The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND

Comment Number Twenty One on Public Suggestions

Australian Labor Party – Queensland Branch

6 pages

COMMENT

№ - 2 1

Please address all correspondence to:
THE STATE SECRETARY, ALP (Qld.), P.O. Box 5032, West End Q 4101
1st Floor, TLC Building, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane Q 4101

Tel: 07 3844 8101 Fax: 07 3844 8085 Email: info@qld.alp.org.au

17 March 2006

Redistribution Committee for Queensland
Australian Electoral Commission
7th Floor Collection House
488 Queen Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Commissioners

On behalf of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Labor Party, I attach our comments on public suggestions for the Commissioner's consideration.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely

Milton Dick
STATE SECRETARY
Encl

COMMENT

№ - 21

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (QUEENSLAND BRANCH)
COMMENTS ON SUGGESTIONS
17th MARCH 2006

INTRODUCTION

When preparing its suggestions for the Commissioners, the ALP was mindful of the ways in which successive Commissioners have sought to apply the criteria of community of interest. In its 2003 Report, the Augmented Electoral Commission for Queensland stated:

(par 11) "Within the constraints imposed by the numerical criteria and the other considerations, the Commission adopted the view that it is highly desirable that electoral boundaries be readily recognisable. Accordingly, the Commission was guided by Local Government boundaries, locality boundaries, main roads, railways, waterways and other linear features, wherever possible."

The ALP sees no reason for the Commissioners to desist from that approach. Accordingly, the merits of the suggestions made can be rated to the extent to which, where possible, Local Government Boundaries have been adhered to and, where not, whether clear and recognisable boundaries have been suggested.

On the criteria of existing electoral boundaries, each of the major parties has claimed that they have sought to effect minimal changes where possible. If we look at, for example, the Gold Coast Divisions, Bowman, Dickson and Lilley, little or no change has been suggested. However as was outlined in our suggestion, the criterion of existing boundaries under the Electoral Act has a lesser importance than the criteria of community of interest. That then means either we've all got it right with respect to the Divisions where no-one has suggested changes or our suggestions of no changes should also be tested against whether a better arrangement under the community of interest criteria can be made for those Divisions. As an example of the latter, we have already suggested that the Carina and Carindale areas be united into the Bonner Division.

As an example of a critique of unnecessary changes being sought, the ALP refers the Commissioners to the separate comments of the Member for Brisbane, Mr Arch Bevis MP. Mr Bevis has outlined the reasons why on this occasion the boundaries of the Divisions of Brisbane and Ryan should be unchanged and why such an outcome would best meet the community of interest criteria.

Turning to the issue of what might be the name of the new Division, notwithstanding the names proposed by the Liberal and National Parties, the ALP is of the view that E.G. Theodore was both a far more significant community, political and national figure than either Chalk or Adermann.

Next we come to the matter of significant differences between the suggestions made. Rather than going through each submission, one by one, we thought a better approach might be to highlight Divisions and/or regions where differing suggestions have been

made and then to state why the suggestions made by the ALP under the community of interest criteria are superior to the other propositions. We'll start with Kennedy.

KENNEDY

The MP for Kennedy, Mr Katter and the Liberal and National Parties have each but with varying degrees of emphasis sought to transfer a significant number of electors currently in Townsville LGA which itself is wholly within the Division of Herbert. It is proposed that these electors be placed in Dawson. The addition of the electors as proposed then has further flow on effects further south notably, but not confined, to the Division of Capricornia. The National Party also seeks to split Dalrymple LGA, (currently entirely within Kennedy), between Capricornia and Kennedy.

The Commissioners may be assured that the easiest thing in the world for the ALP would have been to propose another variation in such an arrangement. We appreciate though Mr Katter's wish for Kennedy to continue to contain Mt Isa and that there are several good reasons why such an arrangement is desirable.

The ALP is cognisant of the 2003 Commissioners Report, where, with regard to the Division of Herbert, the Commissioners advised (par 15) that they preferred to split one LGA (Thuringowa) rather than two (Townsville and Thuringowa). The ALP agrees with that notion. Over the years Kennedy has changed from being an inland Division with a coastal component to a coastal Division with an inland component. Moreover, what does Mt Isa have in common with Innisfail, Cairns or Thuringowa? We'd say culturally less than with Longreach and Winton both of which are in Maranoa.

