



The Federal Redistribution 2009
QUEENSLAND



Objection Number 531

Alison Ezzy and Brendon Russell

4 pages

From: Brendon Russell [brendon.russell@connect.qut.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 21 August 2009 2:27 PM
To: QLD Redistribution
Subject: Submission
Attachments: Submission.pdf

To whom it may concern:

Please find attached our submission for the Queensland Redistribution.

Yours Sincerely,

Brendon Russell

Australian Electoral Commission
GPO Box 2590
Brisbane, Qld, 4001

Dear Redistribution Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission in response to your proposal for the redistribution of electoral divisions in Queensland.

We live in the division of Brisbane, approximately 400m from Kedron Brook.

Use of Kedron Brook as a boundary

We note that you have elected to use Kedron Brook as a boundary between the divisions of Brisbane and Lilley. We fully support your decision in this respect.

Kedron Brook is a readily-identifiable feature of the inner northern suburbs. We are unable to think of any other possible boundaries that stretch as far or are as consistent across the entire northside. Further, Kedron Brook does not cut any suburbs in two, because it is actually used as the suburb boundary for all of the adjacent suburbs.

We notice that Kedron Brook has already been used as a boundary for a long time, further along past Everton Hills and Arana Hills. The Committee has proposed to retain it as the boundary between the Hills in Dickson and the suburbs of Gaythorne, Mitchelton, Keperra, Ferny Grove etc. We also fully support your decision in that respect.

The Committee had previously used Kedron Brook as a boundary along Gordon Park and Grange but is now proposing to change this. We object to this change. It has been a good boundary for many years in this area and there is no need to move it.

We are writing to suggest that the Committee use Kedron Brook more extensively as an electoral boundary. The Committee could use Kedron Brook as a boundary along its entire length, starting at the Gateway Motorway (as the Committee proposes) all the way to Ferny Grove. The characteristics that we described above make it a far better local boundary than, say, Stafford Road, which would divide suburbs like Stafford and Everton Park in half.

Keep whole suburbs together - Stafford & Everton Park

Keeping suburbs together is a good approach to defining communities in inner suburban areas. The Committee recognised as much when it outlined its General Strategy in its report and talked about its preference for using 'locality boundaries'. The Committee therefore does not need convincing of the benefits of keeping suburbs together, but in this instance we would appeal to the Committee to be consistent with this aim where it is able.

If the Committee chose to use Kedron Brook along its entire length, it could keep all of Stafford together in a single electorate, a positive outcome which the Committee has been unable to achieve previously. For several elections, the Committee has had to split Stafford between three divisions, and now it has its first opportunity to reunite the suburb.

The Committee would also be able to put all of Stafford in the same division as Stafford Heights, another positive achievement. Stafford and Stafford Heights obviously share many similar characteristics. The residents share transport routes like Stafford Road and Webster Road. They also shop together at the Stafford shopping strip on Stafford Road which has a Bunnings, a shopping centre containing the local supermarket, several takeaway restaurants and a host of other shops and services.

The Committee should be aware that all of these shops and services are located on the southern side of Stafford Road. If the Committee chose to use Stafford Road as it proposes, then that would run the boundary right in-between the residents and their local shops and services. That outcome would appear to be contrary to the community interest criteria the Committee adheres to.

Similar arguments apply to the suburb of Everton Park. Using Kedron Brook as the boundary will ensure that Everton Park can be kept together in a single electorate. Again this is a positive outcome which the Committee has been unable to achieve in recent times. For several elections, the Committee has had to split Everton Park between two or even three divisions, which is not ideal. Now that the Committee has an opportunity to reunite all of Everton Park in one division, it should take advantage of its chance. It may even wish to consider putting all of Everton Park into the same division as Everton Hills.

Apart from being able to avoid splitting suburbs in two, Kedron Brook is a better boundary than any road due to its sheer size. We are talking about its width, not just its length. While Stafford Road and South Pine Road are major arterial roads, they are still no more than four lanes across. The entire road corridor would be no more than 30 or 40m wide. Compare that to Kedron Brook, which sits amid parks and reserves which are at least 120m wide in its narrowest sections. In some parts, such as between Stafford and Grange or Alderley, the reserves are more than half a kilometre wide. We encourage the Committee to look on Google Satellite Maps and compare for itself which 'line' is a clearer divide between two areas. We are confident the Committee will find that Kedron Brook is a visibly better and much wider barrier between local communities than Stafford Road.

For simplicity, consistency, to keep suburbs united, and in order to identify the best potential boundaries in north Brisbane, the Committee should use Kedron Brook along its entire length.

Keep whole suburbs together - Gaythorne & Enoggera, and Ashgrove, Bardon & Auchenflower

We also note that the Committee is proposing to split up the Brisbane suburbs of Gaythorne, Enoggera, Ashgrove, Bardon and Auchenflower by running boundaries through these suburbs.

