Comment Number Eighteen on Public Suggestions

Hon Arch Bevis MP

5 pages

Hon. Arch Bevis MP.

Federal Member for Brisbane
Shadow Minister for Homeland Security,
Aviation and Transport Security

ARB:RK

17th March, 2006

COMMENT
№ - 18

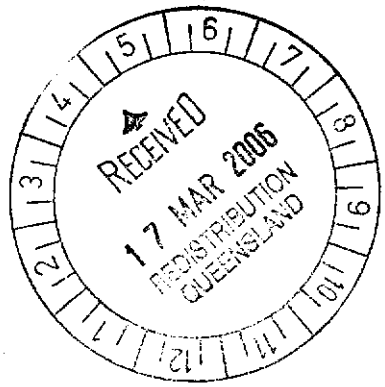
Ms Anne Bright
Redistribution Committee for Queensland
Level 7
488 Queen Street
Brisbane. 4000.

Dear Ms Bright,

Please find enclosed a copy of my comments opposing the suggestions of the Liberal and National Parties to change the boundary of the Division of Brisbane.

Yours sincerely,

ARCH BEVIS



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COMMENTS BY HON. ARCH BEVIS MP ON SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE DIVISION OF BRISBANE

COMMENT
№ - 18

BRISBANE WITHIN QUOTA

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* requires federal divisions in the state of Queensland to have an enrolment as at 2nd December, 2005 within a range of 76,698 and 93,742. As at that date, there were 87,661 electors in the Division of Brisbane.

The more restrictive provisions of the Act relate to the projected enrolment as at the 30th November, 2007. In relation to that requirement, divisions in the state of Queensland must be within the range of 89,587 to 92,722. The projected enrolment for Brisbane as at 30th November, 2007 is 92,073.

Brisbane falls within the quota requirements at both dates set out in the Act. **There is therefore no requirement to alter the boundary of the electorate of Brisbane for it to meet the quota requirements of the Act.**

SUGGESTED CHANGES

There are two public suggestions received by the Redistribution Committee that propose changes to the boundary of Brisbane.

The Liberal Party has suggested moving Stafford to the electorate of Petrie.

The National Party has suggested moving Stafford and Everton Park to Petrie and moving part of The Gap from Ryan to Brisbane (which, overall, increases the enrolment in Brisbane slightly).

Neither of these changes is necessary because Brisbane is already within quota.

They are also undesirable for the reasons outlined below.

REMOVAL OF STAFFORD AND EVERTON PARK FROM THE DIVISION OF BRISBANE

Loss of Community of Interest

The suggestion that the areas of Stafford and Everton Park should be moved to Petrie is contrary to the community of interest which these areas have with the Division of Brisbane.

The general history and character of the Brisbane electorate centre on the nature of the seat encompassing the CBD and the inner northern suburbs.

Stafford and Everton Park fall into the category of the suburbs of Brisbane's character. The people who live there see Brisbane city as their home. Many work in the city, which is reflected by the large volume of traffic and public transport that travels from those areas into the city on a daily basis.

On the other hand, the electorate of Petrie focusses northwards to as far as Redcliffe and Deception Bay. In striking contrast with the CBD and inner northern suburbs, parts of Petrie are semi-rural in nature.

The residents of Stafford and Everton Park do not have any transport, commercial or community links with large parts of the Petrie electorate.

While Stafford and Everton Park are parts of the Brisbane City local government area, substantial parts of Petrie are covered by three different local governments: Pine Rivers Shire, Redcliffe City and Caboolture Shire.

While the residents of Stafford and Everton Park would visit the CBD far more than they would Redcliffe or other areas of Petrie, they also interact with other locations in the Brisbane electorate.

- They shop at Brookside Shopping Centre (location of Myer and Target).
- They use the entertainment and other facilities at the Gaythorne R.S.L., the Broncos Leagues Club and Crushers Leagues Club. In fact, the Gaythorne R.S.L. and the Broncos Leagues Club run courtesy bus services through those areas of Stafford and Everton Park that the suggestions of the Liberal and National Parties' propose to remove from the Brisbane electorate.
- They use the sporting facilities at Lang Park, West Mitchelton Rugby League Football Club, Mitchelton Youth Club and Downey Park.

