



**The Federal Redistribution 2009  
QUEENSLAND**



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**Comment Number 44  
on Public Suggestions**

**ALP**

**9 pages**



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8 May 2009

Redistribution Committee for Queensland  
Australian Electoral Commission  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor Collection House  
488 Queens St  
Brisbane QLD 4000.



Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Labor Party, I attach our comments on public suggestions for the Commissioner's consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Chisholm  
STATE SECRETARY  
AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY  
QUEENSLAND BRANCH

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The current redistribution will be the third consecutive Parliament where QLD will gain an extra seat. However, the Commissioners have forecast that this redistribution will likely apply for two Parliaments. It will be a close run thing but having considered growth forecasts for QLD the ALP agrees with the Commissioners determination. We think based also on population growth for QLD that the predicted two Parliament life of the new boundaries will also mean consecutive each Parliament redistributions in future cycles.

The Commissioners are required to fulfil the numerical requirements and obliged to give due consideration to the community of interest criteria of the Electoral Act. We accept that given rapid growth in QLD except for the inland country it is always difficult for the Commissioners in discharging their duties in coming up with boundaries which best meet the community of interest provisions. Yet in redistributions since 1992 there has emerged a pattern of pivot points—areas that might go in and out of a regional configuration of divisions, depending on where a new seat is formed.

It's also true that there are never sufficient numbers in a particular region that would allow the Commissioners to create a new seat entirely from within that region. Also, account must be given to growth in the other regions and the numerical requirements.

Nonetheless, we think that with this redistribution the drawing of a new division might allow through certain pivot points less dramatic change in future redistributions. (In his suggestions, the MP for Hinkler, Paul Neville implied that North and South Burnett Councils could be areas that could be moved depending on where a new seat goes). Our point is that although major change is a given for QLD, areas that come in or out can be less than in recent years. We'll develop this point further in our comments.

Our main focus will be on examining the differences between our own suggestions and those of the LNP. Of the remaining 24 suggestions, we think that many have made valuable points that will be helpful to the Commissioners. But the two major parties which hold all but one of the House seats in QLD have drawn complete State boundaries and in so doing have also considered the views of their own MP's and others.

## **WHERE THE LNP AND ALP AGREE**

Let's now look at where both the ALP and LNP suggestions are similar.

- Both parties recognise that the new seat should be in south east QLD. But there aren't enough electors for the new seat to be entirely drawn from existing south of the Brisbane River seats. The ALP makes up for the shortfall by reuniting Somerset in Blair and by removing that part of Ryan south of the Brisbane River. The LNP take Warwick and Stanthorpe into the new seat. (The LNP also adds Graceville and Chelmer to Ryan, thereby requiring even more numbers to complete the SE QLD seat).
- We agree that Dickson should move into the southern Brisbane part of Petrie. Our differences are of degree.
- We also agree that as far as possible Mackay be kept together in Dawson. But we have significant differences in how we each deal with Kennedy's surplus etc.

The 11 divisions entirely south of the river, counting Blair and including the Gold Coast are collectively just over 60% of a quota at the future date. That surplus decides that the new division be in SE QLD. The next question is taking into account growth in other parts of QLD where should the remaining electors be found to complete the numbers in the new seat.

That's a question about which the major parties have significant differences and our different answers have knock on effects throughout the rest of QLD.

It is a crucial matter for the Commissioners to decide. An examination of recent electoral history particularly pertaining to the Division of Ryan may be useful.

### **RYAN'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY SINCE 1992**

Until the 1992 redistribution the Brisbane River had been the southern boundary of the division of Ryan. In that year the division of Dickson was formed and the Commissioners, in order to complete Dickson were forced to remove from Ryan into Dickson places such as Ferny Hills, Ferny Grove and to Mt Nebo. These had traditionally been in Ryan since that Division's formation in 1949. In order to compensate Ryan for the loss of the aforementioned the Commissioners, for the first time drew Ryan south of the river.

At the following redistribution in 1994 the Commissioners formed another northern division, Longman. It drew a significant number of electors from Dickson and the round robin of changes meant that Ryan added further electors south of the river including Oxley and Chelmer/Graceville. The latter area was returned to Moreton in 1998 when the Division of Blair was formed. In 2003, additional parts of Ryan south of the river including Oxley itself were removed as a consequence of the formation of a new southern division, Bonner.

In 2009 the numbers dictate that the Commissioners will be required to draw a new division south of the river. But as when Dickson, Longman, Blair and Bonner were first established there won't be sufficient electors in south of the river seats necessary to complete the formation of the new division. Ryan as recent history has shown will be pivotal in the completion process. The final removal of the south of the river component of Ryan will also—as indicated above, be consistent with recent changes made by the Commissioners.

To sum up: the formation of two new north of the river divisions in 1992 and 1994 forced Ryan to add electors south of the river. The creation of south of the river divisions in 1998 and 2003 enabled Ryan to relinquish much of that territory earlier gained-- a process that can be completed in 2009 with the new southern division. It will also mean that Ryan restored to its pre 1992 southern river boundary can also have restored the Ferny Hills/Ferny Grove to Mt Nebo territory that had traditionally been in that division until 1992.

