



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 188

Mr John R Pyke

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Redistribution Committee for Queensland
GPO Box 2590
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Objection to Proposed Redistribution – boundaries of Petrie in particular

Dear Commissioners

This is an objection on technical and legal grounds (and I suppose partly on intuitive and aesthetic grounds), rather than on political ones, to the proposed electoral boundaries of the districts of Petrie, Dickson and Longman. Yes I know all objections are purportedly on technical and legal grounds, but what I am saying is that, unlike the political parties, I have not tried to calculate the effect that giving effect to my objection would have on likely electoral outcomes. As all the seats affected are marginal when a decent swing is on, I suspect it would have little effect (and of course you are not supposed to overtly consider that anyway).

For many years there has been a tendency for the distributions in northern Brisbane to produce reasonably compact-shaped districts, with an oddly-elongated district of Petrie stuck anomalously between them. For a long time it was peanut shaped or even dumbbell-shaped, more recently it has become a northern blob with an odd rectangle (the "Chermside rectangle") hanging down to the south (and it doesn't even include the suburb of Petrie, or even much of the Pine Rivers Shire that Petrie is located in!). This may make sense if there was some real community of interest between the extremities – now Scarborough and Stafford Heights – but I submit that if there ever was a community of interest it has disappeared over the years. The only community of interest between the northern blob and the southern rectangle could be via their common connection with the Petrie-Strathpine area, but that area has been excised out of the "Petrie" district!

Consider the criteria in para 66(3)(b) of your Act. From what I know of the communities of interest in the northern suburbs (I live at Shorncliffe so I'm a northerner myself), the Redcliffe peninsula has much more in common with the areas around North Lakes, Kallangur, Petrie, Kurwongbah and Lawnton than it does with that oddly-placed rectangle that you have running down between the South Pine River and Webster Road, all the way down to Felstead and Redwood Streets. The local governments of Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Caboolture see themselves as a significant group counterbalancing the dominant "big brother" of Brisbane – eg, they are members (with Kilcoy) of the Moreton Bay Coast and Country Area Consultative Committee. As to means of travel, roads join Redcliffe to the Strathpine-Petrie area (and, less relevantly, to Brighton) more directly than they do to Chermside or Stafford Heights. When the electorate was larger, perhaps the Bruce Highway was a linking feature, but now it sweeps in and sweeps out and divides it rather than linking it. There is, of course, still no railway line to Redcliffe from anywhere, but the proposal is that it will come in from Petrie. As to physical features, it seems odd to link an area north of the Pine River (on its left bank heading downstream) with an area that is to the east of the South Pine (on the right bank).

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The only criterion that can be seen to justify this absurd set of boundaries is (v) "the boundaries of existing Divisions" – the silly peanut-dumbbell shape has existed in the past and the rectangle is there at the moment, therefore let's leave it. But sub-s 66(3A) states, and has stated *since 1998*, that criterion (v) is to be treated as subordinate to the other criteria. I submit that your leaving of the "Chermside rectangle" hanging down below the rest of the electorate is bad in law as well as looking silly on the map. I know that judicial review is *almost* (though perhaps not quite) ruled out by s 77, and section 66 is declared to be only directory, but I submit that you have a duty to do your best to draw boundaries in accordance with s 66, with criteria (i)-(iv) predominating, and you have not really managed to do it in this instance.

So – how to fix it? I suppose the simplest way would be a swap of territory (and voters) between Petrie and Dickson – shift most of the "Chermside rectangle" into Dickson and a compensating part of Petrie-Lawnton-Bray Park-Strathpine into Petrie. But a more thorough solution which I think would better comply with s 66 would be a "rotation" among Petrie, Longman, Fisher and Dickson – put the North Lakes-Dakabin area back into Petrie, give the proposed Longman some of the proposed Fisher, give the proposed Fisher some of the proposed Dickson (putting Mount Mee, Mount Pleasant and Dayboro in the same division, as is only logical), and then put the "Chermside rectangle" in Dickson. Whatever you do, there *must* be a way of drawing the boundaries in that area that complies with criteria (i)-(iv) better than your current proposal does.

Sincerely



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