



THE FEDERAL
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QUEENSLAND

Submission S24

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This submission focuses on the boundaries of two Central Queensland electorates: Dawson and Capricornia.

Community of Interest should be given more weight in deciding electorate boundaries, than seems evident from the current boundaries. Of course, enrolment numbers is the primary criterion, but that should not subordinate Community of Interest. In my view, the current boundaries of the electorates of Dawson and Capricornia fail the Community of Interest test.

Local government area (LGA) boundaries should assume more importance as electorate boundaries. Ideally, LGAs should not be divided across several electorates, but should be wholly contained within electorates. Where it is necessary to divide an LGA to balance enrolment between adjoining electorates, the number of such divisions should be minimised.

Dawson

The electorate of Dawson contains parts of four LGAs: Mackay, Whitsunday, Burdekin and Townsville; and wholly contains none of them. The population centre of the electorate is the provincial city of Mackay, but it is located at the southern extremity of the electorate, cut off from much of its hinterland to the west (that is, the Pioneer River valley) and to the south (e.g. Bakers Creek, Homebush, Chelona). Perversely, the northern end of the electorate includes suburbs of Townsville, which are over 400km from Mackay.

Proposed alteration:

Dawson should lose all territory in Townsville LGA. Say, the suburbs of Idalia and Cluden to Herbert; and the rural parts (such as Stuart) to Kennedy.

Dawson should gain the rest of Whitsunday LGA (that is, Collinsville and Mount Coolon) from Capricornia.

Dawson should gain as much of Mackay LGA from Capricornia as possible, but (subject to the enrolment quota) with the probable exception of the former Shire of Sarina.

Thereby, Dawson would contain all of Mackay and Whitsunday LGAs, and share Burdekin LGA with Kennedy (and perhaps share part of Mackay Region with Capricornia).

Capricornia

The electorate of Capricornia contains two whole LGAs: Issac Region and Livingstone Shire and parts of three others: Whitsunday, Mackay and Rockhampton. The population centre of the electorate is the provincial city of Rockhampton, but (like Dawson) the population hub is located at the southern extremity of the electorate, cut off from its hinterland to the south and west. And the northern end of the electorate includes suburbs of Mackay (e.g. Ooralea and Racecourse), which are over 300km from Rockhampton.

Proposed alteration:

Capricornia should lose all territory in Whitsunday LGA and Mackay LGA to Dawson.

Capricornia should gain the rest of Rockhampton LGA from Flynn.

Thereby, Capricornia would contain all of Issac, Rockhampton and Livingstone LGAs.