



The Federal Redistribution 2006  
**QUEENSLAND**



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**Objection Number 172**

**Winton Shire Council**

**6 pages**

BC:DM  
81:594  
18<sup>th</sup> July, 2006

Redistribution Committee for Queensland  
GPO Box 2590  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Committee members

**Re: Proposed seat of Wright**

Attached, please find Council's submission and objection to Winton Shire's transfer to the proposed seat of "Wright".

Please contact the undersigned if further information is required.

Yours faithfully

Bob Hoogland  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**OBJECTION**

**No 172**

## Objection to Proposed Redistribution of Maranoa by AEC

1. The Winton Shire Council (WSC) objects to the proposals put forward by the Australian Electoral Commission with respect to the Federal Division of Maranoa on the grounds of a total absence of community of interest with the population centre of Gladstone.
2. WSC did not provide suggestions to the AEC when it was invited to do so earlier this year. WSC believed that because the Federal Division of Maranoa was within the acceptable tolerance range regarding numbers of electors, its boundaries did not require alteration and therefore, would not be changed. The Council did, however, respond to the invitation to make comments on the suggestions, but I note that this apparently fell outside the stipulated timeframe of acceptable receipt for those comments to be considered.
3. WSC believes that the Committee has reached some unsupported conclusions in its report as demonstrated by Clauses 49 and 50. The statement, "*These primary industry areas are united by their geographic proximity and their dependence on Gladstone...*" cannot be supported by fact with regard to the eight western shires of Aramac, Barcaldine, Blackall, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach, Tambo and Winton.

### Commercial Links

4. While these eight shires all support agriculture, there is no cropping (as opposed to grazing), nor any large scale mining in any of these shires. There is opal mining and gypsum mining in the Winton shire, but neither of these industries is supported by or is dependent in any way on what happens in Gladstone. The gypsum is utilized primarily in the sugar and other agricultural industries and much of the opal is sold in small parcels in the rough state.
5. The wool industry, though declining, is still significant in these shires and as far as I am aware there is no wool exported from Gladstone. Even forty years ago, when there were still sheep grazed on the central highlands, there would have been no wool exported from Gladstone because it was all transported south to be sold. Thus, there is no historical linkage between Gladstone and the western shires, either.
6. The beef industry is now the major industry in the eight western shires and this does confer some involvement and community of interest with shires to the east, but more so to Rockhampton, through bull sales and shows such as Beef 2006, rather than to Gladstone. The eight western shires are all free of cattle tick while the area east of Alpha is considered to be tick infested. Commonwealth and state laws require all stock traveling west from the eastern shires to be inspected and dipped for tick at Alpha. Because cattle that are free of tick can contract tick-borne diseases when introduced to ticky areas, producers tend to consign only slaughter stock to the east. Consequently, store stock are generally consigned to tick-free areas for sale or feedlotting. The area south to the Darling Downs and into NSW are tick free.

**OBJECTION**

**№ 172**

7. There are meat processing plants in Rockhampton and Biloela, but none of significance in Gladstone. The beef from these processing plants is actually exported from Brisbane. Consequently, Gladstone has no involvement with the beef industry apart from in its immediate surrounds.
8. Trends in the beef industry are towards finishing stock in feedlots and the majority of "feeder" stock that are sold direct to feedlot from the eight western shires are consigned to feedlots on the Darling Downs (Roma/ Goondiwindi/ Toowoomba) where the bulk of feedlot capacity in Queensland exists. For this reason, the sale of store stock through Roma saleyards (the largest cattle selling centre in Australia) is a very attractive option to many producers from these eight western shires.
9. Consequently, there are only limited linkages within the beef industry between the east and west of the proposed Wright.

### **Transport Links**

10. While there are some significant feedlots on the central highlands, most producers in the Winton shire prefer not to consign their stock to that area because of the issue with cattle tick as explained in Cl.6 and also due to higher freight rates associated with the road conditions of the Capricorn Highway. Type 2 road trains cannot legally travel east of Alpha, while they can travel as far as Mitchell when transporting stock to the Darling Downs or Roma sale yards via the Landsborough and Warrego Highways.
11. Transport links between the eight western shires and Gladstone are in fact, very poor. There are passenger rail services twice a week east of Longreach and a road service connecting Winton to that service. However, long term under-expenditure on infrastructure between Winton and Emerald threatens this link and the growth in volume of coal traffic causing congestion east of Emerald is also a threat to the long term operation of rail services west of Emerald.
12. Passenger and livestock haulage on rail generally operate below cost and therefore require a CSO payment from the State government to Qld Rail in order to operate. Consequently, the case to invest significantly in the rail infrastructure west of Emerald has a very low priority with Qld Rail.
13. There are daily coach services between Brisbane and Mt Isa which service Winton as well as a coach service two days per week from Longreach to Rockhampton. The time of departure necessitates an overnight stay in Longreach for anyone wishing to travel from Winton to Rockhampton by coach. I expect that the time of arrival in Rockhampton would also require an overnight stay there if traveling to Gladstone.
14. Air services between the western shires and Gladstone (or even Rockhampton) are non-existent. I understand that a service from Brisbane/Gladstone/Blackwater was recently started by Qantaslink, and that this is the only air service between any of the central highlands shires and Gladstone.

**OBJECTION**

**№ 172**

15. The road link has already been mentioned, but I point out some road distances between Winton and other centres which demonstrate that Gladstone does not have proximity to these eight shires and particularly to Winton.

