PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – ACT BRANCH

It is a pleasure to comment on the proposals for the redistribution of ACT Legislative Assembly electorates, on behalf of Proportional Representation Society of Australia – ACT Branch.

As a general, the proposal appear to offer serious solutions to the issue of redistribution. A number, like that of the Proportional Representation Society, seek to minimise change and continue to build electorates broadly aligned to the districts – including those of the political parties. We welcome the approaches taken in those submissions.

As an observation, the online tool was useful in helping frame submission that aligned with the requirements *Electoral Act 1992* regarding the size of the electorates (sections 36(a) and (b)). Only two submissions failed to meet these criteria. What the tool did not do is show any geographic features which could have assisted those preparing submissions understand how well they met the criteria of section 36(c). It is the section 36(c) criteria which largely shape our comments on the submissions.

As we noted in our original submission:

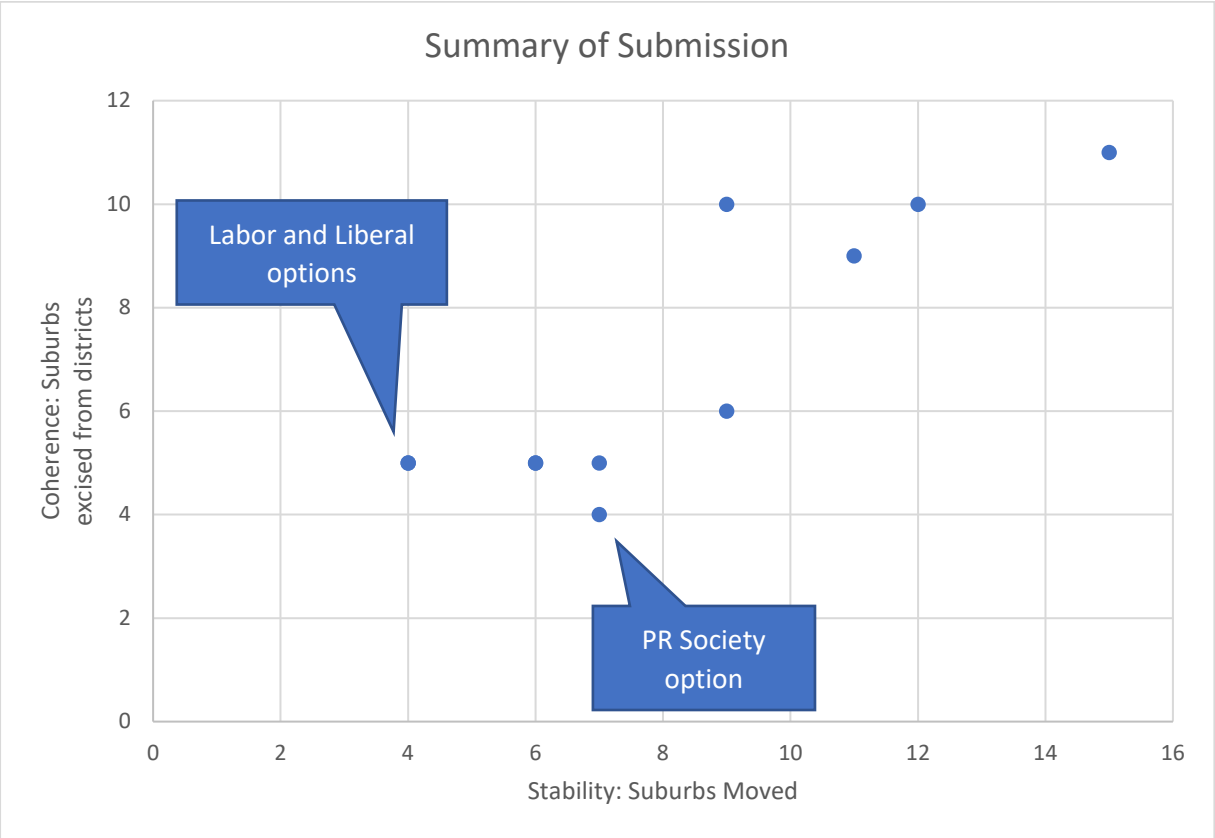
- We read section 36(c)(iv) as a criteria emphasising *Stability* – ie that changes should be kept to a minimum.
- While the remaining four criteria in section 36(c) emphasise *Coherence* of the districts and suburbs (noting that the boundaries normally align with geographic features and define both means of travel and communities of interest.

