



The Federal Redistribution 2006  
**QUEENSLAND**



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**Objection Number 124**

**Hervey Bay City Council**

**5 pages**



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The Hervey Bay City Council opposes the planned redistribution of Federal Electorate boundaries in Queensland because it believes that the redistribution fails to take into consideration Section 66 (3) b) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, sections (I) to (V) which states:

(b) subject to paragraph (a), shall give due consideration, in relation to each proposed Electoral Division to:

(I) community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social, and regional interests;

(II) means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;

(IV) the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division;

(V) the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory.

Under the proposal Hervey Bay would be split from the existing seat of Wide Bay and moved into the seat of Hinkler, based on the city of Bundaberg.

The proposed changes would split Hervey Bay from its sister city, Maryborough, and counteract years of hard work to develop a cohesive entity for the Fraser Coast.

The cities of Hervey Bay (pop 52,818) and Maryborough (pop 25,714) along with the smaller rural shires that surround them, Woocoo (pop 3,262) and Tiaro (pop 5,105), form the centre of the Fraser Coast – a recognisable tourist destination and economic hub of the Wide Bay.

Because of their proximity and interdependence the two larger cities of Hervey Bay and Maryborough have embraced the Federal and State Government policies to work co-operatively to create regions and regional voices to secure services.

That work and momentum would be undone by the splitting of the two cities across two Federal Electorates.

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Hervey Bay and Maryborough are 20 minutes apart and each is intrinsically linked to the other, with many residents living in one city and working in the other.

Hervey Bay's industrial development started with the opening of the Urangan Pier from which goods manufactured or processed (sugar and timber) in Maryborough were exported.

The links between the two cities has strengthened over time and both are now linked economically, culturally and on the sporting fields.

Up to one third of Maryborough's workforce lives in Hervey Bay and commutes to Maryborough daily.

Hervey Bay, with its jet airport, whales, fishing and as the gateway to World Heritage Listed Fraser Island, is the major access point through which tourists reach the area and then filter out into Maryborough and the surrounding areas.

The cities, and ratepayers from the surrounding councils of Woocoo and Tiaro, share facilities and have embarked on a number of projects together to improve the living standards of residents.

These projects include the development and marketing of the Fraser Coast Enterprise Zone to promote the Fraser Coast as a place to establish a business. The project aims to create employment in all four rapidly growing Fraser Coast local government areas.

The two cities funded, along with the State Government, the Fraser Coast Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy, to plan the growth of recreation and sporting facilities across the region and stop duplication of facilities.

The strategy takes into consideration the sporting and recreation needs of groups in the Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Tiaro and Woocoo local government areas.

The strategy aims to ensure that top-standard facilities are developed on the Fraser Coast, facilities are not duplicated and they are built where they are most needed.

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Similarly the Fraser Coast Development Council, comprising the mayors of the four Fraser Coast Councils, has been working closely for many years to develop services across the region without duplication. It spearheaded a State and Federally funded feasibility study which identified the location of a regional airport between Maryborough and Hervey Bay.

In recent years there has been a concerted effort by Federal and State Governments to get councils to work co-operatively and collectively in sub-regions to ensure they have a unified voice when it comes to lobbying for services and funding.

Hervey Bay and Maryborough have been at the forefront of that movement through the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (21 local government areas) to lobby for funding, especially road funding, and setting priorities for regional development.

By splitting Hervey Bay and Maryborough the region's ability to talk as a region with one voice in Federal Parliament is severely undermined.

To get to Hervey Bay, except by air, everyone has to come through Maryborough so Hervey Bay depends on the support of Maryborough to secure Federal Government Road funding, a system that would be made more complicated by splitting the two cities across two Federal Electorates which would be seen to have competing priorities.

The two cities share many things in common. Businesses have outlets in both cities, the cities share a newspaper and television station, civic leaders, sports stars, cultural identities and family members as well as a health service (private and public) and a campus of the University of Southern Queensland, police and emergency services.

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These operations are run as one, as if there were no city boundaries.

The State Government is also driving change in local government and asking council's to work more co-operatively, if not merge, under the Size, Shape and Sustainability discussion paper. There is a desire by the Minister for Local Government and Planning, the

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Honourable Desley Boyle, to see "truly regional planning". Her stated opinion is to see fewer Councils and Councillors in Queensland.

The four Fraser Coast councils, because of their regional proximity and common interests, have agreed to strengthen already close relationships and examine closer working relationships.

The future of those talks and the economic benefits that would be derived would be impeded by having Hervey Bay and parts of the Woocoo Shire in a different Federal Electorate.

### **Alternative:**

A new electorate should focus on the rapidly growing coastal cities based around Maryborough-Hervey Bay, Bundaberg-Bargara and 1770-Agnes Waters inland to include hinterland areas to the Great Dividing Range.

These areas share a community of interest in water supply, roads, job creation, tourism, social infrastructure (aging population from Sea Change and Tree Change movement of Baby Boomers north), environmental and development issues.

They are already linked together economically, culturally, socially and politically.

### **Conclusion:**

Federal seats should be aligned along definable regions such as the Fraser Coast, which includes the four Councils of Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Tiaro and Woocoo, so that representation is based on a community of interest and a shared economic future.

To that end the Hervey Bay City Council believes that to best meet the requirements of the Electoral Act 1918, sections (I) to (V) Hervey Bay and Maryborough should remain in the same Federal Electoral Division because together they:

- (I) form a community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social, and regional interests;
- (II) they are linked by road, the major road and rail access to Hervey Bay is via Maryborough;

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(IV) The physical features of the Fraser Coast means that Hervey Bay is surrounded by sea so its major land access is through Maryborough;

(V) the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State mean that the two cities are now represented by two State Government representatives and one Federal representative. If the changes went ahead they would be represented by two State and two Federal representatives adding another layer of red tape and bureaucracy.

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**20 July 2006**

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