

Appendix D

Comments

Comments lodged with the Redistribution Committee pursuant to section 41(1)(b) of the *Electoral Act 1992* (in order of receipt):

1. Cathy Hales 16 Araba Place ARANDA ACT 2614	page 78
2. Rosemarie Lissimore, President Tuggeranong Community Council Inc PO Box 436 ERINDALE CENTRE ACT 2903	page 83
3. Jeff Carl, Chairperson Weston Creek Community Council PO Box 3701 WESTON CREEK ACT 2611	page 84
4. Barry Raison 32 Colebatch Place CURTIN ACT 2605	page 86
5. Roma Hosking, Editor, Gunsmoke Newsletter Gungahlin Community Council Inc PO Box 260 GUNGAHLIN ACT 2912	page 87
6. Barry Dee, President Gungahlin Community Council Inc PO Box 260 GUNGAHLIN ACT 2912	page 89
7. Miko Kirschbaum The Australian Greens (ACT) GPO Box 2019 CANBERRA ACT 2601	page 90

Note: These comments were submitted using a variety of media and have been reformatted for this publication. The content is identical to the original submission and every effort has been made to preserve the original format.

16 Araba Place
Aranda ACT 2614

The Redistribution Committee
Po Box 272
Civic Square ACT 2608

Dear Committee members,

Thank you for making submissions to the 2003 electoral redistribution process available for public comment. I support the recommendation of the ACT Division of The Liberal Party and the ACT Branch of the Proportional Representation Society of Australia that the current boundaries should not be changed at this time. I am concerned that

- it is not possible to redistribute the Ginninderra electorate without impacting on outcomes in the next ACT election because of the involvement of different interest groups within the Ginninderra electorate in the highly political Gungahlin Drive Extension debate (GDE); and
- any change that divides the Belconnen district across more than one electorate would destroy the Belconnen community of interest.

I endorse the principle of continuity of boundaries and maintain that continuity is crucial when there is interaction between electoral boundaries and a politically sensitive matter in progress.

The Redistribution Committee should be aware that Members for Ginninderra took their stand on the government's initial GDE proposal with an acute awareness of the electoral boundaries at the time. It became clear during the 2002 public consultation that non-government Members, while sympathetic to concerns about design safety, performance and cost, did not want to be seen as 'spoilers' to large numbers of voters in the Gungahlin suburbs of the Ginninderra electorate. Effectively this left people in south-east Belconnen (SE Belconnen), also in the Ginninderra electorate, without political representation despite the fact that they had much to lose. Due to the significance of this issue in the local community, it is crucial that the ACT goes to the next election on the same grounds that dictated politicians' responses throughout the planning process.

The ACT Democrats proposal to move the SE Belconnen to the Molonglo electorate would offer considerable political advantage to that party, based on the stand it took during public consultation on the Gungahlin Drive Extension (GDE). The government campaigned on the GDE at the 2001 election, and the political process unfolded with due regard to the current boundaries. There remains dissent in the suburb of O'Connor (Save the Ridge group), however the government responded to the concerns of residents in Aranda. Merging these two suburbs into one electorate could cancel out the two effects. This would deny voters in all areas the opportunity to make a fair assessment of their political representatives when they vote at the next ACT Legislative Assembly election.

I do not support any change to electoral boundaries that represent a known risk of impacting on election results. Sensitivities to the Gungahlin Drive Extension within the Ginninderra and Molonglo districts suggest that any changes to these electorates within this term of the Legislative Assembly pose a high risk of biasing the 2004 election results.

The ACT Democrats have made a detailed submission, selectively citing statistics from the 2001 ABS Census of Population and Housing. In the attachment to this letter, I address a number of statements in that submission using a wider range of results from the census and knowledge of

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the local area. I hope that you will take these facts into account in considering material contained in the submission.

Yours sincerely,

Cathy Hales
9 June 2003

ATTACHMENT

Detailed response to points in the submission of the Australian Democrats (ACT Division) to the ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2003.

Key points

- While I support the idea of uniting the area of Gungahlin into one electorate, I strongly object to achieving this by dividing established Belconnen area communities of interest as proposed by the ACT Division of the Australian Democrats.
- Communities of interest are not founded on demographics alone and to a large extent relate to the use of services and facilities. People in SE Belconnen suburbs of Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera and Hawker rely mostly on schools, shopping centres and community facilities in the Belconnen area, not in north Canberra.
- Transport, and more specifically, Gungahlin Drive Extension, is an important issue that separates SE Belconnen from Molonglo communities of interest. The implementation phase of this project will have a significant impact on the entire Belconnen district as it traverses Belconnen Way and requires a major upgrade to Glenloch Interchange. Over the next few years, it is imperative that the Belconnen community has united political representation on this issue.
- The age structure of the resident population of SE Belconnen is making a transition in a different direction to that of the Molonglo district.