The Stafford and Everton Park areas actually have a great deal in common with the areas of Grange and Alderley. They were developed around the same time and have similar building styles, reflecting similar characteristics of Brisbane's inner northern suburbs.

The overwhelming response of residents in the Stafford area who have become aware of the proposed changes is clearly in support of remaining in the Brisbane electorate.

The National Party suggestion even proposes dividing the City of Redcliffe between two electorates. The National Party proposal therefore destroys the community of interest at both ends: Redcliffe City in the north and Stafford and Everton Park in the south.

Convenient Location of the Brisbane Electorate Office

The electors of Stafford and Everton Park naturally gravitate toward the Brisbane electorate office, not only because they are part of the division but also because of the very close proximity of the office.

In addition, a bus service runs through Stafford and past the Brisbane electorate office, with the bus stop being across the road from the office.

Electors of Stafford and Everton Park regularly call or visit the Brisbane office seeking assistance for various matters because of its convenience.

(As an example, in March, 2006, sixty businesses in the Everton Park area experienced a loss of Telstra phone services. The Brisbane electorate office received requests seeking assistance to rectify the problem. This most recent incident highlighted the fact that the focus of the Stafford and Everton Park area is towards Brisbane, not Petrie.)

The Brisbane electorate office has been in its current, highly visible location in the Grange for just over fourteen years. It is therefore well known to the people of Stafford and Everton Park as a point of contact.

Insignificant Geographical Boundary

The National Party suggestion proposes using Kedron Brook as the northern boundary of the Brisbane electorate. While this is appropriate where it divides the Brisbane City Council local government area from the Pine Rivers Shire, it is an insignificant geographical feature and therefore an insignificant boundary within the Brisbane City Council area itself.

It is crossed five times within a short distance and such are the nature of the crossings, especially on Osborne Road, Burwood Road and Shand Street, that drivers would barely notice that a creek had been crossed.

Kedron Brook is not a significant barrier and therefore does not merit any claim to be a boundary within the Brisbane area.

SUGGESTED INCLUSION OF THE GAP IN THE DIVISION OF BRISBANE

The Gap has been a part of the electorate of Ryan since that electorate was created prior to the 1949 election.

As a result, its electors have built up a strong identity as constituents of Ryan.

The Gap's half-century-plus association with the Ryan electorate should not be easily dismissed.

Because of its geographic location, The Gap has built up a separate identity. The name of its main shopping area, The Gap Village, reflects this sentiment.

However, the National Party proposal actually divides the suburb of The Gap, so that part of it retains its association with Ryan while the remainder is cast adrift to create a new focus. This hardly maintains a community of interest for The Gap.

There is no reason why the link of The Gap with the Ryan electorate should be broken when both the divisions of Ryan and Brisbane are within quota.

Like Brisbane, the enrolment in Ryan as at 2nd December, 2005 and projected enrolment as 30th November, 2007 are within the quota range. There is no reason why the boundary between Brisbane and Ryan should be altered.

Furthermore, an examination of population trends would indicate that tacking areas on to Brisbane at the margins is not sustainable. With the increasing density of population in the CBD and the inner northern suburbs – from New Farm out to Newmarket and, in future, Stafford and Everton Park – areas at the extremities, such as The Gap were it to be added to Brisbane, would come under pressure in future redistributions to be relocated.

CONCLUSION

The needlessly disruptive changes proposed by the Liberal and National Parties:

- Will not assist the constituents affected by those changes.
- Will damage the community of interests those electors have.
- Are unnecessary because the division of Brisbane is already within quota.

I recommend the Redistribution Committee reject the suggested changes and allow the Brisbane division to consolidate within its current boundaries after the substantial changes made in 2004.