



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 180

The Nationals – Queensland

11 pages

THE NATIONALS

21 July 2006

Redistribution Committee for Queensland
Australian Electoral Commission
Level 7 - 488 Queen Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: qld.redistribution@aec.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Counter-proposals for the Redistribution Committee on its 2006
Proposed Redistribution of Queensland into Electoral Divisions**

On behalf of The Nationals - Queensland I attach counter proposals for the Redistribution Committee on its 2006 Proposed Redistribution of Queensland into Electoral Divisions as per the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions on this paper.

Yours sincerely,



Brad Henderson
State Director

OBJECTION

№ 180

The Nationals - Queensland

Counter Proposal to the Australian Electoral Commission's 2006 Proposed Redistribution of Queensland into Electoral Divisions

Prepared for:

**Australian Electoral Commission
Redistribution Committee for Queensland**

Purpose

This submission provides The Nationals - Queensland comments to the Redistribution Committee for Queensland on the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) 2006 Proposed Redistribution of Queensland into Electoral Divisions.

Introduction

The Nationals recognise the challenges confronting the AEC Redistribution Committee in fulfilling the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, while accommodating the varied patterns of enrolment growth across Queensland within the deemed quota levels.

The Nationals maintain that our Party's initial submission to the AEC Redistribution Committee was a viable alternative that accommodated the challenges associated with this enrolment growth while presenting minimal disruption to communities of interest. As per the criteria in the Act, enrolments in all divisions fell within the 3.5 percent range either side of the average divisional enrolment at the project time, 30 November 2007. Importantly, The Nationals submission protected, to the best extent possible, existing communities of interest, communication and travel corridors, physical land features and existing Shire and electoral boundaries.

OBJECTION

№ 180

It is a concern, not just to The Nationals but also to many of those affected communities, that the Redistribution Committee has discounted the criteria in the Act for the protection of existing communities of interest and recognition of communication and travel corridors, physical land features and existing Shire and electoral boundaries. In apparent defence of this, the Redistribution Committee has placed an overtly heavy reliance on a nebulous argument based on a principle of "equality of electors".

The draft redistribution currently proposed by the AEC has a dramatic impact on a range of communities; breaking up some significant and well-established communities of interest and re-grouping a number of communities in a quite radical way. While Brisbane and the Gold Coast have largely escaped any significant changes, many regional centres have been moved from electorate to electorate, some for the third time in three redistributions.

Federal Parliamentary Members' offices are increasingly important in regional centres as the Federal Government's role in day to day affairs increases. Issues such as family tax benefits, immigration matters, employment, Medicare and child support are just some of the issues Federal MPs deal with in regional areas. Under the draft boundaries currently proposed many local communities are being further separated from their local Member.

Examples of the significant disparities with the proposed redistribution include:

- The placement of disparate centres such as Longreach and Gladstone in the same division
- Rural suburbs of regional cities such as Maryborough and Bundaberg split from their community centres
- Maryborough and Hervey Bay split

It is The Nationals' strong view that the interests of those communities disaffected by the draft redistribution can be better accommodated by its amendment - within the spirit of the Commonwealth Electoral Act and as per the criteria set out in Section 66(3A).

This submission provides a series of constructive solutions to achieve the objectives of the Commonwealth Electoral Act and redress some of the concerns that surround the draft boundary redistribution proposed by the Redistribution Committee. Importantly, it seeks to re-establish communities of interest within the parameters of the deemed quota levels wherever possible.

OBJECTION

№ 180

Proposed Boundary Amendments

A series of amendments to the draft electoral boundaries in the redistribution currently proposed are presented below. Given much of the impacts on existing communities of interest and divisions have been generated as a result of the creation of the new division, proposed to be called Wright, the vagaries of this division are dealt with first.

The New Division - "Wright" (90,557)

As currently proposed, the new division proposed to be named "Wright" is located in an east-west band in central Queensland from the port city of Gladstone and reaching to boundaries of the cities of Bundaberg and Rockhampton and west as far as the Shire of Winton.

There is a broad community of interest within part of this division through Central Queensland itself; Gladstone through the Dawson and Callide Valleys and the Central Highlands. This is based on the major industries conducted in the area, mining, agriculture and associated industries, road and transport links and electronic media markets.

There is also an argument that the northern Burnett Shires of Eidsvold, Mundubbera and Gayndah share a community of interest with the area, particularly as the state electorate of Callide encompasses much of the same area.