Introduction

Electoral boundaries should reflect communities of interest. Three submissions oppose the division of Gungahlin into two electorates on the basis that this divides a community of interest (G. Darnell, ACT Democrats, Gungahlin Community Council). The Democrats submission proposes that inner Belconnen suburbs are more demographically alike inner north Canberra and on that basis, the submission argues for SE Belconnen to be moved to the Molonglo electorate. There are two problems with this argument:

- Communities of interest are not founded on demographics alone and to a large extent relate to the use of services and facilities. People in SE Belconnen suburbs of Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera and Hawker rely mostly on schools, shopping centres and community facilities in the Belconnen area.

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- While there are similarities in the sociodemographics of Belconnen and north Canberra, there are also marked differences not highlighted in the submission.

These points are expanded in turn below.

Belconnen communities of interest

Education

Aranda Primary School with an enrolment of 400 children at the 2003 ACT schools census, ranks third highest of 20 Belconnen primary schools in terms of total enrolments; Weetangera Primary ranks sixth; and Hawker Primary ranks ninth. Canberra High School in Macquarie has the highest enrolments of any government high school in Belconnen. These and other schools in SE Belconnen are attracting families with school-aged children into the area. High out of area enrolments in inner Belconnen schools draw primarily from Belconnen suburbs, not from Canberra's inner north.

School enrolments in SE Belconnen suburbs reflect suburban regeneration in the area and communities of interest that take in greater-Belconnen not just individual suburbs. Schools provide a focal point for families and lay the foundations of communities of interest that prevail throughout the life cycle. The communities of interest established through schools in SE Belconnen are Belconnen communities. Education policy is a priority consideration for many voters. It is essential that core school communities have the same elected representatives.

Community centres

Likewise, shopping centres and community facilities such as churches, swimming pools and scout halls bring people in local communities together. By-and-large, people who live in the suburbs of SE Belconnen use mostly facilities in the Belconnen area. They routinely shop at Belconnen, Jamison and Kippax shopping centres, not at Dickson, for example. Hence, residents of Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera and Hawker are impacted most by planning and service provision in the Belconnen area and they need the same political representation as the majority of other users of those services.

Transport

The Democrats suggest that in matters of transport, inner Belconnen suburbs are more closely aligned with the Molonglo electorate. There are several problems with the argument that is presented. Firstly, the following statement is highly contentious:

"A further point is that people who share common transport routes are more likely to share common transport concerns. This proposed redistribution places SE Belconnen in Molonglo. Many of these SE Belconnen commuters share the western approach to the City via Parkes Way with commuters from Weston Creek and parts of Woden. Equally, Gungahlin traffic shares major road connections with areas of Belconnen, particularly Ginninderra Drive, the Barton Highway, Northbourne Avenue and the proposed Gungahlin Drive Extension."

Transport, and more specifically, Gungahlin Drive Extension, is an important issue that separates SE Belconnen from Molonglo communities of interest. The implementation phase of this project will have a significant impact on the entire Belconnen district as it traverses Belconnen Way and requires a major upgrade to Glenloch Interchange. Over the next few

**Comment from Cathy Hales.
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years, it is imperative that the Belconnen community has united political representation on this issue.

SE Belconnen commuters access Parkes Way via Haydon Drive, Belconnen Way and Caswell Drive. This route is shared with traffic that originates in Gungahlin, hence the need for Gungahlin Drive extension. To suggest that commuters who live in SE Belconnen more commonly share transport routes with commuters from Molonglo than with Gungahlin is sheer nonsense. Few people who live in Molonglo would commute to work via Caswell Drive, Haydon Drive, William Hovell Drive and William Slim Drive. Gungahlin Drive extension will cut straight through routes used everyday by commuters who live in SE Belconnen. The management of this project is of great concern to both Gungahlin and Belconnen commuters. It will have an enormous impact on the entire Belconnen district, but is unlikely to affect people living in the Molonglo electorate. It is in the interest of Belconnen and Gungahlin that construction of the new road proceed as smoothly as possible. In this regard, all of Belconnen, particularly SE Belconnen, is united with Gungahlin in one community of interest.

Table 4 of the submission shows that the transport profile of south-east Belconnen residents is no more similar to Molonglo than it is to the rest of Ginninderra.

