



The Federal Redistribution 2009
QUEENSLAND



Public Suggestion Number 14

Hon Bob Katter MP Member for Kennedy

11 pages

From: Stocker, Elise (B. Katter, MP) [Elise.Stocker@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 24 April 2009 1:01 PM
To: QLD Redistribution
Subject: Submission from Bob Katter
Attachments: boundaries April 2009- final.doc

To the Redistribution Committee for Queensland,

Please find attached the Hon Bob Katter's submission on the proposed redistribution of the federal electoral boundaries in Queensland.

<<boundaries April 2009- final.doc>>

Our office would greatly appreciate confirmation that this submission has been received by the Redistribution Committee prior to the deadline of 6pm Friday 24 April 2009.

Kind regards

Elise Stocker

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SUBMISSION TO REDISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

2009 Redistribution of Federal Electoral Boundaries in Queensland

The Hon Bob Katter
Federal Member for Kennedy

Summary

It is my primary proposal that the seat of Kennedy be retained in its entirety, within its current boundaries. This is due to:

- Significant economic, social and regional ties exist across Kennedy;
- Important communication and travel networks, which transect and unite Kennedy;
- Key physical features identify and define Kennedy; and
- Overlap with existing State and local government boundaries.

These points are further detailed in Attachment 1.

Clearly constant change to electoral boundaries is undesirable, with people becoming cynical of redistribution committees.

Members of parliament also become disillusioned after putting years into knowing and understanding the problems and commitments of their communities, when these communities are vanished out from under them by a redistribution pen.

Should, however, it be determined that electorates to the north need to shed votes to come closer to the “mean” providing votes for the new seat in south east Queensland. Then we would make a cascade proposal, “cascading” south 4,000-

5,000 electors from electorate to electorate (with 2 exceptions of where there'd be 6,000-7,000), down the east coast to south east Queensland.

All redistributions must start in the north since always the only option for an expanding Leichhardt is to shed votes into its only neighbouring electorate Kennedy, thus starting a southern cascading.

Tables indicating the effect of this "Cascade Proposal" are provided in Attachment 2.

With 35 years as Northern Development Minister or as Federal Member for Kennedy, I have had detailed and specific knowledge of every community in North Queensland. Most of the north electorates are fairly homogenous and, whilst it is unfortunate that part of Cairns is in Kennedy and part of Townsville is in Dawson, the size and growth of these cities and the redistribution quota have dictated this outcome.

The "Cascade proposal" I have put forward follows natural boundaries and communities of interests, and presents minimal disturbance of existing arrangements. It also allows the centres of major towns to remain in tact, but does require some movement of their southern and northern outskirts. However, anyone with a detailed knowledge of each of these towns would know that their current boundaries are already in suburbia. These boundaries will just have to move a little further north.

For example, my knowledge enables me to tell the Commissioner that:

- Kennedy already has Cairns suburban areas and to allow Leichhardt to fall within quota, the shedding of more into Kennedy is not highly disruptive;
- urban sprawl in Townsville finishes at the Mystic Sands subdivisions at Rollingstone. This is in sharp contrast to the areas north of Rollingstone where there are no subdivisions and where the broad acre farming of sugar stretches from Rollingstone to the southern outskirts of Cairns. And
- the current Capricornia boundary is already into outer urban Mackay.

As another example, The “Cascade proposal” also avoids the need for bizarre scenarios, such as moving Mount Isa into Maranoa. This would set the woods well and truly ablaze and the people of this area would be entitled to be outraged. Yet this was seriously proposed on a previous occasion: proposed in order, of course, to serve a selfish, narrow political interest.

Another extraordinary proposal put up recently is that Charters Towers be taken out of Kennedy. To indicate how out of touch with reality is this proposal, with the exception of 2 years in the 20s and 2 years in the early 90s, this seat has been continually held by a person from Charters Towers. So for 108 years Charters Towers has been, and still is, the spiritual heartland and centre of the Gulf, Mid West and Mount Isa area.

Furthermore, both the ALP and LNP agreed Charters Towers and the Tablelands should be united together in a single state seat, Dalrymple. For either of these parties to now argue that these areas should now be split in a federal seat would be an exceptional hypocrisy, clearly indicating a political motivation.

People are entitled to have faith that their Electoral Commission will not acquiesce to such self-serving political interest.

PRIMARY PROPOSAL – Status Quo

The Redistribution Committee will be considering this redistribution in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The enrolment quota for each electorate has been calculated at 88,343. As the electorates outside of south east Queensland are over quota only 20,000 (in total), it seems logical that the new seat will be created in south east Queensland.

It is my primary proposal that the seat of Kennedy be retained in its entirety, within its current boundaries. For convenience, I have categorised the key reasons for this proposal under headings consistent with section 66 of the Act.