However, a major disparity is the inclusion of the western outback shires which have no community of interest with Gladstone or the coastal communities that stretch from Bundaberg to Gladstone. These western shires have been significantly disrupted via relocation to three different electorates in each of the last three redistributions. Accordingly, some of the strongest objections to the AEC's proposed redistribution have been made by communities in this area.

While the areas are large, the relative population in these shires is low. The Nationals maintain that this, together with the benefits to be obtained by maintaining communities of interest in a number of other areas, allows the amendment of the proposed boundaries for the new division.

The Nationals propose that this be achieved by maintaining the western Queensland shires in their current division of Maranoa. This means relinquishing the shires of Aramac (pop. 514), Barcaldine (pop. 1,067), Blackall (pop. 1,111), Ilfracombe (pop. 193), Isisford (pop. 179),

OBJECTION

№ 180

Longreach (pop. 2,353), Tambo (pop. 450) and Winton (pop. 962) from the new division back to Maranoa.

A similar argument can be made relative to the relationship between the proposed new division and the divisions of Wide Bay and Hinkler; specifically, the shires of Biggenden and Burnett. Under the AEC's current proposal, Biggenden and part of Burnett are located within the proposed new division.

It is commonly accepted that Local Government Areas (LGA) represent an obvious and accepted community of interest and therefore the splitting of LGAs should be avoided. Burnett surrounds the city of Bundaberg and undoubtedly shares a very close community of interest with the city of Bundaberg, which serves as the Shire's supply, service and media centre. However, the AEC's draft redistribution proposes a significant dislocation of much of the Burnett Shire's community from Bundaberg, including areas that can be described as "rural suburbs" of the city.

The Nationals therefore propose that that part of Burnett currently proposed to be located within the new division, instead be located within the Hinkler division. This would restore, in electoral terms, the strong community of interest that exists between the Bundaberg and Burnett LGAs.

Similarly, Biggenden Shire shares absolutely no community of interest with the major centres in the proposed new division. Residents look to nearby Maryborough for all their services, media and supplies.

To redress the anomaly relating to the placement of the Biggenden LGA, The Nationals propose that it be located within the Wide Bay division rather than the new division.

These changes can be readily adopted with minimum disruption to surrounding areas, despite leaving the new division needing additional population to fulfil quota requirements. The Nationals submit that this is possible to achieve, while at the same time congregating more obvious communities of interest than is currently proposed; first, by taking Kingaroy (pop. 8,225) and Wondai (pop. 3,135) LGAs from Maranoa and second, by taking the balance of Fitzroy LGA (pop. 4,949).

Adding the South Burnett Shires of Kingaroy and Wondai to the new division extends the existing community of interest with the Central and North Burnett Shires of Gayndah, Mundubbera and Eidsvold. This also reflects the existing situation where Wondai LGA lies within the same

OBJECTION

state electorate. It has also been noted that these communities have publicly recorded their strong opposition to inclusion in Maranoa.

Most of Fitzroy LGA is already proposed to be located within the new division and The Nationals proposal would simply see all of the LGA housed there, again maintaining a community of interest in electoral terms.

The changes proposed would result in the new division achieving a projected enrolment as at 30 November 2007 of almost exactly the average enrolment quota; ie. 89,330 versus the average 89,587.

The Name

The Nationals wish to lodge strong objection to the proposed name of the new division. Use of the name "Wright" in the Central Queensland area could be described at best as naïve and at worst as insensitive and inappropriate. Upon announcement of the redistribution proposal, there was a widespread and immediate association with disgraced former Labor MP and convicted child sex offender Keith Wright, who represented the Central Queensland area in Federal and State Parliament.

Judith Wright was an acclaimed poet, but was born in New South Wales and had no close association with the region. The link cited by the Redistribution Committee; that of the book Ms Wright authored regarding her grandparents, is tenuous. The primary concern though, relates to the confusion generated by the use of Ms Wright's name in the context of the history surrounding Keith Wright. This does Judith Wright's achievements and her memory an injustice. If the name "Wright" was to be used anywhere, it should be used far afield from Central Queensland.

Capricornia

Under The Nationals' proposal, Capricornia would relinquish part of Fitzroy LGA (pop. 4,949) to the new division.

The Nationals also propose that the AEC's draft redistribution be amended so that Capricornia relinquishes Mirani back to its existing division of Dawson. This restores a very clear community of interest between Mirani and Mackay, which are adjoining LGAs. Mirani Shire shares a significant community of interest with Mackay and is, in fact, becoming part of the city as it continues to expand. As such, residents of the shire have little, if anything, in common with those in the

OBJECTION

Capricornia electorate which is based on Rockhampton, instead using Mackay for their supplies and services.

