



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 2

Aramac Shire Council

5 pages

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Aramac Shire Council

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28 June 2006

Ms Anne Bright
Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland
Level 7 Collection House
488 Queen Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000



Dear Ms Bright

Please find enclosed Aramac Shire Council's "Objection Submission" to the recently published electoral boundary changes.

We strongly oppose these changes and urge the Commission to reconsider its decision to the benefit of Western Queensland.

Yours Sincerely

Gary Peoples
Mayor of Aramac Shire

OBJECTION

№ - 2

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ARAMAC SHIRE COUNCIL'S OBJECTION TO REDISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

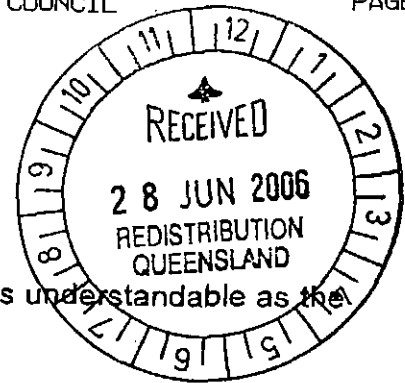
Aramac Shire Council requests that you reconsider the proposed carving up of the Federal Electorate of Maranoa as such a proposed change could seriously affect the future of Western shires through the breaking down of the existing communities of interest.

Your recent proposal to redistribute the communities within the Maranoa Electorate is indicative of a lack of understanding of the communities of interest that exist within Maranoa. Such a redistribution would serve no other purpose than to create chaos and confusion in an area that has been well represented by its current sitting member.

Currently the electorate of Maranoa contains shires that have a strong bond in terms of their remoteness and their primary industry base. Severing most of the Western Queensland Shires and placing them in with shires/cities such as Gladstone and Mount Morgan whose communities of interest are totally dissimilar is certainly an example of failing to keep communities of interest together.

When your organisation changed the electoral boundaries prior to 1998 and placed much of Western Queensland into the Capricornia Electorate,

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representation for this area was vastly diminished. This is understandable as the majority of voters are based in the City of Rockhampton.

While not waxing lyrical about the effectiveness of the current Member for Maranoa, it must be said that he has continued to serve his vast electorate well. He understands the region and has a solid knowledge of each community's needs and an even better understanding of the industries within his electorate. This would be lost once redistribution takes affect. The seat of Maranoa has no large populated cities to which a sitting members and as such, a sitting member realises he has many small communities to serve and must serve all.

A new member and a new seat would be much more difficult to represent considering not only the vastness, but the diverse nature of the communities within the electorate. It is a milestone that Queensland has earned another seat in Parliament, but if the proposal is not reconsidered then a potential gain could be a devastating loss for "grassroots" rural Queensland.

Electors of Aramac have not had an opportunity to vote consecutively in the same electorate for quite some time as the Shire has been shifted from Kennedy to Capricornia to Maranoa and now to the newly formed electorate of Wright. This constant shifting serves no purpose other than to confuse the voters and possibly increase their disdain for the process of compulsory voting.

Aramac Shire Council and certainly most of the other shires within this region have a greater affinity with areas such as Roma and Charleville then they do with areas such as Mount Morgan and Gladstone.

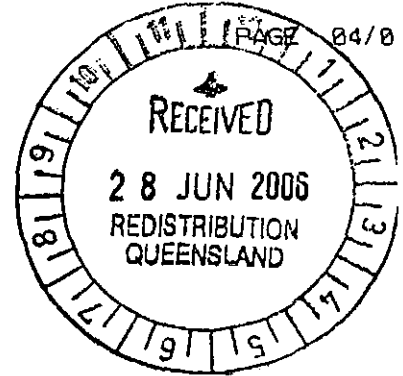
This affinity is not only industry based, but has a myriad of other affiliations including social, historical, networking, sporting and tourism.

Social Communities of Interest

Socially, people from Western Queensland congregate and compare experiences – some as simple, but overwhelmingly important as rainfall – they know life in the bush and they like to gather socially with others whose interests run a parallel line.

Historical Communities of Interest

Historically, there is always a bond of brotherhood that connects people in Outback Queensland – a bond that has been forged from struggling to make a living on the land – a concept not as easily digestible to the city dweller.



Sporting Communities of Interest

Sporting wise – Outback Queensland has developed its own sporting competitions and the electorate of Maranoa unites Outback Queensland under its banner – providing a single entity for a conglomeration of small shires. For example Aramac is part of a racing division that includes Charleville and Roma.

Tourism Communities of Interest

When it comes to tourism the shires within the Maranoa electorate have worked collaboratively together to create diverse and interesting cultural experiences for the discerning state, interstate and national visitor. The Matilda Highway connects most of these shires and is contained mostly within the Maranoa Electorate.

In the upgrade of the Matilda Highway and when seeking Federal Assistance, the shires have only one Representative to liaise with. This is a distinct advantage as there are no political machinations from bi-partisan representation.

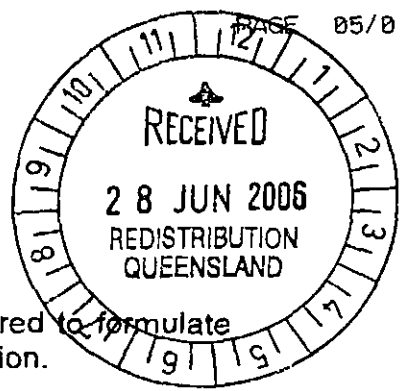
Networking Communities of Interest

Networking within Local Government circles is like the social aspect of Maranoa confined within communities of interest. It is more probable that a councillor will interact and network with a counterpart from Roma or Charleville than one from Gladstone. This has distinct advantages for the local government areas within Maranoa. It has been the reason why Western Shires have been so progressive and have met the challenges so effectively.

Realignment of Federal Electoral boundaries may appear effective on paper but it is unlikely that the ramifications of blinkered number crunching will be successful in reality. Shifting a boundary line on a map has far-reaching consequences including the potential to irreparably destroy communities of interest that have been nurtured and fostered through hard work, commonality and a sense of direction for Outback Queensland.

It has been stated on many occasions that the electoral boundary redistribution process relies heavily on maintaining communities of interest. In actual fact, according to your publication, "Electoral Newsfile", boundary and elector redistribution relies on numbers, and numbers alone. This being the case, there are options other than the one presented that would serve to ensure the number quota per electorate is fulfilled, while at the same time providing as little disruption as possible and maintaining communities of interest.

This option involves the shifting of the gains to the Maranoa Electorate to the seat of Wright and keeping the losses to the electorate within the Maranoa



Electorate. An additional 2675 elector numbers would be required to formulate the Wright Electorate and would certainly be a more plausible action.

This would maintain communities of interest within Maranoa; combine communities of interest within Wright and last, but by no means least, keep the elector numbers within the appropriate margins as laid down by your guidelines.

This is a solution that provides an opportunity for everyone to win and would provide a new electorate that is much easier to administer and understand by a newly elected member of parliament.

As such, on behalf of the peoples of this community, the Aramac Shire Council strongly requests that you reconsider your proposed option in favour of a more positive approach for Western Queensland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Peoples".

Gary Peoples
Mayor of Aramac Shire