Again, while the Committee does not need convincing of the benefits of keeping suburbs together, in this instance we would appeal to the Committee to be consistent with the aims it expressed in its general strategy where it is able.

We appreciate the difficulty the Committee faces in finding a suitable boundary in this general area. The suburbs in the north-west of Brisbane clearly have more characteristics that unite them, than features that divide them.

But we think it is possible to identify two broad communities in this area that may interest the Committee:

Firstly, there is a string of suburbs along the major arterial Samford Road, starting in Ferny Grove and ending in Alderley. These suburbs form the north-western edge of the Brisbane City Council area.

What is interesting about these suburbs is that they are strongly linked together by Samford Road and the Ferny Grove trainline, but there really aren't all any other major roads or transport options that the residents can take. Compare this situation to most other inner suburbs where the residents have the option of major roads on every side of their suburb, plus a trainline and whatever else.

The Committee is at least partially aware that there are strong community links in this area because it has always endeavoured to keep Ferny Grove, Upper Kedron, Keperra and Mitchelton together. The Committee may want to give further consideration to how Samford Road ties all of these suburbs together, with Gaythorne and Alderley, and keep all of these suburbs within a single division.

Secondly, there is a rough square of suburbs due-west of the CBD which is bordered by the Brisbane River to the south, Mount Coot-tha to the west and the Enoggera Barracks to the north. Again, the Committee may want to examine on Google Satellite Maps how clearly these suburbs appear to form a cohesive, integrated, wider community.

Under its current proposal, the Committee has attempted to find a boundary that goes through the middle of this square of suburbs. We would suggest that the Committee has found this task so difficult (using property boundaries and minor suburban streets in many instances) because it overlooked how these suburbs actually all form part of an inseparable whole.

Google Satellite Maps show how there is quite a clear boundary that coincides with the edges of the residential areas along the foot of Mount Coot-tha and along the edge of the Enoggera Barracks Reserve. If the Committee chose to use this general boundary instead, it may not have to split the suburbs of Ashgrove, Bardon or Auchenflower between divisions.

The Committee has taken the opportunity to reunite all of Paddington within a single division. It should take advantage of the same opportunity to reunite all of Bardon within a single division and at the same time avoid splitting the suburbs of Ashgrove and Auchenflower as much as possible.

We notice that the Committee is proposing a swap of areas between the divisions of Brisbane and Ryan. We generally agree with the Committee that this is warranted in order to better define the communities in each division. However, in acknowledgement of the two broad community areas identified above, we appeal to the Committee to consider transferring all of the Samford Road strip out of Brisbane and keeping all of the inner western suburbs within Brisbane. This swap will work with the enrolment tolerances the Committee must meet. It also seems a far better approach than trying to find a boundary that splits both of these communities.

Splitting suburbs confuses electors

The Committee has confessed its support for keeping suburbs together but has not detailed all of the benefits of doing so. We appeal to the Committee to try to avoid splitting suburbs because it can cause electors to be perplexed regarding where they can vote and who they can vote for.

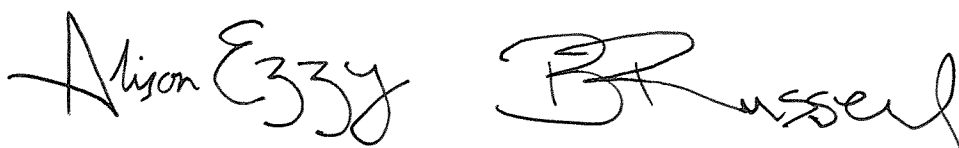
No doubt it is also expensive and wasteful for the Electoral Commission to administer booths where electors are voting for multiple divisions. In the vicinity of Stafford and Everton Park, there are a number of polling booths. There are three polling booths in Stafford, one in Stafford West, two in Everton Park and one in Everton Hills. At the last few elections, each of these polling booths has at various times been split between different divisions. The polling booth at Stafford State School, for instance, bears the brunt of electors from three different divisions having to determine which ballot papers they should receive. If the Committee used Kedron Brook, rather than Stafford Road, this problem would be alleviated.

Enrolment tolerances

In the next stage of submissions, we will endeavour to prove to the Committee that it is possible to keep all of these suburbs together and stay within the enrolment tolerances the Committee must meet when it conducts its redistribution.

However, on our rough estimates it seems to work if all of Stafford & Gordon Park are kept in Lilley, Everton Park goes with Everton Hills in Dickson, all of the Samford Road strip including Gaythorne and Alderley are placed in Ryan, and all of Ashgrove, Bardon and Auchenflower are retained together in Brisbane. Keeping all of these suburbs intact in this way seems much better than the Committee's current proposal to split seven suburbs in half – Stafford, Everton Park, Gaythorne, Enoggera, Ashgrove, Bardon and Auchenflower. The splitting of suburbs could be avoided entirely.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Alison Ezzy' and the signature on the right is 'Brendon Russell'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison Ezzy & Brendon Russell
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