



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
QUEENSLAND

Submission S1

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Proposed Reorientation of the Divisions of Moreton and Bonner

This submission calls for a substantial reorientation of the federal electoral boundaries between the Divisions of **Moreton and Bonner** so that the contiguous Brisbane suburbs of **Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale** are brought together within a single federal electoral division.

There is a compelling case for doing so.

The present configuration divides a highly interconnected urban community between two electorates, while both Moreton and Bonner are significantly below the Queensland electoral quota. The redistribution therefore provides an opportunity to address both issues simultaneously: correcting the enrolment imbalance and establishing boundaries that better reflect established communities of interest.

This submission respectfully urges the Redistribution Committee to give substantial weight to these considerations.

1. Moreton and Bonner require substantial reconfiguration

The starting point for this redistribution is the significant enrolment deficit in both divisions.

At the commencement of the redistribution, the Queensland quota was **127,259 electors**. Moreton contained **109,636 electors**, approximately **13.85 per cent below quota**, while Bonner contained **114,688 electors**, approximately **9.88 per cent below quota**.

These are not marginal deviations.

Moreton is more than 17,000 electors below quota, while Bonner is more than 12,500 electors below quota. Both divisions therefore require substantial boundary changes to achieve appropriate enrolment levels.

The projected figures reinforce the point. On the AEC's projected enrolment figures, both divisions remain substantially below the projected Queensland quota.

The redistribution should consequently be approached as an opportunity for **structural reorganisation of the two divisions**, rather than simply making minor boundary adjustments.

2. A substantial community of interest is currently divided

The most important feature of the area proposed for reconfiguration is the close relationship between **Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale**.

These are not isolated communities that happen to sit adjacent to one another. They form part of a continuous and highly interconnected urban area in Brisbane's south, with substantial commonality in:

- residential and family networks;

- schools and educational institutions;
- shopping and commercial centres;
- transport connections;
- community organisations;
- cultural and social institutions;
- places of worship;
- professional and business networks; and
- language and cultural connections.

The four suburbs should therefore be considered collectively when assessing communities of interest for federal electoral purposes.

Their division between Moreton and Bonner is an artificial boundary from the perspective of many of the communities and institutions that operate across the area.

3. Recognition of Brisbane's significant Chinese community

There is an additional and particularly significant community of interest consideration.

Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale contain a **substantial concentration of Brisbane's Chinese Australian population**.

The 2021 Census recorded Chinese ancestry among a particularly large proportion of residents in each of these suburbs, including approximately:

- **28.3% in Eight Mile Plains;**
- **27.6% in Sunnybank;**
- **32.3% in Sunnybank Hills; and**
- **41.0% in Rochedale.**

The concentration is striking in comparison with Queensland as a whole.

This demographic concentration is accompanied by substantial Chinese language communities, including Mandarin and Cantonese speaking residents, as well as extensive commercial and community activity serving Chinese Australian residents.

It is important to emphasise that this submission does **not** propose that ethnicity alone should determine electoral boundaries. Rather, the demographic concentration is evidence of an established community of interest which intersects with numerous other characteristics of the area, including family, business, cultural, linguistic, educational and social connections.

The appropriate question for the Committee is therefore not simply where people live according to existing electoral boundaries, but whether the boundaries appropriately recognise communities that are demonstrably connected.

In this case, there is a strong argument that they do not.

4. The four suburbs should be treated as a single community for boundary purposes

The central recommendation of this submission is straightforward:

Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale should be contained wholly within the same federal electoral division.

This should be treated as a fundamental objective when determining the new boundaries of Moreton and Bonner.

The suburbs are geographically contiguous or closely connected and collectively constitute a major population centre in Brisbane's south. Separating them between two federal divisions unnecessarily fragments a community that has significant common interests.

A redistribution is precisely the mechanism through which such fragmentation can be addressed.

Where boundary changes are necessary to satisfy enrolment requirements, preference should be given, where reasonably practicable, to boundaries that follow meaningful community divisions rather than splitting closely connected suburban communities.

5. The proposal provides a practical means of addressing the enrolment imbalance

Importantly, this proposal is not simply an argument for preserving an existing community boundary regardless of enrolment.