- Winton-Gladstone 1010km (via Rockhampton)
- Winton- Roma 890km
- Winton-Toowoomba 1250km
- Winton-Townsville 600km

### **Tourism Links**

16. Tourism is becoming a significant industry in all of Queensland now, and visitor surveys indicate that Winton has negligible links with Gladstone in this field. Winton and the other seven shires are part of the Outback Queensland RTO, which covers much of western Queensland from Mitchell in the south-east and Barrington in the south to Hughenden, Richmond, Mt Isa and Camooweal in the north.

17. All shires apart from those along the Flinders Highway are involved in marketing along the Matilda Highway, which runs north/south from Cunnamulla to Karumba via Tambo, Barcaldine and Winton. The Outback Qld Tourism Association is currently involved in the development of a marketing plan for the Matilda Highway in concert with the Kidman Way in NSW, which runs from the Victorian border through Griffith to Bourke and Barrington. The strategy for this project is to attract visitors out of Victoria into western Queensland and is funded through a grant from the Federal Tourism Development Fund.

### **Education Links**

18. Gladstone has no links with the eight western shires in terms of education as the majority of children travelling away for education attend boarding schools in Charters Towers, Townsville, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Warwick, Rockhampton or Yeppoon, but not Gladstone. While there is a full university campus in each of Townsville, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, there is not in Gladstone.

19. Winton Shire Council believes that all of the above demonstrate a strong case that Winton in particular, but the other seven western shires as well, are not "*united by their geographic proximity and their dependence on Gladstone...*". (Clause 50). In fact, the term, "*geographic proximity*" does not apply at all with respect to the eight western shires.

20. The statement made by the Committee in Clause 41, "*most provincial and or rural divisions need to be configured with a major coastal centre supporting a rural element.*" is totally unsupported by any evidence apart from a statistical necessity to meet the tight tolerance ranges imposed by the Electoral Act.

This statement is also contrary to conclusions reached by Commissioner Tom Sherman QC in his report of the Electoral and Administrative Review

**OBJECTION**

**№ 172**

Commission in Queensland in 1990. After extensive research and exhaustive public hearings that commission warned against “a wagon wheel approach to electorate configuration”.

21. Winton Shire Council believes that the sentiments expressed in Clause 41 are an unhealthy development and is opposed on social and community grounds to the principle of long, narrow electorates, similar to Wright, which, on average has a width of two shires, but stretches almost across the state.
22. In Clause 34, the Committee, “*considers that the principle of equality of electors between electoral divisions is of high importance.*” WSC would concur with that principle, but contends that there is more involved in achieving this than simply by meeting an apparent balance of numbers between electorates. A real equality of electors is manifested by an equality in access to services such as health, education and transport, as well as to their member, to media in order to publicise issues of concern. These are all related to the connectivity that a town or shire has to the main population centre of the electorate.

#### **Alternative Configuration**

23. As an alternative to the AEC proposal, Winton shire council proposes that:

- The shires of Aramac, Barcaldine, Blackall, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach, Tambo and Winton be returned to Maranoa.
  - The shire of Wondai be removed from Maranoa and added to Wright.
  - Part of the shire of Kingaroy (comprising approximately 3000 voters) be removed from Maranoa and added to Wright.
22. This simple solution will preserve the numbers in Wright and solve the acute community of interest issues for the eight western shires that the original proposal creates. There may well be community of interest issues arising from this proposal for the shires of Wondai and Kingaroy, however because of the closely settled nature of these communities, that issue does not impact as severely as in remote and sparsely populated areas.

Winton Shire Council  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Attachment I

**OBJECTION**

**№ 172**

**ATTACHMENT I**

<b>MARANOA PROPOSED BY AEC</b>			
From Maranoa	65922	66961	
From Blair			
Crow's Nest (pt)	2489	2580	
Kingaroy	7996	8225	
Nanango	5958	6131	
Rosalie (pt)	1099	1109	
From Groom			
Clifton	1782	1816	
From Wide Bay			
Wondai	3055	3135	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88301</b>	<b>89957</b>	

<b>WRIGHT PROPOSED BY AEC</b>			
From Maranoa			
Eight western shires	6848	6829	
Five central shires	13617	13891	
From Wide Bay	1119	1135	
Biggenden			
From Hinkler	46658	48588	
From Capricornia	16878	16995	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85120</b>	<b>87438</b>	

<b>MARANOA AS PER WINTON SC</b>			
As proposed by AEC	88301	89957	
Add eight western shires from Wright	6848	6829	
Less Wondai	-3055	-3135	
Less Kingaroy (part)	-2917	-3000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>89177</b>	<b>90651</b>	

<b>WRIGHT AS PER WINTON SC</b>			
As proposed by AEC	85120	87438	
Less eight western shires	-6848	-6829	
Plus Wondai	3055	3135	
Plus Kingaroy (part)	2917	3000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>84244</b>	<b>86744</b>	

<b>EIGHT WESTERN SHIRES</b>			
Aramac	526	514	
Barcaldine	1062	1067	
Blackall	1141	1111	
Ilfracombe	193	193	
Isisford	180	179	
Longreach	2337	2353	
Tambo	443	450	
Winton	966	962	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6848</b>	<b>6829</b>	

**OBJECTION**  
**No 172**