With the return of Somerset Council to Blair as in the ALP's suggestion there are sufficient numbers to form a new Division.

The LNP takes another approach entirely. It retains the southern portion of Ryan and even adds a new and separate section south of the river in Chelmer/Graceville. But as we have seen recent practice has been when the Commissioners have created a south east division for Ryan to transfer some of its south of the river component.

### **MARANOA**

Instead the LNP makes up for the shortfall in SE QLD by transferring into the new Division both the largest and second largest centres in Maranoa being Warwick and Stanthorpe.

The LNP's suggestion regarding Maranoa massively increases the size of Maranoa by more than 80% to almost one million square kilometres. We note that in recent redistributions the Commission has attempted wherever practically possible to reduce the size of extremely large seats.

At 993, 402 km<sup>2</sup> the LNP's version of Maranoa would be the third largest division in the country, larger than the newly drawn division of O'Connor and the South Australian division of Grey. The LNP's proposal increases the size of Maranoa by 446,572 km<sup>2</sup>.

Specifically the inclusion of Mt Isa into the division increases the size further and fails community of interest tests.

The ALP notes that some communities on the western side of Flynn claim some connection with their neighbouring parts of Maranoa. This is certainly not the case with Mt Isa.

Earlier we introduced the concept of pivot points – areas that might go in or out of either a region or division depending where a new seat is drawn. We would describe that part of Ryan south of the river as such. Somerset is another pivot point. In the past 20 years Esk has been in Oxley then Dickson then Longman then Blair then Dickson and we say should go back to Blair this time.

Although it is true that Warwick was in Rankin from 1984 until the next redistribution we do not believe it needs to be moved at any future time from Maranoa. The same even more applies to Stanthorpe.

Before we return to Brisbane divisions we next wish to examine the proposals for North QLD divisions.

### **Leichhardt/Kennedy**

With Leichhardt we ask the Commissioners to examine the points made in the suggestion of Bob Richardson outlining reasons why the Cape should be retained in Leichhardt. His points compliment our original suggestions.

The LNP suggestion proposes that Leichhardt be drawn as a Cairns only division.

This suggestion if adopted would force the Cape communities which are strongly connected with Cairns into a division that stretches down below Charters Towers but with little connection between communities. It also creates a seat that wraps around both Townsville and Cairns but excises Mt Isa into Maranoa. Having regard for the strong connection of the Cape communities with Cairns we think that the Commissioners should continue as has been recent practice adjusting Leichhardt by removing to Kennedy part of Trinity SLA.

The LNP claims air connection between areas in their proposed Kennedy but conveniently ignores areas with no air services to Cairns, most importantly ignoring Charters Towers.

Given that the surplus in Leichhardt, no matter how the boundaries are drawn must flow into Kennedy it follows that the Commissioners will be forced to excise a significant section from Kennedy.

The MP for Kennedy, Mr Bob Katter has suggested that Kennedy be adjusted by transferring into Herbert the remaining part of Townsville council still in Kennedy. Were our only consideration the best boundaries for Kennedy under the community of interest criteria we would endorse Mr Katter's proposal. Unfortunately, the addition of new electors from Kennedy into Herbert would force that division, already well over quota to move to Dawson a large chunk of Townsville which in turn, to keep within tolerances force Mackay to be split in two. Additionally, such a change would mean a Capricornia with a population at two different ends.

We think the LNP as has the ALP have considered but rejected the Katter option due to the flow on effects to the coastal divisions south of Kennedy.

That only leaves two options which allow Mackay to be retained in Dawson and minimising a further split of Townsville. One is removing Mt Isa as suggested by the LNP. It's a partial consequence of what they propose to remove from the south eastern corner of Maranoa. We have dealt with that suggestion above. The south western part of Maranoa consists of tiny communities covering large areas. That fact together with the proposed 80% enlargement of Maranoa by the LNP means the commissioners should reject the Mt Isa option.

This leaves the proposition that Charters Towers be transferred to Capricornia. All things considered this is the least worst option facing the Commissioners especially when we think of the flow on effects of such a movement.

### **Herbert/Dawson**

Of interest is the suggestion of the member for Hinkler who has proposed almost exactly the same boundaries for the divisions of Herbert and Dawson as the ALP.

The LNP map shows that the LNP suggests removing the upper Ross from Herbert and moving it into Kennedy. This suggestion puts Townsville Suburbs that have little or no community of interest with Kennedy into Kennedy, while adding further parts of Kennedy to the north. This suggestion is a poor community of interest outcome and represents a huge and unnecessary change to the Division with thousands of electors being moved from Herbert to Kennedy and the reverse. We also note that previous suggestions by the Liberal Party regarding dividing the upper Ross suburbs have previously been rejected by the Commission.



(Taken from the LNP maps attached to the LNP submission – subsequently removed)

We further note the comment made by Hon Warren Truss MP in his suggestion which states that if possible “Dawson should be a sugar seat based on Mackay and not pressed into the suburbs of Townsville.”