To gain the additional enrolments necessary to satisfy quota requirements, Capricornia must then encompass Charters Towers LGA (pop. 4,779) and that part of Dalrymple LGA south of the Flinders Highway (pop. 1,043). The Capricornia division then becomes one with a strong community of interest based on its predominant industries of agriculture and mining, with the beef capital of Rockhampton and the Keppel coast as its coastal population hinge.

North Queensland

The creation of the new division and boundary adjustments to accommodate population changes between Leichhardt, Kennedy, Herbert and Kennedy has forced the dislocation of a number of areas. The Nationals accept and indeed proposed the transfer of Sarina Shire and the balance of Broadsound to Capricornia in recognition that there was little other alternative. However, the AEC's proposal to shift Mirani Shire from Dawson raises concerns for that area which have been previously canvassed.

With minor impact on surrounding electorates, The Nationals submit that Mirani (population 3,478) can be maintained in the Dawson electorate. The offset would require adjusting the proposed northern boundary of Dawson back to that which existed at the 1996 election, returning those residents to Townsville, where their overwhelming community of interest lies.

Herbert should then relinquish Thuringowa City LGA (part): 2,820 to the adjacent electorate of Kennedy, with Kennedy in turn relinquishing Charters Towers city (pop. 4,779) and Dalrymple shire (part - pop. 1,043) to Capricornia.

These adjustments leave each division well within the stipulated range for deviation from the projected average enrolment quota.

Wide Bay and the Sunshine Coast

The draft AEC redistribution proposes significant adjustment to the Hinkler and Wide Bay electorates with dramatic impact on some significant communities of interest in the region.

As explained previously, the placement of Biggenden and part of Burnett LGAs in the draft redistribution is highly impractical and betrays

OBJECTION

those shires very strong community of interest with the cities of Maryborough and Bundaberg respectively. Biggenden enjoys strong links to Maryborough, which is used as a supply and service centre by residents and which shares the same media market. Burnett surrounds the city of Bundaberg. For those reasons The Nationals propose that Biggenden LGA (pop. 1,135) instead remain in the Wide Bay division, while that part of Burnett (pop. 6,453) currently proposed to be located within the new division, instead be maintained in the Hinkler division.

The dramatic alteration of the Wide Bay division under the AEC proposal has further significant implications, none more serious than the splitting of the "twin cities" of Hervey Bay and Maryborough. This flies in the face of the increasing links between the two in local governance, commerce, services and transport.

Ideally, this link should be restored. However, recognising that the imperatives in the AEC's argument supporting its proposed redistribution may prevent this, some amendment is proposed to at least improve the proposal.

Also, the addition of these LGAs requires the shedding of population elsewhere so, to achieve that aim and to restore greater communities of interest, it is proposed to relocate that part of Woocoo LGA that is currently proposed to be located within Hinkler back into Wide Bay. This would see the entire Woocoo shire retained in Wide Bay, thereby avoiding any dislocation of that community from its current division and current service city, Maryborough.

For similar reasons, The Nationals also propose relocating that part of Maroochy Shire (pop. 2,383) that has been placed in Wide Bay back to Fairfax. This maintains Maroochy LGA as an entity and results in Fairfax remaining a Sunshine Coast based division based almost entirely on the Maroochy LGA.

Both these changes are readily accommodated within the stipulated range for deviation from the projected average enrolment quota, again satisfying the Redistribution Committee's argument for equality of electors.

Southern Queensland

The changes that The Nationals propose to better maintain communities of interest and accommodate the new division in Central Queensland have subsequent implications for the southern inland divisions of Maranoa and Groom.

OBJECTION

No 180

As previously discussed, maintaining the western shires of Aramac, Barcaldine, Blackall, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach, Tambo and Winton in the Maranoa division also maintains the existing communities of interest in the region and between these centres and their service centres in the South. However, despite these additions, the shedding of Kingaroy and Wondai LGAs to the new division leaves Maranoa short of the population quota.

An anomaly also exists within the AEC's draft redistribution with the inclusion of Crows Nest and just part of Rosalie LGAs in Maranoa, located on the top and east of the Great Dividing Range and without a direct road connection with the rest of the Maranoa division.

To rectify these population and logistical issues, The Nationals propose that Maranoa relinquish Crows Nest LGA to Groom. This would restore strong the community of interest between the Crows Nest and Toowoomba LGAs, which are joined by the New England Highway, which in turn is developing as a corridor for urban expansion.

