



The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 20

Kolan Shire Council

3 pages

Kolan Shire Council

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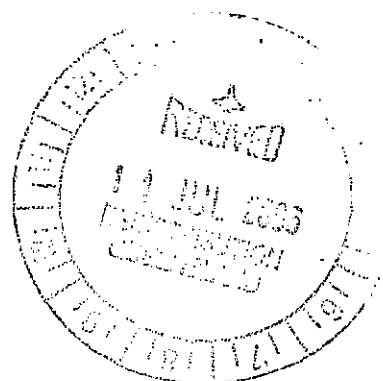
10 JUL 2006

Australian
Electoral Commission
QUEENSLAND
REGISTRY

4 July 2006

Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland
GPO Box 2590
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Sir/Madam



ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

I refer to your letter of 23 June 2006 enclosing the proposed redistribution report for Queensland.

Council considered this matter at its General Meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2006 where it was resolved to make a submission that objects strongly to the proposal.

According to the proposal, Kolan Shire is to be re-located from the existing division of Hinkler into the new division of Wright. It is noted that the projected enrolment for this division by November 2007 is 87,438.

Initially, Council would dispute the projected enrolment for this shire from 2,990 to 2,993 over a two year period. It would seem unlikely that net increases during this period would only amount to three enrolments, given our understanding of current population projections. At the March 2004 local government elections there were 2,918 enrolments, with there being 2,990 actual enrolments as at 2 December 2005. This represents a net increase over two years of 72; therefore, I would question the projected increase of 3 electors over a similar timeframe. However, this aspect of the redistribution is not of primary concern.

To support Council's submission, the following is provided:

1. Community of Interest

The new division of Wright is to be based around Gladstone - Gin Gin has no community of interest with this centre.

Gladstone is more than three times the distance away to that of Bundaberg with very few, if any, residents travelling to Gladstone to conduct regular business or shopping for example. Similarly, many of the western towns included in the new division have no relationship to Kolan Shire, which is located in the North Burnett area. Given their geographical distance from this area they have no community of interest with Kolan Shire, the North Burnett area or Bundaberg, the main regional city.

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OBJECTION

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ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Most of the towns in the western part of the new division travel along the Capricornia Highway to get to the coast, which leads to Rockhampton. That is where their community of interest lies and it is proposed that the division should reflect these circumstances.

In item 46 of the report that was provided, the Committee indicates its intention to create a new division in Central Queensland. Kolan Shire and others in the North Burnett have always been considered part of South-East Queensland, not Central Queensland. No community of interest is established under the so-called creation of a new division noting comments about transport and geographical criteria.

Gin Gin is the main centre for residents of this shire with Bundaberg providing the regional centre with a full range of specialist services such as financial, legal, specialist medical, travel (airport, rail and sea), sporting facilities and entertainment. Bundaberg is 50km from Gin Gin and is considered part of the attraction for people living in this district.

Kolan Shire's community of interest remains with Bundaberg. Many local residents work in Bundaberg, as commuter times improve, along with many people being attracted to the semi-rural environment of Kolan Shire.

It would greatly disadvantage this shire if divisional changes segregated the existing social and commercial relationships that form part of the basis of this community.

2. Means of Communication and travel

Gladstone has been recognised in the report as the major administrative centre of the newly created division of Wright.

Currently, residents who seek to meet face-to-face with the member of parliament requires a trip to Bundaberg which is 50km away involving 30 minutes travel. If this shire were to be relocated into the seat of Wright, it would be necessary to travel to Gladstone which is 178km drive and would take three times as long. Access to Bundaberg is via the Bundaberg-Gin Gin Road, a declared state road with limited traffic congestion. However, a trip to Gladstone involves over an hour and a half on the Bruce Highway, a very busy road to say the least.

Such an outcome would further disadvantage this community, as the existing connection to Bundaberg would be eroded.

3. Geographical Features

Kolan Shire has no geographical relationship with most of the localities in the new division of Wright. There is a large proportion of the new division west of the Great Dividing Range with other smaller areas located on the Eastern Highlands with each possessing contrasting physical features. The western areas consist of flat agricultural land suitable for livestock, grain crops and mineral development. Eastern sections consist of sugar cane and small agricultural crops including citrus.

Previously, those areas west of the Great Dividing Range such as Blackwater, Moura, Mount Morgan and Theodore were in the division of Capricornia; which tends to share common interests to either Rockhampton or Gladstone.

Under the current proposal, these towns now form part of the new division, as does Kolan Shire, and don't share a common geographical relationship.

Under the previous divisional arrangements, Capricornia and Hinkler mainly included those areas on the Eastern Highlands. At least under this format, there was more potential to link communities who share a common geographical features and related economic activities that flow on.

Kolan Shire forms the hinterland of the Bundaberg district. The southeast corner of the shire is a long-term sugar cane growing area supporting that very important industry for the region. The Burnett River, which flows through Bundaberg, forms the southern boundary of this shire and is much-recognised feature of the district.

4. Boundaries of existing divisions

Council fully appreciates the quota requirements as part of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. As a result of this prerequisite, Kolan Shire has been jostled from various divisions over several redistributions. A redistribution that occurred in 2003 placed Kolan back into Hinkler, having been located in the division of Wide Bay. This division also provided little benefit for electors in the sense that similar arguments existed as are being proposed with the 2006 redistribution.

Council feels it has been shifted from one division to another as a result of quota requirements. Not only does this negatively affect our community of interest, there is an inability to build up an ongoing relationship with an elected member. In some cases, this may take quite some time and may result in our representations being successfully addressed over a period of time.

Should you require any further information concerning this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me on telephone 4133 2004.

Yours faithfully



Mark Watt
Chief Executive Officer



Cr Eddie Stone
Mayor

OBJECTION

12 = 10