



**The Federal Redistribution 2006
QUEENSLAND**



Public Suggestion Number 5

Hon Bob Katter MP

7 pages

SUBMISSION
into the
2006
Redistribution of Federal
Electoral Boundaries in
Queensland.

By
The Office of Hon. Bob Katter, MP
MEMBER FOR KENNEDY

KENNEDY REDISTRIBUTION SUBMISSION**2 March, 2006****VOTER REGISTRATION NUMBERS FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND**

The three far north Queensland seats are projected to be over quota. There voter registration as at 30 November, 2007:

Leichhardt	94,049
Kennedy	93,262
Herbert	93,433

All exceed the maximum enrolment quota 92,722.
(The quota mean is 89,587).

Since Dawson, the other north Queensland electorate, is also over quota the best an electoral redistribution commission can do is come in under the maximum quota of 92,722.

LEICHHARDT

Leichhardt has projected enrolments of 94,049 which is 1327 above maximum quota.

Recommendation One – Leichhardt to Kennedy

Edmonton moves out of Leichhardt into Kennedy.

3211 people voted at the Edmonton booth in 2004. Kennedy's existing northern boundary therefore needs to move north and to become Blackfellow Creek up to its source thence due west to the existing Kennedy boundary line.

Reasons

1. This reduces the projected Leichhardt enrolments of 94,049 by 3211 to 90,838. However Blackfellow Creek cuts off the top of the Edmonton township some estimated 600 of these Edmonton voters would remain in Leichhardt, so more accurately Leichhardt's enrolments of 94,049 would be reduced by 2511 to **91,538**.
2. Edmonton is already in the State electorate of Mulgrave, a seat based on Innisfail, Babinda and Gordonvale. The State Electoral Commission has already decided that these areas have commonality of interest and should be together in one electorate.
3. The three towns Babinda, Gordonvale and Edmonton comprised the old Mulgrave Shire Council area (all were only incorporated into Cairns City a decade ago).
4. Edmonton still nestles amongst cane farms and sends their cane to Gordonvale for processing with local farmers part owning the Gordonvale co-operative mill.
5. Edmonton has its own shopping centre, hotel and independently owned supermarket, and it is still a country town. There is no woolworths or coles.

Reasons why there are no other area movements available for consideration:

Other areas:

- have no commonality of interest with the rest of the electorate.
- look to Cairns as their centre.

- are too small in population for their movement to achieve equitably sized electorates.

e.g. Kowanyama (and Yarrabah) are Aboriginal communities with separate shire councils that have their umbrella organisation based in Cairns. Kowanyama is 350km to the nearest part of Kennedy electorate. Its road is impassable for months of the year (result of dirt roads and annual monsoons). Communication is normally by air with Cairns. Kowanyama people mostly don't have motor vehicles.

e.g. Kuranda and Kowanyama electors would have the extraordinary situation where to see their MP they would have to drive past the Leichhardt Member of Parliament's office in Cairns and then drive an additional two hours through heavy traffic to get to their Member of Parliament's office at Innisfail.

e.g. Kuranda calls itself "village in the rainforest". It has two national iconic tourist attractions, the Kuranda Tourist Train and Skyrail. It is a tourist community dependent in every way upon Cairns. It has no commonality of interest with Mareeba.

e.g. Kuranda is 10km from the giant Cairns shopping centre of Smithfield. Kuranda is 38km from the smaller shopping centre of Mareeba. It is a major Australian and overseas tourism centre which has little in common with the fruit and vegetable irrigation town of Mareeba. Kuranda is jungle rainforest tourism. Mareeba is the dry inland agricultural industry.

KENNEDY

(2007 projected) enrolments of 93262 with Edmonton 2511 would be 95,773. Exceeding the maximum allowable quota.

Recommendation Two – Kennedy to Herbert

Deeragun and Alice River (polling booth) areas to move out of Kennedy into Herbert. 3728 people voted at the booths in 2004.

Kennedy's existing northern boundary moves north to Deep Creek, up Deep Creek to its junction with Althaus Creek thence along Althaus Creek upstream to its source at Mt Cataract thence due west to the existing Kennedy (Dalrymple Shire) boundary.

Reasons

1. This reduces the projected Kennedy enrolments (with Edmonton) of 95,773 by 3728 to 92,045.
However, this new Deep Creek-Althaus boundary cuts off an estimated 300 Bluewater voters so more accurately Kennedy's enrolments (with Edmonton) of 95,773 would be reduced by 4028 to **91,745**.
2. Deeragun and Alice River are now suburban areas within the city of Thuringowa. The major population centre will be and are Bushland Beach and Mt Low – both now, in part, densely populated suburban areas. There are relatively very few Deeragun or Alice River voters now living on rural residential acreage blocks.
3. Bluewater voters are in the main people on larger rural acreage or small 'sleepy hollow' albeit beautiful minimally developed, fairly isolated beaches.
4. Deep Creek is adjacent to the giant Yabulu Nickel plant. South of this line is predominantly urban, north of this line is predominantly rural.

Reasons why there are no other area movements available for consideration

Major western towns: - Charters Towers, Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Mt Isa.

