



The Federal Redistribution 2006  
**QUEENSLAND**



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## **Comment Number Fourteen on Public Suggestions**

**Queensland Greens**

**3 pages**

Dear Committee Members,

Please find attached the comments of the Queensland Greens in response to the public suggestions regarding the current Queensland redistribution.

The Greens are founded on the principle that political structures should reflect the communities being represented. We are pleased to be participating in this public discussion even though we are dedicated to major change in the electoral system. The Greens believe that instead of creating divisions between the people, our electoral system should remove these artificial boundaries and afford all communities the opportunity and hope to be represented in the Parliament. This is best achieved through Proportional Representation which must be the next step for democratic reform in Australia.

That being said, we recognise that it is not within the the power of the AEC to consider electoral reform and our comments are limited to those criteria that the Redistribution Committee must consider under section 66(3)b of the *Electoral Act*, and the suggestions for the name of the new Division.

Yours Faithfully

Elissa Jenkins  
Acting Convenor

## **Comments by the Queensland Greens on Public Suggestions QS-08, QS-10 and QS-11.**

### **QS-08 (The Liberal Party)**

The suggestions from the Liberal Party pay very little heed to the redistribution criteria of the Act, despite their claims to the contrary.

In divisions such as Leichhardt, Herbert and Rankin they suggest the division of dense urban communities, co-joining them with rural communities many hundreds of kilometers away with whom they share no economic, social or regional interests.

With their suggestions for Wide Bay and Fairfax, they disregard "the means of communication and travel within a Division". The Cooloola shire uses the Bruce Highway as its primary transport corridor while Fairfax uses the Sunshine Motorway and David Low Way which stops at Noosa.

The suggestions for Fairfax and Wide Bay also illustrate the Liberals' disregard for the "physical features and areas." They suggest moving a significant section of the Great Sandy Region and its National Park out of the seat containing Fraser Island and the World Heritage area.

Even the final criterion of considering "the boundaries of existing Divisions" is disregarded when it suits them. In Forde they suggest moving 14000 electors to Blair which then necessitates a further shift of 12000 electors back into Forde from Rankin. In Wide Bay they propose shifting 23000 electors into a division already over quota in order to create the new Division, but then they only move 7500 into the new Division leaving an extra 24000 to be shifted into Fairfax! This rather demolishes their claim that "the movement of elector populations... has been kept to a minimum".

The Liberals' specific suggestion for the new Division ("Chalk") is the fruit of this poisoned vine. They make no attempt to even try and describe any communities of interest that are served by a Division "based around" Caloundra and encompassing Kingaroy and Crows Nest. The means of communication and travel are extremely weak as are the physical features that bind it together and it is constructed with disregard for the existing boundaries.

### **QS-11 (the Nationals)**

Many of the Nationals' suggestions suffer from the same deficiencies as the Liberals. Their plan for Wide Bay disregards community of interest arguments almost entirely. Placing the Banana Shire (for instance) in a Division based around Maryborough and splitting Cooloola Shire by moving Gympie into Fairfax while leaving Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach in Wide Bay, defies any attempt to describe how it meets the requirements of the Act.

Their suggestion for Forde is a striking example of change for its own sake. The rural electorate of Forde is overquota. The Nationals propose to remove half its area and then change the boundaries of three divisions that would otherwise require no change at all. (Moncrieff, McPherson and Fadden).

The Nationals' proposed new Division ("Adermann") suffers from many of the same defects as the Liberals' proposal. Neither the Liberals' nor the Nationals' proposals appear to have much to do with the requirements of the Act. Instead, other Divisional boundaries are being manipulated to move Blair south and contrive an artificial space for a new rural Division west of the Sunshine Coast.

### **QS-10 (the ALP)**

The ALP's focus on communities of interest and clear boundaries appears to yield more reasonable results in terms of the requirements of s66(3)b. Their close consideration of the existing boundaries of urban divisions yields some positive suggestions, such as the boundary modifications between Bonner, Griffith and Moreton, which improves the communities of interest significantly.

Their proposal for the new Division ("Theodore") is also superior to the other two recommendations, emerging more naturally from the existing population centres without

the contrived manipulation evident in the Liberals' and Nationals' proposals. Returning to previous examples, the Banana Shire has a much stronger community of interest with Gladstone and should be in Hinkler rather than Wide Bay, and Forde does not suffer the significant boundary changes and disruption needed to artificially extend an existing seat to the NSW border

The proposal to move Blair north to absorb excess electors is a better outcome, preserving rural communities of interest, transport and communication links and respecting the physical features of the area.

### **The name of the new Division**

It is disappointing that all three major parties have demonstrated such traditionalism with their proposed names for the new Division. Of the 29 Queensland Divisions, only four are named after women and two after indigenous Australians. Our comment is that the Committee should strive to improve this imbalance at every opportunity. For two examples, the name "Wright" for Judith Wright and "Oodgeroo" for Oodgeroo Noonuccal would both be superior choices. Both these women were internationally lauded figures in the arts and culture and played significant roles in the public life of Queensland and Australia in arts, conservation, indigenous affairs and politics.