The ‘near suburbs of Belconnen’ in the statement

“under the previous “zonal” bus fare system for ACTION (now abolished), the near suburbs of Belconnen were included in the central zone, whereas Gungahlin suburbs were grouped with west Belconnen in the north zone”

actually refer to Aranda, Bruce, Cook and Macquarie but not Weetangera and Hawker. Under the old zonal bus fare system, Weetangera and Hawker were serviced by the same routes as outer west Belconnen. It was not generally possible to catch a bus from these two suburbs to the city without going via Belconnen interchange. So, bus services there were quite distinct from those in the Molonglo district.

Sociodemographic profiles

The Democrats’ submission contends that SE Belconnen suburbs should be added to the Molonglo electorate on the basis that it has a similar sociodemographic profile. Specifically, it states “The ‘middle ring’ of suburbs – Woden, Weston Creek and inner Belconnen are experiencing ageing populations and declining numbers of children”.

In reality, the 2003 schools census results show that rising enrolments in SE Belconnen schools are offsetting the effects of suburban ageing. Established, well-resourced schools like Aranda Primary, Weetangera Primary and Canberra High attract families to an area and are instrumental in suburb regeneration. This is occurring throughout SE Belconnen. There is very little medium to high-density housing in SE Belconnen compared to inner north Canberra, where there has been a burgeoning of apartment-style accommodation. Many older residents in inner Belconnen suburbs are selling their large bush blocks to move to a style of accommodation more suited to their stage of life. In their place are moving families with children. In contrast, residential development in inner north Canberra is attracting singles and professional couples without children. Thus, the age structure of resident population of SE Belconnen is making a transition in a different direction to that of the Molonglo district.

While there are some demographic likenesses, there are also some marked differences. Using Aranda and O’Connor as examples of the contrast between inner Belconnen and inner north Canberra suburbs, the 2001 ABS census of population and housing reveals that:

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- 46.5% of Aranda households are couple families with children, compared to only 35.9% of families in O'Connor;
- 7.4% of households in Aranda are lone person households versus 13.0% of households in O'Connor; and
- 5.6% of people in Aranda cycle or walk to work versus 15.5% of people in O'Connor, whereas commuting by car is more common in Aranda (68.3%) than in O'Connor (54.9%).

In summary, the Democrats submission is fairly selective in which statistics it quotes.

**Comment from Cathy Hales.
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Tuggeranong Community Council Incorporated
Supported by a grant from the Act Government

President: Rosemary Lissimore
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Erindale Centre
ACT 2903

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Mr Phillip Green
 Electoral Commission
 ACT Electoral Commission
 Canberra

Dear Phillip

RE: Redistribution of ACT Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries

After due consideration the Tuggeranong Community Council Inc have decided that some changes are needed with the above.

The following points are how we see the future electorate:

Molonglo would loose Gungahlin and drop to 5 members

Ginniderra would combine with Gungahlin they would increase to 7 members

Brindabella would loose Chifley, Pearce and Torrens due to increase in Lanyon population, so would retain 5 members.

We feel that this is a much fairer distribution of members in the Canberra area in line with population numbers.

This is of course is based on the number of members in the assembly now, if these were increased then of course there would need to be some adjustments.

I hope these comments are still acceptable as the letter was very confusing with so many dates.

Yours sincerely
 Rosemary Lissimore
 Rosemary Lissimore
 President TCC

Comment from Tuggeranong Community Council Inc.
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RECEIVED
18 JUN 2003

ACT ELECTORAL
COMMISSION

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

Email: info@wccc.com.au

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Phone: (02) 6288 8975

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PO Box 3701 Weston Creek ACT 2611

17 June 2003

Redistribution Committee
ACT Electoral Commission
PO Box 272
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

Dear Committee Members

ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2003 Submission by the ACT Equity Party

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) would like to comment on the submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2003 by the ACT Equity Party, which presents an option that Weston Creek be split into two electorates.

In our submission accompanied by a covering letter dated 3 June 2003, we stressed the primary importance to Weston Creek residents of the electoral integrity of our district. The desire for community integrity has been reinforced since the January fires devastated much of our community.

Weston Creek is clearly an identifiable physical and social entity, something that is valued by residents who have asked us to lobby for community facilities such as a library and swimming pool. Any issue that geographically splits our 'small town' atmosphere will erode this important sense of community.

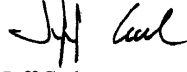
The four models proposed by the ACT Equality Party propose to split at least 2 (and sometimes 3) local communities, so they are no real improvement to the existing boundaries that split only two communities.

