Objection Number 553

Peter Dutton MP

4 pages

From: Little, Rosemary (P. Dutton, MP) [Rosemary.Little@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 21 August 2009 5:07 PM
To: QLD Redistribution
Subject: Submission regarding proposed Redistribution of the electoral divisions Queensland
Attachments: submission.pdf

Australian Electoral Commission,
7th Floor,
488 Queen Street,
Brisbane, Qld, 4000;

Dear Redistribution Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission responding to your Proposed Redistribution of the electoral divisions Queensland. I have consulted with the LNP and I am aware that in their submission they cover proposed boundary changes and I concur with those findings and I would like to offer these additional comments.

I do not question the requirement for a redistribution to occur in Queensland during every term of government. I am aware that the high population growth in south east Queensland and in regional centres around Queensland is driving the need for Queensland to gain additional electorates.

I believe that the Committee should have greater regard to the detrimental effects on electors caused by needlessly swapping two areas between Dickson and Longman. Such a proposal is of no benefit for either division, in terms of meeting the necessary enrolment tolerances. Furthermore, if this proposal was adopted it would cause some perverse outcomes for the communities in question, as I have outlined below.

Removal of Esk

While I am disappointed that Dickson loses the area of Esk where I have worked so hard, I understand that this result has been a likely conclusion for a number of reasons. While representing the area after it was included in Dickson following the last redistribution, it is obvious that the residents of Esk share few community links with the rest of Dickson. Significantly, a mountain range divides the two areas. There are only two roads that traverse this mountain range within Dickson, and both are tourist drives that are essentially unfit for commercial traffic. Signs warning against towing trailers and caravans via these roads have meant that I have had to travel through three other electorates simply to take my mobile office (caravan) on my regular visits to the Esk region.

The removal of Esk from Dickson was presumably even more likely following its amalgamation with Kilcoy Shire into the new local government authority of Somerset Regional Council.

It is my hope that the Committee is able to learn a valuable insight from the inclusion and subsequent removal of Esk during the last two redistributions. Wherever possible, the Committee should be seeking to consider whether future population growth will lead to it having to undo its proposals in a mere three years' time.

Failing to account for such things causes electors detriment for two reasons. Firstly, it makes it less likely that strong and longstanding links can develop between electors, their communities and MPs. Secondly, it causes significant disruption and confusion amongst electors, particularly the most marginalised, which increases their risk of disenfranchisement. When electors have difficulty keeping track of the division in which they live, they may struggle to identify their incumbent MP, their other candidates and even the booths at which they should vote. The risk of disenfranchising electors by constantly transferring them between divisions cannot be understated. While AEC staff inside polling stations is always very helpful and informative, I have witnessed electors giving up outside polling stations following confusion caused by changed boundaries.

Transferring a community back and forth may sometimes be unavoidable. After all, the Committee is performing a complex and difficult duty. However, when it is clear that a proposed change will simply have to be undone again in the next redistribution due to population growth, and there are other options identified, the Committee should explore those other options available to it.

Inclusion of Kallangur (part)

I was proud to represent Kallangur previously, right up until it was removed from Dickson by the redistribution conducted in 2006. I would be very happy to work hard on behalf of Kallangur residents again, yet I cannot help but conclude that, due to high population growth in Dickson, the Committee will simply have to transfer Kallangur out of Dickson again at the very next redistribution, that outcome would not be helpful or positive for local residents.

Removal of Dayboro and Kurwongbah

I strongly object to the removal of Dayboro, Kurwongbah, Whiteside and other nearby localities such as King Scrub, Rush Creek, Ocean View and Mount Pleasant.

This boundary around Dayboro is essentially the line between Pine Rivers communities and the Caboolture Shire region. While those council areas have recently been amalgamated, this has not yet led to any greater community links between this rural area and Caboolture.

Transferring these areas into Longman implies that Dayboro has stronger community links to Caboolture than it does to Strathpine and Pine Rivers. That is fundamentally not the case. It is ironic that the residents of Dayboro would be required to travel through Kallangur to visit their local Member of Parliament in Longman whose office is located in Caboolture.

Local residents in these areas:

- view their wider community as being "Pine Rivers" not "Caboolture";
- use Dayboro Road as their major means of transport and communication with their wider community;
- travel to the commercial shopping strips in Petrie and Strathpine, particularly the Strathpine Westfield Shopping Centre;
- have no strong links to the Caboolture centre or the Morayfield commercial shopping strip, because there is no direct means of transport to these areas;
- view Mount Mee Road as a tourist drive, not as a link to their wider community;
- travel to the Petrie train station when they need to commute to the Brisbane CBD; and
- send their children to high schools such as those around Bray Park and Strathpine.

The Committee should also be aware that its proposal will actually divide the Dayboro community as it presently exists. The residents of Laceys Creek, Armstrong Creek, Kobble Creek and Samsonvale all view Dayboro as their local centre, including for postal services and other community services. They also vote at the Dayboro polling booth. The Committee should abandon its proposal to remove Dayboro and ensure that these localities can remain together with Dayboro in the same division.

Further, the Committee should be aware of the strong links that exist between Dayboro and Samford. These two communities, linked by Mount Samson Road, form the backbone of the rural areas of Pine Rivers. As such, the Dayboro community has strong links with the Samford community. Certainly those links are much stronger than any links between Dayboro and Woodford or Caboolture. The Committee may wish to note

that Dayboro and Samford are included together in the same local ward in the new Moreton Bay Regional Council – a reflection of their links at the most local level.

In the interests of trying to limit the number of electors who have to be transferred between divisions, the Committee should seek to disrupt the enrolment of as few electors as is possible. Rather than disrupting two local communities by unnecessarily swapping them between divisions, the Committee should consider leaving both communities alone, to the extent that is possible.

Inclusion of Bridgeman Downs, McDowall and Everton Park

There are very strong links between the south eastern corner of Dickson and suburbs like Carseldine, Bridgeman Downs, McDowall and Everton Hills. They are linked by arterial roads such as Albany Creek Rd, Beckett Rd and Old Northern Rd. They are suburbs with similar topographies and contain residents with similar demographic characteristics. For instance, as the names suggest, Everton Hills in Dickson has close links with the adjacent suburb of Everton Park. The Committee will find that the communities of Albany Creek, Bridgeman Downs and McDowall are also quite closely connected.

Thank you again for the opportunity to lodge a submission.

Yours sincerely

Peter Dutton MP
Member for Dickson