Significant economic, social and regional ties exist across Kennedy and key physical features identify and define Kennedy within its present boundaries as a homogeneous and distinct area in terms of economic, sporting and community interests

- Kennedy has 5 highly connected regions: Tablelands, the Coastal Wet-belt, Mount Isa, Mid-West, and Gulf Country.
- Mount Isa is a key regional centre for towns in the mid-West and Gulf country. Indeed for this very reason the AEC has chosen to situate the Kennedy AEC office in this town.
- Charters Towers is an important education centre for the children of the Mount Isa area, Mid-West, Tablelands and Gulf Country. It was once regarded as the Education Capital of North Australia due to the large number of secondary boarding schools compared to the town's population. Students from the Mid-West and Gulf region make up about 50 per cent of the student population, with boarding students coming from towns such as Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry, Mount Isa, Boulia, Burketown, Georgetown, Normanton and Karumba.
- State Origin rugby league players , Nathan Fein, and Jake Lillyman, for example, were both educated in Charters Towers boarding schools. Nathan was from Mount Isa and Jake was from Richmond.

- In sharp contrast children from the Central West (those without secondary schools ie. small towns and station properties) all go to Brisbane or Rockhampton – none go to Charters Towers.
- There is a strong sense of community between Charters Towers and other Mid West towns, a bond evidenced in the parents' choice of education, and its choice as a retirement centre. I can say with certainty that ease of travel to Charters Towers – as it is close and en-route to the more populated coastal areas – and the familiar 'Mid West town' feel most definitely factors into their consideration when they choose a boarding school for their children to attend or as a place to retire.
- Social events have created a great sense of community among towns along the Mid West. These events include the Julia Creek Dirt and Dust, Mount Isa Rodeo, Cloncurry Merry Muster, Charters Towers Country Music Festival and various agricultural and mining field days, race days and gymkhanas. Through such essential social gatherings there is a great sense of 'togetherness' among the Mid West and gulf towns.
- The Tablelands, with its' high rainfall and rich soils, provides cattle fattening for Gulf and Mid West cattle stations. Many stations across the Mid West and Gulf rely on Tableland produce and businesses to support their farming enterprises. For example, grain and molasses comes respectively from the Tablelands and from the Innisfail sugar mills. This provides supplement feed blocks to carry cattle in the Mid West and Gulf through the annual dry.

Important communication and travel networks, which transect and unite Kennedy

- The 6 town Mid West Rugby League competition covers the 4 Mid West towns of Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek and Cloncurry and includes the 2 Gulf towns of Normanton and Doomadgee. There is a proposed second tier competition for 2009, which will include the 4 Mount Isa clubs into the Mid West.
- Almost all of the Mid West, Mount Isa and Gulf cattle are sold at Charters Towers and processed at the meat works in Townsville.

- Charters Towers is a big Railway centre servicing the Townsville – Mount Isa Railway line.
- Mount Isa, and to a lesser extent Charters Towers, are both hard rock mining centres, which it must be emphasised bears absolutely no resemblance to coal mining; coal mining is quarrying – Hard rock mining is underground, tunnelling and stopeing.

Overlap with existing State and local government boundaries

- Kennedy includes almost all of the State electoral divisions of Mount Isa, Dalrymple, Mulgrave and Hinchinbrook. Only half of Mulgrave is in Kennedy at present. The Cascade proposal will bring all of Mulgrave into Kennedy. The State Redistribution Commission saw these areas as “homogeneous” as we do in this submission.
- Under the Cascade proposal, with the exception of a small part of Cook state electorate, state electoral boundaries will almost exactly mirror the Kennedy boundaries.
- Similarly, the local government boundaries, except for the incursion into Cairns, will almost exactly mirror the Kennedy boundaries.
- The important ties between Charters Towers and the Atherton Tablelands were most recent espoused by both the ALP and the LNP when they strongly supported the amalgamation of these two regions into the now State seat of Dalrymple.

CASCADE PROPOSAL

The Cascade proposal suggests the movement of 4,000-7,000 votes of electors from Leichhardt down the east coast to the south east corner of Queensland. It has been designed to have a minimal impact on each electorate. This would require minor changes to the electoral boundaries of Leichhardt, Kennedy, Herbert, Dawson, Capricornia and Flynn.

The Cascade proposal would see the Kennedy electorate:

- incorporating areas south east of Cairns – Edmonton, Gordonvale¹ and Yarrabah² - a total of approx. 4,216 voters.
- shedding areas to the north of Townsville – Bluewater, Deeragun, Northern Beaches, Rollingstone, The Weir– a total of 5,129 voters.

In Kennedy, the Cascade proposal keeps the integrity of the electorate intact, whilst building on the strong social and economic ties between the areas south of Cairns and rest of the Kennedy electorate, and the areas north of Townsville and the electorate of Herbert. Many of the key reasons listed in Attachment 1 apply as reasons also for my support of the Cascade proposal. For brevity these reasons will not be repeated.