It is also proposed to include the Pittsworth LGA (pop. 3,231), a further part of Rosalie LGA abutting the Wambo LGA (pop. 1,187) on the western side of the Great Dividing Range and part of the Jondaryan LGA (pop. 601) in Maranoa. The inclusion of these part areas of Rosalie and Jondaryan LGAs (along the boundaries Mt Tyson, West Prairie, Jondaryan-Evanslea, Cranks and Motley-Mt Tyson roads) would also reflect the boundaries for Maranoa prior to 1998.

The net effect of these changes would leave Maranoa with a population of 87,865 and the Groom division with a population of (89,126), well within the permitted quota range on the 30 November 2007 enrolment projections.

South East Queensland

As minimal disruption is proposed for South East Queensland, The Nationals make no submission for amendment of the draft boundaries in this region.

OBJECTION

№ 180

Summary

The following table summarises the amendments proposed by The Nationals to the Redistribution Committee's draft redistribution of electoral boundaries.

Division	Pop'n	Dev'n %	Gains	Losses
Herbert	90,923	+ 1.49	<i>From Dawson:</i> Townsville City part (pop. 2,958)	<i>To Kennedy:</i> Thuringowa City LGA part (pop. 2,820)
Kennedy	88,999	- 0.66	<i>From Kennedy:</i> Thuringowa City LGA part (pop. 2,820)	<i>To Capricornia:</i> Charters Towers (4,779) Dalrymple LGA part (pop. 1,043)
Dawson	87,813	-1.98	<i>From Capricornia:</i> Mirani LGA (pop. 3,478)	<i>To Herbert:</i> Townsville City part (pop. 2,958)
Capricornia	87,075	- 2.80	<i>From Kennedy:</i> Charters Towers (4,779) Dalrymple LGA part (pop. 1,043)	<i>To Dawson:</i> Mirani LGA (pop. 3,478) <i>To Wright:</i> Fitzroy LGA part (pop. 4,949)
Wright	89,330	- 0.29	<i>From Maranoa:</i> Kingaroy LGA (pop 8,225) Wondai LGA (pop 3,135) <i>From Capricornia:</i> Fitzroy LGA part (pop 4,949)	<i>To Maranoa:</i> Aramac shire (pop 514) Barcaldine LGA (pop 1,067) Blackall LGA (pop 1,111) Ilfracombe LGA (pop 193) Isisford LGA (pop 179) Longreach LGA (pop 2,353) Tambo LGA (pop 450) Winton LGA (pop 962) <i>To Hinkler:</i> Biggenden LGA (pop 1,135) Burnett LGA part (pop 6,453)
Hinkler	92,385	+ 3.12	<i>From Wright:</i> Burnett LGA part (pop 6,453)	<i>To Wide Bay:</i> Woocoo LGA part (pop 1,270)
Wide Bay	88,320	- 1.41	<i>From Hinkler:</i>	<i>To Fairfax:</i>

OBJECTION
№ 180

THE NATIONALS

			Woocoo LGA part (pop 1,270) Biggenden LGA (pop 1135)	Maroochy LGA part (pop 2,383)
Fairfax	92,103	+ 2.81	<i>From Wide Bay:</i> Maroochy LGA part (pop 2,383)	
Maranoa	87,865	- 1.92	<i>From Wright:</i> Aramac shire (pop 514) Barcaldine LGA (pop 1,067) Blackall LGA (pop 1,111) Ilfracombe LGA (pop 193) Isisford LGA (pop 179) Longreach LGA (pop 2,353) Tambo LGA (pop 450) Winton LGA (pop 962) <i>From Groom:</i> Jondaryan LGA part (pop 601) Rosalie LGA part (pop 1,187) Pittsworth LGA part (pop 3,231)	<i>To Wright:</i> Kingaroy LGA (pop 8,225) Wondai LGA (pop 3,135) <i>To Groom:</i> Crows Nest LGA (pop 2,580)
Groom	89,126	- 0.51	<i>From Maranoa:</i> Crows Nest LGA (pop 2,580)	<i>To Maranoa:</i> Jondaryan LGA part (pop 601) Rosalie LGA part (pop 1,187) Pittsworth LGA part (pop 3,231)

Note: All population numbers are the projected enrolments for 30 November 2007, with the percentage figures quoted representing the deviation from the average enrolment at that time of 89,587 as per the AEC's directive.

OBJECTION

No 180