



The Federal Redistribution 2009  
**QUEENSLAND**



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**Objection Number 92**

**Michael Hurburgh**

**2 pages**

12th August 2009

The Electoral Commissioners for Queensland,  
Australian Electoral Commission,  
GPO Box 2590  
Brisbane, QLD., 4001



Dear Sirs,

This submission is in relation to the proposed boundary changes/re-distribution between the seats of Herbert and Dawson.

I am currently an elector for the seat of Herbert, and wish to register an objection to the proposed changes which would see parts of Herbert incorporated into the division of Dawson.

The transfer of a significant portion of the southern suburbs of Townsville to the seat of Dawson ignores a fundamental principle of electorates encompassing a "community of interest". The seat of Dawson includes many of the small communities between Ayr and Mackay, all geographically and economically distinct from the large urban area of Townsville. These distinctions are obvious to most people living in this part of North Queensland.

The suburbs involved, Annandale, Wulguru and Stuart, are dormitory areas for people who work in and around Townsville. Their interests, both work and recreation, are in Townsville. They use facilities provided for the whole population of Townsville. The inhabitants of the excised areas have their lives focussed on Townsville. They are part of the community of Townsville. They have little or no affinity with the major population centre of Dawson, Mackay.

Recently the cities of Townsville and Thuringowa were merged because they had such a strong joint identity that the separate administrations were seen as pointless and counter-productive. The proposed changes would seem to go against this reasoning.

Another issue which is fundamental to the Australian electoral system is equal representation. I appreciate the problems in juggling electoral boundaries to ensure roughly equal numbers of electors in each division. However, consider the fact that the areas subject to this proposed change, along with the adjoining suburbs of Idalia, Onoonba and Fairfield Waters which were transferred to Dawson in the last changes, will not be equally represented for the following reasons -

- The member for Herbert is focussed on Townsville, but the member for Dawson is focussed on Mackay and the other townships along the coast. A small part of Dawson, remote from the bulk of the electorate, cannot/will not be represented on an equal basis.
- The current member for Herbert lives in Townsville (in the area to be transferred to Dawson), the member for Dawson lives in Mackay. Their circle of contacts in the community has a significant effect on how they carry out their duties. How can a person living in Mackay maintain significant contacts in a corner of his electorate 400 kms away. Yes, I know Bob Katter and others manage to cover large areas, but he is a special type of person – the system should be designed on the basis that ordinary people can do the job without extending themselves to a huge extent.
- The electorate office for Herbert is easily accessible for all the electors of Townsville. The electorate office for Dawson is in Mackay, and therefore not easily accessible for people in

**Townsville. In particular, the current member for Dawson has stated that he will not be establishing an electorate office in Townsville, to cater for his constituents here! Will subsequent members adopt the same attitude?**

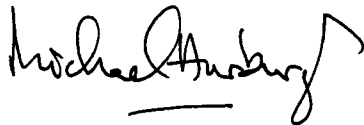
**I believe that the electors of the southern suburbs of Townsville would rather be part of the division of Herbert than Dawson as they would be more equally and fairly represented by a member from their own community, despite the inequality of elector numbers.**

**There will arise a situation soon when Townsville will have a population sufficient to require two electorates – in particular, the transfer of a significant number of Army personnel to Townsville to occur over the next couple of years will see an increase of at least 10,000 (most of whom will be adults) in the population of these southern suburbs of the city. Why not anticipate this now?**

**My suggestion is to determine the boundaries of the division of Herbert to be the same as the boundaries of the City of Townsville. The city boundaries were adjusted sometime ago, with some local input, to reflect to a large extent the wishes of the local community as to where their allegiance lay. The adjoining divisions will have fewer electors, but the “community of interest” is far more important than strict equality of numbers.**

**Many other electors in this area are of a similar opinion on these proposed changes. It is a pity that there is no opportunity for you to test those opinions by a vote.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hurburgh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

**Michael Hurburgh**

**36 Hynch Street,  
Wulguru,  
Townsville, Qld., 4811**