Our assessment of the submissions in terms of the Electoral Act criteria is contained in the table at the end of this submission. Note that in counting suburbs, only substantively populated suburbs are included in this analysis. Kambah East and Kambah West are treated as two separate suburbs.

We note that:

- Two submissions do not comply with the requirement that the electorates be of roughly equal size at the next election (Weston Creek Community Council and Chris Erett). While non-compliant, these did the best job in addressing the Coherence and Stability criteria. And we note the discussion in the Weston Creek Community Council submission on how it might be made compliant.
- The Proportional Representation Society option provides the best solution to ensuring the coherence of the electorates (only four outside suburbs are not part of the electorates that represent the majority of other suburbs in that district). In emphasising coherence, we note that this effectively addresses four of the five criteria within section 36(c). While the Proportional Representation Society option provides a less optimal solution in terms stability (equal fourth in terms of suburbs moved). And this option avoids changes to the Kurrajong boundaries.
- The two political parties provided the strongest options in terms of stability, and still strong in terms of coherence.
- Three other submissions rated well on both criteria, those of: Alex Adkins, Ben Chesler and Peter Sutherland.
- The remaining submissions were weaker on both the coherence and stability criteria than any of these six submission. These weaker proposals were Anne-Maree Nelmes, Barry Coyles (both proposals), Chef Giovannus, Martin Gordon and Michael Adams. Typically, these

proposals tried to adjust the size of electorates by moving suburbs by moving more than the minimum number of suburbs.



Broadly, the task of adjusting the electorates involved judgements on three issues:

- How to enlarge the Brindabella electorate?
- How to reduce the size of the Yerrabi electorate?
- And how to adjust the remaining boundaries as a result of these changes? (usually Murrumbidgee would be too small at this point)

How to enlarge the Brindabella electorate?

The more convincing solutions to increase the size of Brindabella involved moving part of Kambah from Murrumbidgee into Brindabella (Kambah is too large to be moved in its entirety without necessitating other boundary changes for Brindabella). The options were:

- Move Kambah West (Proportional Representation Society, Chesler, Sutherland)
- Move Kambah East (Labor, Liberal, Adkins)

We do not consider that there is a lot of difference between these options, but we note that more of Kambah West is closer to Tuggeranong town centre than Kambah East. And while Kambah East clearly has its strongest connections with the other Tuggeranong suburbs, it is closer to the Murrumbidgee centres such as Philip and Mawson than Kambah West.

How to reduce the size of the Yerrabi electorate?

The more convincing solutions to reduce the size of Yerrabi focussed on the five Belconnen suburbs included in Yerrabi (Evatt, McKellar, Lawson, Giralang and Kaleen). The solutions included:

- Returning two suburbs to Ginninderra, namely Evatt and McKellar (Labor and Liberal)
- Returning three suburbs, namely Evatt, McKellar and Lawson (Adkins and Chesler)
- Returning four suburbs, namely Evatt, McKellar, Lawson and Giralang (Proportional Representation Society).

Consistent with emphasising alignment with district boundaries over stability, the Proportional Representation Society chose to move four suburbs. In the longer term, as Gungahlin's population grows, this option will minimise the need for future changes.

How to adjust the remaining boundaries as a result of these changes?

With the move of part of Kambah from Murrumbidgee to Brindabella, Murrumbidgee was left undersized. Solutions included:

- Moving two suburbs from Ginninderra to Murrumbidgee (Aranda and Cook proposed by the Proportional Representation Society).
- Moving a suburb or two from Kurrajong to Murrumbidgee. These approaches included Deakin (Liberal and Adkins), Red Hill (Labor), Narrabundah (Sutherland) and both Deakin and Yarralumla (Chesler).

The more substantive changes to the Yerrabi boundary made the Proportional Representation Society option of moving Aranda and Cook feasible. These represent reasonably distinct communities, and although they clearly have the greatest affinity to the Belconnen district, their relatively central position in Canberra makes that connection relatively weaker and provides substantive connections with other districts. Belconnen Way, Bindubi Street and Redfern Street provide distinct boundaries (although Redfern Street is clearly the weaker boundary).

The Proportional Representation Society preferred to avoid changing the Kurrajong boundaries as these already met the requirements of section 36.