So, the ALP would submit that it agrees with the Commissioners previous approach of not splitting the Townsville LGA. It is not reasonable in this exercise to disregard community of interest in other Divisions merely to protect existing boundaries in one.

That said there are several good points contained in Mr Katter's suggestion, notably the treatment of the surplus in Leichhardt and his suggestion that Palm Island be kept in Herbert. The interests of the aboriginal communities in the Northern Divisions have been ill considered in both the Coalition Parties suggestions but not by Mr Katter.

NORTHERN COASTAL

Analysis of suggestions can't be divorced from what has been suggested elsewhere (eg Kennedy). Earlier the ALP expressed its opposition to suggestions that Townsville LGA be spilt. It is important to look at the flow on effects of such a proposal. We note that each of the parties including the ALP have suggested that Broadsound and Sarina Shires be added to Capricornia but that Banana Shire be transferred from Capricornia. That's all that's needed. The Nationals then split Dalrymple LGA between Capricornia and Kennedy. The Liberals, on the other hand, suggest that Mirani Shire be transferred from Dawson and that Capricornia then lose Duaringa Shire.

To the ALP, the Liberal's suggestion is yet another instance of insufficient care and attention being paid to the interests of Aboriginal Communities. The Woorabinda Community, which is in the Duaringa Shire, relies on Rockhampton for all its major

services. The town of Blackwater, also in Duaringa, relies on Rockhampton for shopping, media and educational services.

Mirani Shire, which the Liberals submit should go to Capricornia, is in fact part of the Pioneer Valley which is part of the hinterland of Mackay. The Liberals are wrong to say that its proposals here are due to the constraints imposed by the numerical requirements of the Act when these are entirely the result of its unwise proposal to split Townsville LGA.

With regard to the Division of Hinkler, the ALP notes the suggestions made by both Kolan and Mundubbera Shires. These Shires together with Eidsvold, Gayndah, Monto and Perry were only added at the 2003 Redistribution to Hinkler. This time both the ALP and the Liberals suggest these Shires as well as Isis be transferred from Hinkler (with the exception that the Liberals split Kolan Shire between Wide Bay and Hinkler). The Nationals delete fewer of these Shires from Hinkler. In neither case do the Coalition parties give ground other than the numerical requirements of the Act to justify the return of Banana LGA to Wide Bay. We still think that given its size and relationship to Gladstone that Banana LGA should be placed with Hinkler and that this should be a higher priority for the Commissioners than the retention of Isis, (containing about half the electors of Banana LGA but also having a stronger connection with the adjacent LGA of Hervey Bay) in Hinkler.

As Wide Bay is caught up in the issue of where to draw the new Division, the ALP will comment on it in the section dealing with the Sunshine Coast.

SUNSHINE COAST (including Wide Bay and new Division)

The ALP reiterates our suggestion that only Deception Bay South needs to be transferred from Petrie to Longman. This would allow Longman to become a Caboolture LGA only Division and also allow Caloundra to be contained in the same Division, (Fisher) and further allows a cleaner, more understandable boundary separating parts of the Maroochy LGA between Fisher and Fairfax. We note and support the suggestion made by the Nationals' MLA for Maroochydore.

The Coalition Parties both split Caboolture and Caloundra. The Liberals suggest a major coastal component for the new seat their submission creates. The Nationals' submission contains less of a coastal component but both submissions suggest a Division running from Kingaroy to the coast.

The ALP acknowledges the difficulties in drawing the boundaries of the new Division. Our submission on the Division of Blair, for the purposes of comparison might be set against the Liberal's proposed Division of Chalk and the National's proposed Division of Adermann. All the major parties submissions have in common the northern parts of the current Division of Blair, including the LGA's of Kingaroy, Nanango, Crows Nest and Kilcoy.

The ALP's submission states that, "Sometimes we are forced to choose the least worst of the alternatives. This is such an instance". We further acknowledge that at the next Redistribution for Queensland it's likely that the new Division will be centred on Gympie and Noosa.

In some respects each of the Parties submissions for the new Division propose a hybrid of a coastal/rural seat. But only the ALP's suggestion creates a seat without a coastal component (as distinct from containing areas that look towards the coast). Elsewhere, we've also noted that with the growth in Brisbane, particularly south of the River and including the Springfield corridor, that it makes sense to draw a Division centred on Ipswich.