The Molonglo electorate covers five local communities (Weston Creek, Woden Valley, South and North Canberra and Gungahlin) while the Brindabella and Ginninderra electorates are primarily based on a single local community, or two communities with one community being substantially larger than the other. It would appear to be more democratic that the Molonglo electorate have 7 members since this electorate covers the largest number of local communities.

**Comment from Weston Creek Community Council.
Page 1 of 2.**

We reiterate our recommendation that the Committee avoid splitting local communities, but if this is not possible, that the current electorate boundaries be left unchanged. It is also preferred that our district remains in a seven-member Molonglo electorate.

Yours faithfully



Jeff Carl
Chairperson, Weston Creek Community Council

**Comment from Weston Creek Community Council.
Page 2 of 2.**

B.V. RAISON

RECEIVED

19 JUN 2003

ACT ELECTORAL
COMMISSION

32 Colebatch Place

CURTIN

A.C.T. 2605

Ph. + Fax (02) 6281-4094

17-6-03

A.C.T. Electoral Commissioner,

Dear Sir,

ATT. REDISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Thanks for supplying copies of the submissions. I had hoped to provide comments through the Woden Valley Community Council, but they were too busy with the Woden Town Centre Draft Master Plan to meet your deadline.

The thrust of our concern was the splitting of adjacent suburbs into different Electorates. In particular, 2 Woden Valley suburbs are in Brindabella, whereas the remainder are in Molonglo. No doubt, there is similar concern over Nicholls and Hall being in a different Electorate to the bulk of Gungahlin. As M.L.A.'s are meant to represent a locality, consolidated Districts would be more efficient and consistent.

It is noted that this theme is included in several of the submissions. Rather than dislocate Canberra's satellite towns, it would seem preferable to change the number of members in each Electorate.

Yours faithfully
Barry Raison

Comment from Barry Raison.

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GungahlinCouncilInc.txt
From: Roma Hosking [gunsSmoke@austarmetro.com.au]
Sent: Thursday, 19 June 2003 4:44 PM
To: elections@act.gov.au
Subject: Electoral boundaries

Gungahlin Community Council Inc
Po Box 260
Gungahlin ACT 2912
19 June 2003

Electoral Boundary Redistribution Committee
ACT Electoral Commission
Plaza Level, Allara House,
48-56 Allara Street
Canberra City, ACT 2601

Electoral Boundaries – 2003 Distribution
Comments on Submissions

Dear Committee Members,

The Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) would like to make the following comments in relation to the submissions already received on the Electoral Boundaries – 2003 Distribution.

- The GCC rejects the thoughts and opinions as expressed in the submissions that the boundaries should remain “as is” purely on the basis of boundary stability as an underlying argument. This position will continue the division on the Gungahlin region across two electorates.
- Gungahlin being the only significant area of green fields development in the Territory should be considered in an electoral context similar to how Civic is being treated for planning and

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GungahlinCouncilInc.txt
 development issues - "a first among equals" (quoting Minister Corbell - Canberra Times,

Friday 13th June). This is the only way to ensure cohesiveness legislative representation for the

entire region as it continues to rapidly grow.

- The position as expressed by the Weston Creek Community Council in that they will accept the

splitting of other communities as inevitable due to legislative constraints, but refuse to consider

that their own community being put under similar pressure is unfortunately an all too common

occurrence of the "Not In My Backyard" position. It could be argued that the Weston Creek

Community has not had the opportunity to consider statements made by the Australian Labor

Party prior to the 2001 Election (and documented in "Gunsmoke" Edition 63 - official

newsletter of the Gungahlin Community Council Inc.) that stated - because the Gungahlin

region was split across two electorates the region could look forward to "double" representation

from the elected members of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

I would like to point out that communities that are fragmented do not function as efficiently as those which are able to have a sense of belonging in their local community. I therefore, request the Electoral Commission repair the damage that has been done to the Gungahlin community by the dividing Gungahlin between two districts and ensure that Gungahlin is contained within one electoral boundary.

We trust that these comments will be given due consideration in the ongoing redistribution process.

Yours faithfully

Roma Hosking

[Sent by email]

Editor: Gunsmoke Newsletter

Gungahlin Community Council Inc.

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**Comment from Editor, Gunsmoke Newsletter,
 Gungahlin Community Council Inc.
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Gungahlin Community Council Inc
Po Box 260
Gungahlin ACT 2912

Electoral Boundary Redistribution Committee
ACT Electoral Commission
Plaza Level, Allara House,
48-56 Allara Street
Canberra City, ACT 2601

19 June 2003

Electoral Boundaries – 2003 Distribution
Comments on Submissions

Dear Committee Members,

The Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) would like to make the following comments in relation to the submissions already received on the Electoral Boundaries – 2003 Distribution.

