



The Federal Redistribution 2009
QUEENSLAND



Public Suggestion Number 15

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From: claudia marckx [cvmarckx@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, 24 April 2009 1:06 PM
To: QLD Redistribution
Subject: Suggestion for the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in Queensland – naming of new division
Attachments: Suggestion for the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in Queensland.doc

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached my submission for the Queensland Electoral Redistributions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this suggestion.

Warm regards,

Claudia V. Marckx
Surry Hills, NSW 2010

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Suggestion for the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in Queensland – naming of new division

Prepared by Claudia V. Marckx

As the state of Queensland will require an additional electoral division, I suggest that this division be named **Coulter**, in recognition of Queensland entertainer Ricki-Lee Coulter.

I submit that this choice of name would leverage synergies between reality television and electoral process, progress the cause of youth electoral engagement and help project a contemporary understanding of Queensland as a vibrant place in which young Australians, and in particular young women, are valued and recognised for their contributions to nation-building. Further, given the understanding of the lives of working Australian families that is demonstrated in Coulter's catalogue of songs, such a choice would also accord with modern Australian values.

I further submit that the redistribution committee embrace youth-driven technology and make the announcement of the name of this new electoral division by way of a 'tweet'.

I have included a brief biography of Ms Coulter, as well as detailed arguments about these points.

Biography of Ricki-Lee Coulter¹

Although born in Auckland, New Zealand on November 10, 1985, Ricki-Lee Coulter has lived in Queensland since she was 3 weeks old, growing up on the Gold Coast. A keen netballer, Coulter's Queensland-representative career (and burgeoning Australian-representative career) was sadly ended by a serious knee injury requiring reconstructive surgery.

Showing the ANZAC spirit to be alive and well, Coulter turned to another passion – singing – and auditioned for the second series of *Australian Idol*. Impressing the Australian public with her nuanced take on contemporary pop/R'n'B, Coulter was considered a major contender to win, but another set-back was to come. Coulter was unexpectedly voted out in 7th place, her departure described by the show's judges as a scandal and keenly felt by the viewing public.

Rising like a phoenix from the flame, with true Aussie determination, Coulter shunned major-label offers and released her gold-certified debut album Ricki-Lee through independent label Shock Records. The album included three top-twenty singles, including the seminal meditation on working-class life in Australia 'Hell No!' ("Workin' hard, two jobs, just to get by / Got a boss that's makin' my head fly") and the lyrical, inspirational 'Sunshine' ("Everything that I've been waiting for / is knocking at my door").

¹Information sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ricki-Lee_Coulter (accessed 23/4/09).

With this mix of gritty insight into Australian life and defiant optimism, Coulter would be the centre of attention when she teamed with fellow *Idol*-alumni Paulini Curuenavuli, Emily Williams, and Kate DeAraugo, to form the Young Divas. Despite a double platinum album and a number of very popular singles with the group, Coulter once more demonstrated her Aussie battler spirit in deciding to return to pursuing a solo career.

The fruit of this labour was her 2007 sophomore solo album *Brand New Day*. Another gold-certified success, this included the anthems 'Can't Touch It' (an examination of so-called 'club culture' in the Australian suburban context) and 'Love Is All Around' (a ground-breaking exploration of the sad world of eating disorders on par with silverchair's 'Ana's Song', in which Coulter confides "Tried to eat, but nothing would taste").

Coulter's extraordinary following dictated that she release a compilation of her best known songs after a mere two studio albums and in 2008 listeners were treated to *Ricki-Lee: The Singles*, which included the new single 'Wiggle It', a deliciously post-modern interpolation of the classic 1990s tune by Dominican hip hop/freestyle /house pioneers 2 in a Room.

1998 would also herald Coulter's return to television stardom, as she appeared in a mentoring role on the hit show 'It Takes Two', before returning to Australian Idol as a co-host. Seemingly inexhaustible, Coulter also undertook the Brand New Day tour.