Our different approach helps explain some of the differences between the Parties for the new Division being proposed. Aside from the above, the ALP by refusing to suggest that Townsville LGA be split also transfers electors from Kennedy to Maranoa which then sheds its acquired surplus back to the new Division.

If all these all those considerations are taken into account, the major differences between the parties comes down to the treatment of Petrie's surplus. That is whether Caboolture and Caloundra LGA's should or shouldn't be split and whether, since all the Parties draw a Division in which the major population is non coastal, it's desirable to include a coastal component with interests significantly different to those of a Division without a coastal component.

On balance, the ALP's suggestion is easily the 'least worst solution".

BRISBANE (North of Brisbane River)

The ALP has earlier referred to the submission made by Mr Bevis, MP for Brisbane which we fully support. Of the five Divisions of Petrie, Brisbane, Lilley, Dickson and Ryan, only the Division of Petrie is outside the tolerance allowed by the future quota. That problem is solved by taking Deception Bay out of Petrie. The result is that no other changes are needed. The Nationals unnecessarily split the Shire of Redcliffe between Longman and Petrie. The Liberals split the small section of Pine Rivers Shire (North Lakes), now in Petrie, between Longman and Petrie. Due to numerical requirements this area could not be put in Dickson (itself a Pine Rivers LGA only Division). So the good they do by taking Deception Bay, the only part of Caboolture LGA not in Longman, from Petrie is then undone by having Pine Rivers LGA split between three Divisions instead of two.

BRISBANE (South of Brisbane River including Blair and Forde)

Both Coalition Parties make similar suggestions with the Division of Blair. They both suggest that Boonah Shire and a major part of Beaudesert LGA be transferred from the Division of Forde as a means of moving the Brisbane surplus. Frankly, at first the ALP simply saw these proposals as absurd. Upon reflection both Liberal and National Party proposals are a form of problem avoidance but at the same time sending a signal to the Commissioners. (We saw a similar train of thought with Kennedy/Townsville). The ALP assumes the Coalition parties are suggesting something along the lines of.... "We know that it makes sense for you to consolidate a Division more on Ipswich LGA. Yet for various reasons we don't want to formally suggest this. Here's the

madcap alternative that lets us blame you, the Commissioners, for the outcome which we consider inevitable anyway"

Let's look at how the Division of Rankin is dealt with by the Coalition. On projected numbers, Rankin on current boundaries would be a Logan LGA based seat but with around 5000 electors from Brisbane LGA, mostly drawn from Kuraby. Given that at the projected date Rankin will also be around 5000 electors above quota, it then makes sense before taking any other steps to transfer the Brisbane LGA electors to the adjoining Division, in this case Moreton. Yet neither Coalition Party attempts this sensible change. The Labor submission takes these Brisbane suburbs out of Rankin and puts other parts of Logan City into Rankin, namely Loganlea and Waterford West.

In contrast, the Liberal submission retains these Brisbane City Council suburbs within Rankin and adds in Parkinson (Brisbane City Council) and North MacLean and Park Ridge South (Beaudesert Shire). As a consequence, less of Rankin is contained within Logan City under the Liberal Party's suggestions than under the existing boundaries.

The Labor Party does not object to the Liberal suggestion of transferring Shailer Park and Daisy Hill into Forde, as long as necessary additions to Rankin come from within Logan City and not outside of it. That would retain Rankin as a seat firmly based on Logan City.

In summary, the ALP makes Rankin a Division wholly made up of parts of Logan LGA but also seeks a better configuration of those parts of Logan to be within Rankin.

At the western end of Rankin, we note that the Nationals have used the same boundary, (The Mount Lindsay Highway), as a boundary between Oxley and Rankin. Here at least, whilst Logan LGA contains too many electors to be contained in a single Division, the clear and understandable boundary of the Mount Lindsay Highway is able to be used to effect a better arrangement of Logan LGA electors within Rankin.

We can't satisfy Mr William Green's suggestion concerning the boundary between Moreton and Bonner but we feel we go some way towards satisfying the suggestion made by Mr Bob Irwin who suggests a clearer boundary be drawn at the eastern end of Oxley. As Mr Irwin has outlined, Oxley Creek is an easily understood boundary and we use it plus the Mount Lindsay Highway as an eastern boundary for Oxley.

Conclusion

The task of the Redistribution Committee is a challenging one. We look forward to reviewing the proposal of the Redistribution Committee.