The areas removed from Kennedy into Herbert are rural residential areas of Townsville. These subdivisions extend from Townsville City to Mystic Sands subdivisions at Rollingstone. But north of Rollingstone is all broad acre cane farming. This caneland continues all the way north, through Ingham and Innisfail, to the outskirts of Cairns.

¹ Major portions of both Gordonvale and Yarrabah are already in Kennedy these are residual areas still in Leichhardt.

² As above.

Tables indicating the effect of the Cascade proposal are:

Leichhardt to Kennedy

Area to be transferred	Votes in 07
Edmonton	3,211
Gordonvale	283
Yarrabah	722
Totals	4,216

Notional areas proposed for transfer from Leichhardt to Kennedy are south of Mill Rd, Edmonton. Leaving figures for proposed Leichhardt: 95,837 – 4,216 = 91,621³ (over quota by 3,278 or 3.7%)

Kennedy to Herbert

Area to be transferred	Votes in 07
Bluewater	1,437
Deeragun	1,591
Northern Beaches	1,189
Rollingstone	636
The Weir	276
Totals	5,129

Notional areas proposed for transfer from Kennedy to Herbert are along the beaches north of Townsville in the City of Thuringowa LGA. Leaving figures for proposed Kennedy: 92,642 + 4,216 – 5,129 = 91,729 (over quota by 3,386 or 3.8%).

The boundary between Kennedy and Herbert would start at Hencamp Creek up to the Paluma Range then south along the Range to Harvey Range Development Road, then east to Alice River then downstream to Rock Road continuing on in a direct line east to the Bohle River (the existing boundary of the Herbert electorate).

Herbert to Dawson

Area to be transferred	Votes in 07
Hermit Park South	1,299
Railway Estate	1,635
Townsville South	881
Wulguru	2544
Totals	6,359

Notional areas proposed for transfer from Herbert to Dawson are (*from west to east*) – east of Flinders Hwy, Hermit Park, to Boundary Street then south east of Ross River (north of South

³ These figures are approximate and should be viewed as indicative only. They have been sourced from the enrolments at February 2009 and the votes at polling places in the 2007 Federal Election. The sum provides: Enrolments as at Feb 09 + areas for inclusion (votes 07) – areas for exclusion (votes 07)= proposed enrolment

Townsville and Railway Estate). Leaving figures for proposed Herbert: $92,042 + 5,129 - 6,359 = 90,812$ (or over quota by 2,469 or 2.8%).

All these areas are referred to in Townsville as South Townsville. It has always had a very definite separate and clearly different identity from Townsville proper.

(As an alternative proposal, Rasmussen and Kelso could be put into Dawson. This looks good on a map but badly cuts across reality. South Townsville now, and for the foreseeable future, will always be South Townsville with its own identity and community of interest. This alternative proposal would make the Bohle River, and not the Ross River the boundary. This would involve Wulguru, Lavarack Barracks and James Cook University going into Dawson, and Gollogly Lane running away from the Bohle River (which divides Condon from Rasmussen) as the new north boundary cutting off the parrots beak of Kelso and Rasmussen.)

Dawson to Capricornia

Area to be transferred	Votes
Bakers Creek	525
Ooralea	1011
Racecourse	200
Walkerston	1697
West Mackay	2023
Totals	5,456

Notational areas proposed for transfer from Dawson in to Capricornia are west and south of Bridge Road, West Mackay. Leaving figures for proposed Dawson: $88,498 + 6,359 - 5,456 = 89,401$ (over quota by 1,058 or 1.2%).

This leaves central Mackay in tact, but does place some of the southern Mackay area into Capricornia. Any-one with a detailed on ground knowledge of Mackay knows that the current Capricornia boundary is already into outer urban Mackay. Like all of the northern seats, it will just move a little further north.

Capricornia to Flynn

Area to be transferred	Votes
Bajool	257
Bouldercombe	508
Clermont	1303
Dysart	1129
Middlemount	815
Moranbah	1370
Moranbah West	996
Mount Morgan	1199
Totals	7,577

Notional areas proposed for transfer from Capricornia to Flynn are the LGAs of Mount Morgan, Belyando, the south east portion of the Fitzroy LGA, and the western portion of Broadsound LGA (west of Fitzroy Developmental Road). Leaving figures for proposed Capricornia: $93,691 + 5,456 - 7,577 = 91,570$ Capricornia would end up with 88,728 (Over quota by 3,227 or 3.6%).

Flynn already has 1/3 of Queensland's coal mining industry; this will give it another 1/3.

Flynn to the South East

Leaving figures for proposed Flynn: $88,843 + 7,577 = 96,420$ (therefore Flynn would have an additional 8,077 votes (+ or - 3.5%) to contribute to the new seat in the south east).

I trust that due consideration will be placed on these primary and secondary proposals, and the strong reasons for these proposals that I have put forward.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Katter', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

The Hon. Bob Katter MP
Federal Member for Kennedy