### **Capricornia & Flynn**

The LNP in their submission attempts to chop two seats in half then recombine the alternate halves with far worse community of interest outcomes. It also ignores the history of Queensland redistributions that plainly recognise the East to West rail and road connections along the Queensland coast.

The LNP suggestion to excise western areas from the two seats and combine the two cities of Gladstone and Rockhampton together creates unneeded change for these two divisions. It also creates the plainly ridiculous seat that stretches from Collinsville west of Mackay to the suburbs of Bundaberg which are north of the Burnett River. It manages to combine the towns of Gayndah and Eidsvold with Collinsville. (It should be noted that it is a 10 hour drive between Collinsville and Eidsvold and an 11 hour drive to Bundaberg’s northern suburbs (passing through Rockhampton on the way).

This is an extraordinary suggestion to create a huge seat with no community of interest and no major centre.

Also, the Member for Hinkler in his submission did not follow the arbitrary splitting and recombining of Flynn and Capricornia but instead tried to find solutions that sensibly avoid divisions being changed unnecessarily.

### **Hinkler**

Whereas the ALP suggests that the surplus in Hinkler be solved by transferring electors to Wide Bay, both the LNP and Mr Neville propose that the suburb of North Bundaberg be transferred to Flynn.

In part, this proposition is an outcome of suggestions made elsewhere (Eg Maranoa). But as Mr Neville himself acknowledges, the current boundary, the Burnett River "is a natural boundary and that many of the businesses of urban North Bundaberg service the adjoining rural areas. These include regional shopping centres, Post Office, hotels, rural and produce agencies".

### **Wide Bay & Fairfax**



The LNP's suggestion for a swap of Noosa for Nambour does not satisfy the principles of community of interest. The splitting of the neighbouring communities of Nambour and Maroochydore is not a solution to Noosa being included with Wide Bay.

The LNP argues that the Noosa community is not well connected to Gympie, but their suggested solution is to connect Nambour into Wide Bay. Nambour is only 20 minutes from Maroochydore and the two communities are linked with all sort sorts of shared services. Public transport regularly runs between Nambour and Maroochydore while there is little connection between Nambour and areas in Wide Bay.

The LNP completely ignores the relationship that exists between the hinterland and coastal communities on the Sunshine Coast. Also, we note that the council chambers for the Sunshine Coast Council, located in Nambour would under the LNP be severed from the region.

It is interesting to note that whilst these LNP suggestions would impose maximum disruption to the communities the local Liberal member states in his submission that '...it is important on this occasion to minimise the impact of the redistribution as much as possible'. His



submission is clearly at odds with the LNP's plan to move thousands of Fairfax voters into the Wide Bay while moving thousands of others in the opposite direction.

### **North Brisbane and Longman**

We now return to Brisbane. Elsewhere we have described the differences between ourselves and the LNP in how we find the required numbers for a southern seat. Our different approaches to that issue have resulted in significant differences in how we draw seats in north Brisbane.

Yet there are several points where both parties are in broad agreement. These are

- We try to minimise changes to the Division of Brisbane itself which has the effect of keeping the inner suburbs of Brisbane together.
- We only add numbers to Lilley whilst at the same time retaining its current electors.
- Longman transfers numbers only into Petrie and Longman remains a Caboolture/Bribie Island division.
- Dickson retains the area around lakes Kurwongbah and Samsonvale as its northern boundary.
- As a consequence of transferring electors both from Longman and Dickson into the northern end of Petrie we each effect a significant transfer of Brisbane Council electors from Petrie into Dickson. Such a movement also recognises that an east west configuration produces a better community of interest outcome than a north south arrangement. Our differences are of degree not substance.

### **South Brisbane**

#### **Forde**

The LNP's proposed Forde is an exceptionally fragmented seat. Whereas the ALP places the Scenic Rim Council at the heart and centre of the new seat which we call Theodore the LNP splits both this council and also splits the former Boonah council. Also, the LNP unnecessarily retains a Gold Coast component in Forde.

We however recognise that both the LNP's suggested divisions of Forde and Killen are an outcome of trying to add the two largest centres within Maranoa into the area covered by the new division. The flow on effects here as elsewhere produce divisions with questionable communities of interest.

**Southern Brisbane and Ipswich.**



**1LNP proposal has all southside seats moving vote in a counter clockwise direction.**

The LNP's submission seems to move southern Brisbane seats arbitrarily in a counter clockwise direction. Bonner into Griffith, Griffith into Moreton, Moreton finally to move into Bonner. This swirl of movement consistently ignores community of interest arguments, instead officially creating movement of voters and change for change's sake.

Rankin is also forced to change significantly due to the knock-on effects of the placement of the LNP's new seat. This also creates major changes to Blair and Rankin. The ALP's proposal of a new seat means much less unnecessary movement of voters in the southside of Brisbane.

### **CONCLUSION**

Under the LNP's suggestion 599,573 current voters or 22.6% of all voters would have to change division. Under the ALP's only 332,141 people or 12.5% will change their current division. The above supports our contention that under the LNP's proposals that besides moving nearly twice as many electors between divisions than does the ALP, the LNP suggestions actually result in poorer outcomes under the community of interest criteria. In short, much pain for more pain and no gain.