeast corner, apart from the division of Herbert. Further, all divisions requiring additional electors to meet the criteria of s 66 (3) (a) are located outside of this area, apart from Blair.

This of course reflects the general nature of growth predictions in the state. Growth is predicted to be higher in the southeast corner and less robust in the non-metropolitan areas of the state.

The Divisions of Leichhardt and Dawson, along with Groom, Lilley, Rankin and Oxley do not require adjustment to satisfy the provisions of the Act.

¹ 1997 Redistribution Committee for Queensland, *Reasons for the Proposed Redistribution of the State of Queensland*.

Application of Requirements of the Commonwealth Electoral Act

The Act establishes a set of principles in s 66 to which the Redistribution Committee must give consideration in preparing a proposal.

There are two inflexible and objective² criteria: firstly, the requirement to stay within 10% of the quota for the redistribution and, secondly, the requirement that projected enrolments do not exceed the average divisional enrolment at the projection time by more than 3.5%.

In addition s 66 (3) (b) specifies a number of other principles, namely:

- (i) community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social and regional interests;
- (ii) means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;
- (iv) the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division; and
- (v) the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory.

These principles are explicitly stated to be subject to the strict requirement for future enrolments to sit within the margin provided for the projected time.

This submission proceeds on the basis that the Redistribution Committee will once again consider it has no option but to meet the numerical criteria but will seek to apply the other criteria as much as possible.

Past Approach of the Redistribution Committee

At each of the last three Federal Redistributions, Queensland has increased its parliamentary entitlement, due to higher population growth than the other states. Of course this growth is uneven across the state, with the southeast corner representing the area of highest growth.

The north and west of the state are covered by fewer divisions, and are once again projected to grow at much lower rates than the south-east. Acknowledging these circumstances, the 1997 Redistribution Committee adopted the strategy of commencing their consideration from the north and west and working towards the area of highest growth.³

The 1997 Redistribution Committee reported:

“the Committee saw the need to deal with the existing Divisions at the extremities of the State and move towards the south-east, the area of highest growth.”⁴

² AEC practice, based on legal advice commissioned for the 1997 Redistribution, interprets the margin of allowance for the projection time as inflexible beyond the 3.5% leeway either side of the projected average divisional enrolment. The provision in s 66 (3) (a) for this margin to be observed “as far as practicable” does not therefore provide for scope to exceed the margins provided.

³ 1997 Redistribution Committee for Queensland, *Reasons for the Proposed Redistribution of the State of Queensland*.

⁴ *ibid*

Further, the Committee:

"believed this approach provided for maximum consideration of the qualitative criteria while still meeting the quotas for enrolment and projected growth."⁵

The Australian Labor Party endorses this approach and our submission makes broad suggestions about the area of the state outside the southeast corner. We agree that such an approach provides for the greatest scope to apply the qualitative criteria in s 66. Often, these qualitative criteria of s 66 are more readily applied in non-metropolitan areas.

Applying the Principles to the 2003 Redistribution

We take also the starting point that present boundaries axiomatically reflect the criteria of s 66 in a holistic sense. Current boundaries express the summation of the previous Redistribution Committee's efforts to provide for community of interest,⁶ means of communication and travel,⁷ and the physical features of an area.⁸

A holistic interpretation of the qualitative criteria in s 66 is appropriate as communities of interest are commonly served by common means of communication and travel with communities inevitably built around the physical features of an area. Each of these criteria tends to reinforce the other.

The present divisional boundaries reflect the best efforts of the Redistribution Committee to incorporate communities of interest, means of communication and travel and the physical features of an area, while still meeting the current and projected enrolment targets.

We might also add that local government boundaries are useful guides for the Redistribution Committee. In general Redistribution Committees attempt to observe local government boundaries which of themselves reflect communities of interest and physical features of an area. As such, they tend also to reflect common means of communication and travel.

Commencing our consideration at the very northern tip of the state, we immediately note that the Divisions of Leichhardt and Dawson do not require any adjustment to meet the criteria of s 66 (3). According to the projected enrolment data, the Divisions of Leichhardt and Dawson, without amendment, are projected to be within approximately 500 electors of the average divisional enrolment at projection. There is a strong argument for these two divisions to be retained without amendment.

Herbert is required to shed at least 4235 electors to remain within the projected enrolment limits, while Kennedy must gain 3150 electors to reach the minimum projected enrolment window.