- Charters Towers is a hard rock mining, educational and cattle centre. There is negligible hard rock mining in Dawson, Capricornia and Maranoa. Mt Isa and Cloncurry are hard rock mining as well. Hard rock mining is as different from coal mining as is building sky scrapers from quarrying.
- All lines of communication run to Townsville which is in every sense the city centre for Charters Towers.
- In Central Western Queensland all lines of communication run back to Rockhampton.
- In South West Queensland all lines of communication run back to Brisbane.
- The Midwest towns (Charters Towers, Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, and Cloncurry) are monsoonal – they only get rain for three summer months of the year. The area therefore cannot grow grain. Central Queensland with winter rain can.
- This also means that where Central Queensland and South Queensland are broadacre, thousand hectare plus farms, farming in Kennedy is sugar and small intense-cropping normally around 80ha farms – a fundamentally different animal.
- Their grazing in southern and central Queensland is cleared country with farming integrated into their sheep and cattle operations. Our country in Kennedy is still uncleared timbered country grazing without any integrated farming.
- There are negligible sheep in north Queensland. Central Queensland and south west Queensland are major Australian sheep growing areas.
- Mt Isa, an industrial North Queensland hard rock mining town would have simply nothing in common with central or southern Queensland towns.
- The Midwest (Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, and Cloncurry) Rugby League now includes the Gulf communities of Normanton and Doomadgee. It does not include the central west, no town of which (Winton excepted) is much less than 400km away. (368km Charters Towers – Clermont, Hughenden – Longreach is 383km).
- The old pre-NRL Queensland Rugby League was South Queensland, South West Queensland, Central Queensland, North Queensland, Brisbane. This was a league drawn up on lines of communication, community of interest and homogeneous areas distinctively different one from another.

Any proposal involving moving Mt Isa or Charters Towers – or any of the Midwest towns in between going into a South or Central Queensland electorate such as Capricornia or Maranoa would be grossly offensive to the western people of North Queensland as the distances and community of interest would make representation meaningless. Their representative would have to commute from south west Queensland to Brisbane, from Brisbane to Townsville and from Townsville to north west Queensland (eg. Mt Isa), since these are the only regular daily or near daily air routes.

In submissions to a government inquiry, I provided travel details for the previous three months. I had averaged over 38 hours travel per week. Most of this was done on small charter planes. An area twice Kennedy's size would, of course, be double this figure making representation a mockery.

In the three days before coming to Parliament this week:

Friday seven hours of travel. With meetings at Tully and Mission Beach which are four hours drive to Cairns airport, one hour to fly to Townsville, two hours by car to Charters Towers.

Saturday, six hours, starting at Charters Towers then fly to Cloncurry and back. Plus taxi and wait time, six hours.

Sunday, eight hours. Scheduled to travel to Canberra, from home taxi to Charters Towers airport, 40 minute air charter to Townsville, commercial flight to Brisbane, commercial flight to Canberra then taxi to Parliament House. Eight hours.

HERBERT

Recommendation Three – Herbert to Dawson

Oonoonba, Wulguru (possibly including some parts of the army base) and Stuart (and maybe some parts of Annandale or Railway Estate). This encompasses some 5500 to 6000 voters. The details of this boundary it would be more appropriate to leave to the AEC and other parties. But Herbert (with Deeragun and Alice River) would have 97,461 electors less 5500 (Wulguru and other areas).

This would leave Herbert with a registration of approximately **91,961** or less electors.

Reasons

1. These areas are all within the state electorate of Burdekin based on Ayr. State commissioners have already resolved that these areas are to be with the Ayr-Giru based electorate.
2. Alligator Creek, now a major suburb of Townsville is some half a dozen kilometres down the highway from the suburb of Stuart. Alligator Creek is already in Dawson.

MINIMAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE

My father the late Bob Katter Snr, also the Member for Kennedy, went through a number of redistributions that were soul destroying. Areas that he had worked for a decade or more, areas that felt at home with their MP and that he of course felt similarly at home with, were asundered from Kennedy. These areas in a then homogenous electorate were suddenly thrown in with areas they had nothing in common with. With a Member of Parliament they simply did not know and one that was often initially foreign to them in every way.

Their rapport with their Member of Parliament, their only interface or influence they can exercise on Government was completely destroyed.

The knowledge, detailed knowledge so vital to providing proper representation, was rendered useless. Projects my father was working on collapsed when he was moved out as their Member of Parliament.

The new member, by the time he acquired the knowledge and got on top of the projects and problems, worked hard and had got the trust of the people he too then found that the area was again moved out from under him.

People's cynicism grew, their despondency and disempowerment grew.

Good representation is based upon trust. This does not exist unless you know your MP and this trust relationship takes years to build and can be destroyed in a second by the stroke of a redistributor's pen.

The more we can minimise these democratic upheavals and the less drastic we can make redistributational changes, the better will be the good government of Australia.

RIGHT TO VIABLE REPRESENTATION PRINCIPLE

The value of your vote is exercised through your Member of Parliament. If it becomes enormously difficult in terms of time and money to personally contact your member then the value of your vote is diminished and undermined.

The Kennedy electorate encompasses over 140 towns and it would be virtually impossible to appropriately represent additional distant towns. It would adversely impact on the ability to represent an already long list of remote centres including Karumba, Burketown, Boulia and Camooweal to name but a few.

Similar arguments would apply against Capricornia or Maranoa being given any extra far away western towns. Such would constitute an outstanding injustice against the people of North Queensland's Inland.

NOTES

The proposals outlined above involve minimalist change and are all, we are informed, broadly the same as those of Mr Lindsay, the only other continuing Far North Queensland Member of Parliament (Mr Entsch is retiring). The proposals are also approximately in line, we are informed, with the ALP proposals. Whilst there is broad agreement, it can be assumed that there will be differences in the detail of any proposals.