



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Comment Number 40 on Objections

The Hon Peter Slipper MP

Member for Fisher

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The Hon Peter Slipper MP

Federal Member for Fisher

AEC Redistribution Committee
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The Redistribution Committee

I am writing to comment on the objections to the Australian Electoral Commission's proposed redistribution of federal boundaries in Queensland.

I reiterate my concerns as outlined in previous submissions: the proposed boundaries fail to comply with section 66 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918. The Act requires that the allowable enrolment variations between electorates be within +/-3.5% of the average. The AEC has instead elected to aim for a variation target of +/-1.5%.

This is not the intent of the Act and it also has resulted in a greater number of electors being shifted among electorates than would be required under some of the public submissions.

This is the fifth redistribution of federal seats in Queensland since 1990. Commentators have suggested that it is likely that continued high population growth in Queensland will trigger another boundary redistribution in the following election, due around 2010.

For this reason, it is important that the new seat be placed in the growth corner of the state, the South East.

The placement of the proposed new seat – currently known as “Wright” – in Central Queensland has resulted in a “concertina” of boundary changes southwards, unnecessarily uprooting a greater number of electors.

This concern is reflected in a significant number of objections to the AEC. Noosa Council noted that:

“Noosa Council's preference is to stay in the Fairfax Division on the basis that:-

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*(a) There is no common community interest with the Wide Bay Division;
and*

*(b) The interests of the Noosa Shire area would be better served if Noosa
remained as part of the Fairfax Division centred on the Sunshine
Coast."*

Similar concerns as a result of these "forced" changes to electorates to the south and south west have been expressed by Aramac Shire Council, Esk Shire Council, Maryborough City Council and Wondai Shire Council.

As I advised in previous correspondence, the proposed boundaries fail to give adequate weight to the need to retain communities of interest. The AEC proposal also means that a greater number of electors will be "shifted" into different electorates than is required under other suggestions.


This concern is shared by Mr John Cherry, who, in his objection letter to the AEC, noted:

"My objection is that the proposed boundaries of electorates between Ipswich and Rockhampton fail to take into account long established communities of interest, and result in transfers of substantial numbers of electors for no good purpose."

I understand the difficulties faced by the AEC in determining revised boundaries that meet the required population criteria but also communities of interest. That said, I believe the proposed boundaries are impractical and flawed and that they should be discarded and the AEC start afresh.

I hope that my comments help the AEC to make decisions for the most practical outcome.

Yours sincerely



PETER SLIPPER

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