If Kennedy were to gain the required minimum transfer from Herbert this would place the division above the projected minimum quota while placing the Division of Herbert just below the projected maximum quota.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ s 66 (3) (b) (i)

⁷ s 66 (3) (b) (ii)

⁸ s 66 (3) (b) (iv)

The 1997 Redistribution Committee was mindful of the size of the Division of Kennedy and adopting a strategy of transferring voters from the outer fringes of Herbert serves to satisfy the need to boost enrolment in Kennedy without the need to assume large rural areas into one of the state's largest divisions in terms of land area. It should be noted that such a strategy could also enhance the urban nature of Herbert as a division based on the city of Townsville.

Accordingly we recommend the committee transfer CCDs on the outer ring of the mainland part of the Division of Herbert into Kennedy. In seeking to meet the numerical requirements of s 66 (3) for the Divisions of Herbert and Kennedy through encroaching towards the urban fringe of the cities of Townsville/Thuringowa are also endorsing the Redistribution Committee's view that the community Palm Island should be retained within the Division of Herbert, a view challenged in public hearings and upheld by the Committee in 1997.⁹

We also urge the committee to transfer more than the 4235 electors required to meet the requirements of s 66 (3). Indeed, there is a strong case for adopting such a strategy given the low growth predictions for Kennedy and the strong growth predictions for Herbert. A transfer in the order of 6000 electors would more evenly balance the projected enrolments of the redrawn Herbert and redrawn Kennedy.

Accordingly there is a strong argument for transferring parts of the Division of Herbert into the Division of Kennedy, while maintaining the boundaries for the Divisions of Leichhardt and Dawson.

Working south from these divisions, we note that the Divisions of Maranoa, Capricornia, Hinkler and Wide Bay all require additional electors to meet the projected enrolment requirements.

In examining the Division of Capricornia we note it is projected to experience very modest growth. While Capricornia is presently within the acceptable window for current enrolments, we note that it must gain significant population to meet the projected enrolment window.

We suggest the Redistribution Committee consider the addition of the LGAs of Duaringa and Emerald into Capricornia. This move will see the length of the communities along the Capricorn Highway included in the one division and maintain Capricornia's nature as a coal and pastoral industry seat. We make this recommendation with a view to maintaining the essential nature of the Division of Hinkler as a coastal division that retains the long-standing link between Gladstone and Bundaberg.

Such a move will place the Division of Capricornia just above the projected enrolment limit, but the Redistribution Committee can make a minor adjustment for part of the Shire of Fitzroy to be transferred from existing Capricornia into proposed Hinkler. This LGA is already split between Capricornia and Hinkler, and we would suggest two CCDs be transferred from existing Capricornia to satisfy the requirements of s 66 (3).¹⁰

⁹ 1997 Augmented Electoral Commission for Queensland, *Redistribution of Queensland: Final Report*.

¹⁰ We suggest CCDs 3-06-1408 and 3-06-1409.

Hinkler also needs to gain voters and we see options for the Committee in adding the Shires of Banana and Kolan from Wide Bay. The addition of the Kolan LGA would incorporate a complete stretch of the National Highway through the Division of Hinkler. Such an approach would put Hinkler beyond the requirements of s 66, and we suggest the Isis LGA be transferred from Hinkler to Wide Bay.

Even with the addition of Isis, the Division of Wide Bay requires additional electors to ensure the requirements of s 66 (3) are met. One way this could be achieved would be through the transfer of electors in the Cooloola and Gympie LGAs into Wide Bay. We note that this approach will help relieve the pressure of growth in the Sunshine Coast divisions.

The transfer of Duaringa and Emerald to Capricornia enhances the need for the Division of Maranoa to gain electors. Given this approach the natural areas for attracting additional electors are in the areas abutting the south eastern boundary of Maranoa.

Proposal for Name of New Seat

One of the major tasks for the Redistribution Committee in this process is the creation of new Federal Division, which of course requires a new name.

We submit that the new seat be named Hanlon, after one of Queensland's most significant Premier's Edward Michael (Ned) Hanlon.

Hanlon was born on 1 October 1887 in Paddington, one of seven children to Irish parents, Michael and Mary Anne.

Hanlon was elected to the Queensland Parliament to represent the electorate of Ithaca, which he ably served for 26 years, the last six as Premier. Hanlon's enduring legacy is his work in building Queensland's public hospital system, a legacy that has long outlived his death, while still in office, in 1952.

The naming of the new Federal Division after one of Queensland's most influential Premier's would be highly appropriate.

Conclusion

The task of the Redistribution Committee in 2003 is significant. With no redistribution during the last parliament the impact of six years of growth, particularly in southeast Queensland, means the Committee faces many challenges.

Our submission seeks to provide some guidance in the general strategic approach, and we look forward to the opportunity to comment on the proposal published by the Redistribution Committee.

Cameron Milner
State Secretary
Australian Labor Party
Queensland Branch