



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 130

Hon Peter Slipper MP

Member for Fisher

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The Hon Peter Slipper MP

Federal Member for Fishie

The Secretary
Redistribution Committee for Queensland
Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 2590
BRISBANE QLD 4001



Dear Sir/Madam,

I object strongly to the recently announced redistribution proposals for electoral boundaries in Queensland.

The Australian Electoral Commission should return to the drawing board to start again because the boundaries announced do not comply with section 66 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and pay scant regard to the public submissions received.

Subsection 3 of section 66 provides that:

- (3) *In making the proposed redistribution, the Redistribution Committee:*
 - (a) *shall, as far as practicable, endeavour to ensure that, if the State or Territory were redistributed in accordance with the proposed redistribution, the number of electors enrolled in each Electoral Division in the State or Territory would not, at the projection time determined under section 63A, be less than 96.5% or more than 103.5% of the average divisional enrolment of that State or Territory at that time; and*
 - (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;*

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Serving the community from the mountains to the sea!

- (ii) *means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;*
- (iv) *the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division; and*
- (v) *the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory;*

and subject thereto the quota of electors for the State or Territory shall be the basis for the proposed redistribution, and the Redistribution Committee may adopt a margin of allowance, to be used whenever necessary, but in no case shall the quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-tenth more or one-tenth less.

(3A) When applying subsection (3), the Redistribution Committee must treat the matter in subparagraph (3)(b)(v) as subordinate to the matters in subparagraphs (3)(b)(i), (ii) and (iv).

Thus at the projected time under section 63A, the recommended variation is supposed to be plus or minus 3.5% of the average divisional enrolment for Queensland not the artificial non legislated for plus or minus 1.5% variation that has largely commended itself to the Commission.

It is not the role of the Commission to impose criteria additional to the Act (i.e. the desirability of being as close as possible to the plus or minus 1.5% variation as possible) particularly when this results as a consequence in the provisions of section 66(3)(B) being ignored.

There has been no public outcry in Queensland over the provisions of the Act and it is not the role of the Commission to amend the law without reference to Parliament or the people.

The Liberal Party of Australia, the Australian Labor Party and the Nationals all lodged whole of Queensland submissions which appear to have been completely ignored by the Commission. Other submissions related to more limited areas.

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No one suggested a new Central Queensland seat and its creation would see a much-greater level of dislocation and relocation of voters into new divisions. For example, on the basis of the Liberal Party submission, only 230,369 voters would have changed electorates compared with 353,141 voters under your proposal. It is my contention that the Liberal Party submission (and presumably those of the other parties) comply with the criteria but that the draft proposal does not.

Additionally, the choice of the name "Wright" for a new Central Queensland seat has inappropriate connotations as many people consider the electorate has been named in honour of a former Member for Capricornia. This controversy does nothing to honour the memory of Judith Wright.

While I believe the proposals to be fatally flawed, I make the following comments, which, if implemented, would go some distance towards restoring the integrity of the Sunshine Coast as a region in an electoral context.

In the proposed redistribution, Noosa and Gympie have been placed in an electorate that is based at Maryborough. This means that residents at Peregian, for example and other areas, will need to travel to Maryborough to visit their elected federal representative. This seems to be an odd expectation to place on communities that are very much part of the Sunshine Coast.

Gympie is increasingly an extension of the Sunshine Coast. The Liberal Party submission would have seen Gympie and Noosa in Fairfax and consequently most of Maroochy Shire including Buderim and part of Caloundra City in Fisher have been ignored. **I reiterate support for the original Liberal Party submission.**

In my letter commenting on submissions made to the Commission, I supported the return of that part of Maroochydoore currently not in Fisher to this electorate. This is consistent with the view of Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydoore. Instead, the central Sunshine Coast has remained dismembered and a new artificial boundary created between Maroochydoore, which has transferred to "new Fairfax", and Mooloolaba and Alexandra Headland, which remain in "new Fisher". This peculiar suggestion totally ignores any suggestion of the community of interest of the central Sunshine Coast.

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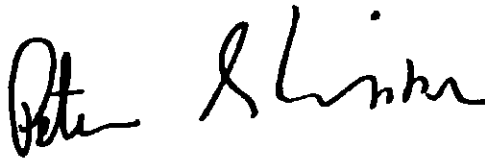
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Even on the Commission's draft boundaries, the area designated to be "new Fairfax" should better have been called "new Fisher" given the shifting of close to 50,000 Fisher votes into what is now deemed "Fairfax" in the last two redistributions. Similarly, on your proposals, "Wright" should be called "Hinkler", "Hinkler" called "Wide Bay" and "Wide Bay" called "Fairfax".

I hope the Commission takes this opportunity to conduct a new redistribution of Queensland electorates disregarding its initial flawed proposals and at the very least move to implement the suggestions for the Sunshine Coast region included in the original Liberal Party submission, which will conform to the terms of reference and respect the community of interest of the region.

I thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Yours sincerely



PETER SLIPPER

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