Of the options to excise a suburb from Kurrajong, Deakin looks to be the most obvious option followed by Yarralumla. These suburbs have the closest proximity to Philip and other Murrumbidgee centres, relatively easy transport connections via Yarra Glen and Cotter Road, and are distinctly defined boundaries from other Kurrajong suburbs in the form of Adelaide and Melbourne Avenues.

In contrast, Red Hill and Narrabundah are separated from the remainder of Murrumbidgee by the Red Hill feature. Connections to other Murrumbidgee suburbs are either via Deakin or Hindmarsh Drive (a significantly longer route than Yarra Glen is for Deakin). Moreover, the boundary between Red Hill / Narrabundah and the neighbouring Griffith/Forrest is not distinct.

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Deputy Convenor

10 March 2019

Assessment of the Options

Criterion	**Size**	**Stability**	**Coherence**
	Electorates are within the allowed tolerance	Minimise suburbs moved	Minimise suburbs excised from districts
Electoral Act provision	*sections 36(a) and (b)*	*section 36(c)(iv)*	*sections 36(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)*
ACT Labor	Yes	4 Evatt McKellar Red Hill Kambah East	5 Kaleen Giralang Lawson Red Hill Kambah West
Canberra Liberals	Yes	4 Evatt McKellar Deakin Kambah East	5 Kaleen Giralang Lawson Deakin Kambah West
PR Society – ACT Branch	Yes	7 Evatt McKellar Giralang Lawson Aranda Cook Kambah West	4 Kaleen Aranda Cook Kambah East
Weston Creek Community Council	No	4 Evatt McKellar Lawson Oaks Estate	4 Kaleen Giralang Kambah East Kambah West
Woden Valley Community Council	N/A	N/A	N/A

Criterion	Size	Stability	Coherence
Alex Adkins	Yes	6 Evatt McKellar Lawson Oaks Estate Deakin Kambah East	5 Kaleen Giralang Strathnairn Deakin Kambah West
Anne-Maree Nelmes	Yes	9 Evatt McKellar Giralang Bruce Oaks Estate Fadden Macarthur Kambah East Kambah West	6 Kaleen Lawson Bruce Strathnairn Fadden Macarthur

Criterion	Size	Stability	Coherence
Barry Coyles 1	Yes	15 Watson Hackett Downer Evatt McKellar Lawson Kaleen Giralang Narrabundah Oaks Estate Fadden Macarthur Gowrie Kambah East Kambah West	11 Watson Hackett Downer Kaleen Giralang Narrabundah Denman Prospect Whitlam Fadden Macarthur Gowrie
Barry Coyles 2	Yes	11 Watson Hackett Evatt McKellar Lawson Giralang Kaleen Bruce Narrabundah Oaks Estate Isaacs	9 Watson Hackett Kaleen Bruce Strathnairn Narrabundah Isaacs Kambah East Kambah West

Criterion	Size	Stability	Coherence
Ben Chesler	Yes	6 Evatt McKellar Lawson Yarralumla Deakin Kambah West	5 Kaleen Giralang Yarralumla Deakin Kambah East
Chef Giovannus	Yes	Many. This submission represents a major departure from the existing electorates	Many. This submission divides the Central Canberra, Gungahlin and Belconnen districts.
Chris Erett	No	4 Evatt McKellar Lawson Oaks Estate	4 Kaleen Giralang Kambah East Kambah West
Martin Gordon	Yes	12 Evatt McKellar Giralang Lawson Bruce Aranda Oaks Estate Yarralumla Deakin O'Malley Isaacs Pearce	10 Kaleen Bruce Aranda Yarralumla Deakin O'Malley Isaacs Pearce Kambah East Kambah West

Criterion	Size	Stability	Coherence
Michael Adams	Yes	9 Evatt McKellar Lawson Deakin Red Hill Oaks Estate Mawson Isaacs Pearce	10 Kaleen Giralang Deakin Red Hill Mawson Isaacs Pearce Mawson Isaacs Pearce
Peter Sutherland	Yes	7 Kaleen Giralang McKellar Lawson Narrabundah Oaks Estate Kambah West	5 Giralang McKellar Lawson Narrabundah Kambah East

Note: only substantively populated suburbs are included in this analysis. Kambah East and Kambah West are treated as two separate suburbs