- The GCC rejects the thoughts and opinions as expressed in the submissions that the boundaries should remain “as is” purely on the basis of boundary stability as an underlying argument. This position will continue the division on the Gungahlin region across two electorates.
- Gungahlin being the only significant area of green fields development in the Territory should be considered in an electoral context similar to how Civic is being treated for planning and development issues - “a first among equals” (quoting Minister Corbell – Canberra Times, Friday 13th June). This is the only way to ensure cohesiveness legislative representation for the entire region as it continues to rapidly grow.
- The position as expressed by the Weston Creek Community Council in that they will accept the splitting of other communities as inevitable due to legislative constraints, but refuse to consider that their own community being put under similar pressure is unfortunately an all too common occurrence of the “Not In My Backyard” position. It could be argued that the Weston Creek Community has not had the opportunity to consider statements made by the Australian Labor Party prior to the 2001 Election (and documented in “Gunsmoke” Edition 63 – official newsletter of the Gungahlin Community Council Inc.) that stated - because the Gungahlin region was split across two electorates the region could look forward to “double” representation from the elected members of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
- The GCC would like to suggest that in the interests of equity and fairness all areas of the Territory should (at some time) be given equal exposure to such a multiple electorate distribution effects. In this context the current split distribution across two electorates could be removed from both Gungahlin and Woden regions and applied to two other regions for the upcoming 2004 Election.

We trust that these comments will be given due consideration in the ongoing redistribution process.

Yours faithfully

[Sent by email]

Barry Dee
President, Gungahlin Community Council

Comment from President, Gungahlin Community Council Inc.
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**The Australian Greens (ACT)
GPO Box 2019
Canberra ACT 2601
ph. 6247 6305
19 June 2003**

To the
Redistribution Committee
ACT Electoral Commission
PO Box 272
Civic Square
ACT 2608

Re: Comments on proposed redistribution of ACT electoral boundaries
Submission on behalf of the ACT Greens.

Introduction

In deciding on the most appropriate electorate sub-division we use these key guiding principles:

Protection of communities of interest

Community groups that have common interests should, if possible, be represented by the same Assembly members. In the present contexts, these community groups more or less correspond to the recognised townships, such as Woden, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin.

Fairness in elected numbers of Members per voter;

There should be a closely similar number of voters per Member of the Assembly. This requirement is enshrined in legislation.

Contiguosness of the area

Electorates should be contiguous so that they represent easily recognisable physical units. Hence, electorates that might consist of a few suburbs of Tuggeranong and a few of Belconnen should generally be avoided even if that could achieve other objectives.

Consistency over time

For voters to gain familiarity with their electorates, and for elected Members to have the chance to represent the same voters in consecutive elections, it is necessary to as much as possible maintain continuity over time. Hence, boundary changes should be avoided unless the other principles given above make a compelling case for a change of boundaries.

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The current situation

Currently, the ACT boundaries have the clear problem that the Gungahlin community is split into two different electorates. It strongly violates one of our key principles, that communities of interest should be protected. The undesirability of breaking the community of interest of the Gungahlin community and placing Gungahlin into two separate electorates has been pointed out in submissions to the Redistribution Committee by Ms Darnell, The ACT Equality Party, the ACT Democrats and the Gungahlin Community Council.

The current situation is clearly not desirable and the disadvantage for the people of Gungahlin is obvious. However, the question must be asked whether there is any alternative boundary arrangement that would not lead to similar problems.

The ACT Equality Party proposed four different arrangements that would meet the numerical requirements of the Electoral Act. However, none of the proposed alternatives solve the problem of breaking the continuity of the Gungahlin community without breaking other communities of interest.

Similarly, the ACT Democrats also proposed an alternative arrangement that would solve the problem for Gungahlin by creating a similar problem for other communities.

The suburbs Chifley, Torrens and Pearce, placed in the electorate of Brindabella, have also been a long-standing anomaly and placed away from their community of interest, but for that anomaly, too, there appears to be no possible solution.

Overall recommendation

While the problems with the current arrangements are obvious, and, indeed, highly undesirable, we cannot see a way of solving these problems without creating equally significant problems somewhere else. None of the solutions that have been suggested appear to be an improvement on the current situation despite its obvious undesirability.

Hence, we concur with the view put forward by the Proportional Representation Society, that the current boundary arrangements be maintained in the interest of continuity and stability.

Miko Kirschbaum for
The ACT Greens