The substantial deficits in Moreton and Bonner mean that both divisions necessarily require population to be added.

The Committee should use this requirement constructively.

Rather than treating the enrolment problem and the community of interest issue as separate matters, the redistribution can address both through a comprehensive reorientation of the two divisions.

A coherent new configuration could consolidate the four nominated suburbs in one electorate while transferring surrounding areas as necessary to ensure that the resulting divisions comply with the statutory enrolment requirements.

The precise line should be determined by the Committee following consideration of the complete enrolment projections and the other relevant redistribution criteria. The essential point is that **the existing Moreton and Bonner boundary should not be treated as sacrosanct** merely because it is the current boundary.

The current enrolment circumstances provide a strong practical justification for reconsidering it.

6. Existing boundaries should not take precedence over communities of interest

There is a particular danger in approaching a redistribution through incremental adjustments to existing boundaries.

If the Committee simply seeks to add or remove small numbers of electors from the existing divisions, the result may preserve a boundary that continues to divide the very community the redistribution provides an opportunity to unite.

That would miss an important opportunity.

The Committee should instead consider the broader geography of Brisbane's south and determine whether the Moreton and Bonner boundary can be redrawn around recognisable communities.

In doing so, **Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale should be regarded as a coherent unit.**

This would produce a boundary arrangement that is more intelligible to electors and more reflective of the actual social and economic geography of southern Brisbane.

7. A community centred approach is particularly appropriate in southern Brisbane

Southern Brisbane has undergone substantial demographic and urban change.

The growth and consolidation of communities in the Sunnybank, Eight Mile Plains and Rochedale corridor means that historical electoral boundaries do not necessarily correspond to contemporary communities.

The Committee should therefore look beyond historical notions of where the boundaries between Moreton and Bonner have traditionally been drawn.

The relevant question is what configuration best reflects the communities that exist **now and over the projection period.**

On that basis, the concentration of population, commercial activity and community connections across these four suburbs provides a persuasive basis for reconsidering the existing arrangement.

8. Requested boundary outcome

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Redistribution Committee adopt the following principles when preparing its proposed redistribution:

Primary recommendation

Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale should all be contained within one federal electoral division.

Secondary recommendations

The Committee should:

1. undertake a substantial reorientation of the boundaries of Moreton and Bonner rather than relying upon marginal boundary adjustments;
2. use the substantial enrolment deficits in both divisions as an opportunity to establish a more coherent configuration;
3. recognise the four nominated suburbs as a significant and interconnected community of interest;
4. avoid unnecessarily dividing the established Chinese Australian community concentrated across these suburbs;
5. take account of linguistic, cultural, commercial, educational, family and social connections when assessing communities of interest;
6. ensure that the resulting divisions comply with the applicable enrolment requirements and projected enrolment criteria; and
7. adjust surrounding boundaries as necessary to achieve an overall redistribution that is coherent across Brisbane's south.

Conclusion

The case for reconsidering the Moreton and Bonner boundary is compelling on two complementary grounds.

First, both existing divisions are substantially under quota. Moreton is approximately 13.85 per cent below quota and Bonner approximately 9.88 per cent below quota. The existing configuration therefore cannot simply be preserved unchanged.

Second, the existing boundary divides a highly interconnected community in Brisbane's south. Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale form a substantial and recognisable community, including a particularly significant concentration of Brisbane's Chinese Australian population.

The redistribution should address both circumstances together.

The Committee has an opportunity to replace an inherited boundary arrangement with one that better reflects contemporary Brisbane, its population distribution, its communities and the connections between them.

I therefore strongly urge the Redistribution Committee to **reorientate the Divisions of Moreton and Bonner so that Eight Mile Plains, Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills and Rochedale are united in a single federal electorate**, with surrounding boundaries adjusted as necessary to achieve the required enrolment balance.

Such an approach would provide a more coherent expression of community of interest while simultaneously contributing to the substantial enrolment adjustments that the redistribution requires.

I respectfully request that this proposal be given serious consideration in the preparation of the proposed redistribution of Queensland.