



The Federal Redistribution 2009  
**QUEENSLAND**



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**Public Suggestion Number      1**

**Mr Bruce Collins**

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**From:** Bruce Collins [collins.sb@bigpond.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 April 2009 3:48 PM  
**To:** QLD Redistribution  
**Subject:** Public suggestion for Federal redistribution in Queensland  
**Attachments:** Fed redistribution public suggestion 0409.doc

The Commissioners  
Australian Electoral Commission Qld

Dear Sirs

Attached please see some suggestions that I submit. I trust that you will take note of these in your deliberations.

*Yours faithfully*

*S B Collins*

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## **Introduction**

The Commissioners should initially ensure that accurate information is placed on the AEC website and make themselves aware of it. In some instances the information appearing under “*Products/Industries of the Area*” for the different electoral divisions is just blatantly inaccurate and in others, lamentable for its omissions.

For example, the information provided for Kennedy is quite misleading – wheat, cotton and tobacco as some of the primary production. Wheat and cotton, if grown at all, would be in insignificant quantities while the last of the tobacco industry closed down in 2003. [I am sure that an ex-tobacco farmer at Mareeba would be quite incensed to learn that the public servants who make the decisions as to how the nation’s electorates are shaped were not aware that the tobacco industry had been closed down]. There is no mention of bananas from Australia’s foremost banana growing region. I would be interested to know where coal and uranium are mined in Kennedy.

In Flynn the information does not mention the alumina refinery in Gladstone (a major employer), nor the gemstone and opal production.

This is pretty basic information, but very important in terms of forging the social and cultural basis of an electorate and in forming its community of interest linkages. If Commissioners have used this information in the past to help assess issues of community of interest, then it is not surprising that some very poor decisions have resulted.

## **General Principles**

- All residents in Australia should have an equal opportunity to participate in the democratic processes of government, which includes access to their elected members.
- This equality of opportunity should be manifested practically as well as theoretically.
- There is little doubt that in a geographically large electorate it is more difficult for an elected member to provide adequate representation to his constituents than in a geographically small electorate.
- In a location where transport and telecommunications infrastructure is poor it becomes even more difficult. The member must spend more time travelling, less time in the electorate and has less time available for one on one contact with constituents. Internet connections are slower (that difference will grow following the Federal government’s planned Broadband roll out) and as a result the member receives less effective feed back on issues confronting his constituents.
- If the economic base for that geographically large electorate is diverse, covering a wide range of unrelated industries, it becomes even more difficult for that member to adequately represent the electorate. Agriculture often has priorities that are not those of mining and manufacturing and they may be mutually exclusive.
- The concept of community of interest is extremely important if residents of rural and remote communities are to feel that they are not being excluded from the processes of democracy.

- In recent redistributions in Qld the concept of community of interest has been largely ignored by those charged with the responsibility of drawing up boundaries.

### **Suggestions for the Redistribution**

A new electorate should be created in the south east of the state and the boundaries of existing electorates in that region adjusted to take up excess numbers from those electorates that are projected to be over-quota. The new electorate should be named Bjelke-Peterson in memory of Queensland's longest serving Premier and one under whom the state experienced its greatest period of sustained growth. There are already a number of Federal electorates in Queensland named after previous Premiers, some of quite modest achievement.

The electorate of Flynn should be altered by transferring the four central-western shires of Blackall-Tambo, Barcaldine Regional Council, Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council (6124 total projected enrolments) from Flynn into Maranoa. These shires already have long-standing links and a community of interest with the existing areas of Maranoa. Flynn's numbers should be compensated by transferring Mt Morgan (2136 projected) from Capricornia and approximately 5000 from adjoining areas of Burnett Heads (as Hinkler needs to shed numbers).

This would create a much better outcome in terms of community of interest for the residents in the large central-western shires as their connections are along the Warrego Highway to Roma and Dalby, not to the Central Highlands and Gladstone. The additional geographic area in Maranoa would not be difficult to represent as the industries and demographics are closely linked with that which already exists in Maranoa. The change would allow the elected member for Flynn more time in that electorate with its industrial base in Gladstone, the extensive coal mining and intensive agriculture concentrated in the Emerald – Biloela – Calliope - Gayndah regions.

The combined projected enrolments of Dawson, Herbert, Kennedy and Leichhardt should allow their common boundaries to be altered in order to adjust their enrolments so as to satisfy the new quota. Kennedy could gain excess numbers (7400) from Leichhardt in the north and lose numbers (3900) to Dawson in its south east to bring it within tolerated limits. Dawson could extend into the southern part of Herbert to pick up extra numbers (2500). There would then have to be some transfer from Dawson into Capricornia in order to balance numbers (2400).

While this may involve a deal of minor boundary adjustments, I believe it to be preferable to a radical redrawing of the boundaries of these four regional electorates.

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