A keen contributor to her community, Ricki-Lee Coulter cemented her role-model status by acting as the face of Jeans for Genes Day in 2008, as part of her continuing commitment to this youth-focused charity.

Arguments for naming the new Queensland division 'Coulter'

Synergy with electoral matters

Reality television programming, such as *Australian Idol*, of which Coulter is Queensland's most celebrated graduate, represents the main form of democratic engagement which young Australians experience prior to attaining voting rights at age 18. As such, the naming of the new electoral division as the Division of Coulter will leverage synergy between youth culture and electoral process. Ricki-Lee Coulter's unexpected early departure from *Australian Idol* was indeed an object lesson to young Australians about the importance of making your vote count.

Youth electoral engagement:

It is no secret that younger Australians remain disproportionately under-enrolled and are often disengaged from the electoral process more generally.

The *Youth Electoral Study* contends that “the experiences of young adults in secondary school are crucial determinants, as we see it, to the kind of politically aware and active citizens they become as mature adults”.²

By naming the division after a popular icon of young Australians, in particular the secondary-school aged population who comprise the most committed viewership of shows such as *Australian Idol* and the most committed fans of pop/R’nB music such as that promulgated by Ms Coulter, the Redistribution committee would be sending a signal that it is serious about engaging young Australians and doing so on terms that are relevant to them.

I put it to the committee that it consider how many Australians aged under 25 would be able to name a significant number of the people after whom Queensland’s current 29 electoral divisions are named, and reflect on that question when naming this new division.

Recognising the contributions of young Australians:

Queensland is the fastest growing state in Australia, its expansion being due both to a rising birth rate and to movement to the state from elsewhere in Australia, which includes a large number of younger Australians who see Queensland as a state of opportunity for starting their own families. In particular, the Gold Coast, from whence Ms Coulter hails, is one of the fastest growing parts of Australia and a likely location of this new electoral division. Whilst Ricki-Lee Coulter is an icon for all Queenslanders – nay, all Australians – to share, if the newest electoral division were indeed to be based in this area her choice as its namesake would be all the more appropriate.

Queensland’s state slogan ‘the smart state’ would ring truer if this new electoral division were to be named in recognition of this young Queensland entrepreneur and artiste, for a smart state is surely one that recognises and celebrates its greatest assets, and the youth of Queensland are not only its future but its present.

Contributing to gender balance:

Presently, the number of electoral divisions named after women is still significantly fewer than those named for men.

By naming this new division Coulter, the redistribution committee will be not only acknowledging a fine example of Australian womanhood, but symbolically honouring all of the women of Queensland, for it will be sending a message that even the most unlikely of ‘Idols’ might find a place in the nation’s heart through determination and true blue Aussie spirit.

² Print, Murray, Saha, Larry and Edwards, Kathy *Youth Electoral Study – Report 2: Youth, Political Engagement and Voting*, October 2005, online at http://www.aec.gov.au/about_aec/publications/youth_study/youth_study_2/index.htm (accessed 23/4/09).

Saluting working families

“My life ain't paradise there's no, champagne on ice”, notes Coulter on the title track to her *Brand New Day* album. And so she speaks to the quiet dignity of working Australians.

“Some days I'm overjoyed and happy like a clown / other days I'm all washed out and that / Smiles turning upside down,” she continues.

I think there's something in that for all of us.

‘Tweeting’ the announcement:

A definition of Twitter:

“Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have subscribed to them (known as *followers*). Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow anybody to access them. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications.”³

By using Twitter to announce the name of this new electoral division, the redistribution committee would create a ‘buzz’ amongst young people about electoral matters. Young people are not apathetic, but merely jaded about conventional political dialogue. This mechanism of communication will allow the youth of Australia to share, discuss and respond to this announcement in ‘real time’.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my suggestion.

Claudia V. Marckx

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³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter> (accessed 23/4/09).