

From: Ewan Brown
Sent: Friday, 5 August 2011 5:26 PM
To: Elections
Subject: Objections to the Proposed Redistribution by the Augmented ACT Electoral Commission.docx
Attachments: Objections to the Proposed Redistribution by the Augmented ACT Electoral Commission.docx

Please find attached my submission to proposed electoral redistribution.

Ewan Brown

Objections to the Proposed Redistribution by the Augmented ACT Electoral Commission

Submitted by Ewan Brown (resident of Ngunnawal ACT).

In general I support the Augmented Commission's proposals to:

- Alter the Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution to propose that Molonglo become a 5-Member electorate including all of the district of Molonglo Valley;
- Retain the existing Brindabella electorate unchanged; and
- Retain the existing names for the electorates of Brindabella, Ginninderra and Molonglo.
- Alter Ginninderra to be made the 7-Member electorate.

However I do not agree with the proposal to include the Canberra Central suburbs of Lyneham, O'Connor & Turner with the suburbs of Belconnen, Gungahlin and Hall to form this electorate.

I support the earlier objections which argued that, in making its proposal, the Redistribution Committee had given too much weight to the criterion regarding existing electoral boundaries and too little weight to the other criteria related to community of interests, including economic, social and regional interests, means of communication and travel, and physical features and area.

Gungahlin, as a rapidly growing new area, is split between two electorates with a range of community interests represented by both older & new communities at critical points in their respective development.

The 'older' areas of Gungahlin suffered for many years from lack of essential amenities, including lack of adequate telecommunications (broadband), adequate road access, commercial facilities & employment opportunities. The rapidly expanding newer areas of Gungahlin are also experiencing the ramifications of 'catch-up' planning & provision of facilities & amenities commensurate with the needs of the growing population. The residents of Canberra Central suburbs of Lyneham, O'Connor & Turner do not experience similar issues & their interests are better aligned with the residents of North Canberra.

I support the view that the growth in Gungahlin has been accompanied by increasing connections between Gungahlin and Belconnen as:

- many Gungahlin residents have made use of schools, medical facilities, employment opportunities, shopping and commercial areas in the adjacent district of Belconnen.
- the development of the Gungahlin Drive Extension and the heavy usage of other roads linking Gungahlin and Belconnen have facilitated these connections.

In relation to the arguments calling for stability of boundaries and for minimising the transfer of electors between electorates it can be argued that most Gungahlin residents would support the move from one electorate to another (to combine

Gungahlin and Belconnen together in the one electorate) under the Augmented Commission's proposal as it would create an area with vastly more similarities between affected Gungahlin & Belconnen residents rather than maintaining an electorate comprising some residents of South Canberra – far removed from most synergies with Gungahlin residents.

My main issue is with the view that these two districts (Gungahlin & Belconnen) by themselves are not large enough to create a 7-Member electorate, thus 'making it necessary' to include other adjacent areas to make up the numbers to bring the electorate to within +/- 5% of the quota at the time of next election.

The Augmented Commission concluded that its preferred option would be to include the suburbs of Lyneham, O'Connor and Turner as the other suburbs which could be combined with Belconnen and Gungahlin to constitute a 7-Member electorate.

The Committee noted that the option to make Ginninderra the 7-Member electorate, comprising all of Belconnen, Gungahlin and the suburbs of Lyneham, O'Connor and Turner would result in the electorate of Ginninderra being 1.08% above the quota at the time of the next election. This result would be comfortably within the required +/-5% variation from the quota. This option was considered by the Committee to be the best mix of suburbs that could constitute a 7-Member electorate including Belconnen and Gungahlin.

(The alternative of a progressive incremental shift of Gungahlin suburbs to the Ginninderra electorate in future redistributions would entrench the existing lack of commonality of interests perceived by affected Gungahlin residents & result in continuing dissatisfaction from those residents remaining in a less appropriate electorate (Molongolo)).

The Committee noted that a negative impact of this option would be the separation of the community of interests that Lyneham, O'Connor and Turner share with neighbouring (north) Canberra Central suburbs as it could be argued that Lyneham, Turner and O'Connor have much closer connections to the university precinct of Acton, the adjacent City area and the neighbouring suburbs of Braddon, Dickson, Downer and Watson than they do with Belconnen or Gungahlin.

The Turner Residents Association stated "that the suburbs of Turner, O'Connor and Lyneham should NOT be part of a larger Ginninderra electorate as Turner, O'Connor and Lyneham have much stronger links with central Canberra than with the newer suburbs to the north and should remain within the electorate of Molonglo."

My objection to part of the current recommendations is based on the 'requirement' to comply too heavily with variance limits to electorate quotas. As at 31 March 2011 the electorate of Molongolo was 2.7% over quota & Ginninderra was 0.60% below quota.

The Gungahlin area continues to grow at a significant rate. The suburbs of Bonner, Casey, Crace, Forde, Franklin, Gungahlin & Harrison have projected growth rates of enrolled persons in excess of 10% up to October 2012. In Belconnen the suburbs of

Belconnen Town Centre, Bruce, Dunlop & Macgregor have growth projections over 10%. Only Braddon, City & Phillip in the electorate of Molongolo have growth rates (from a reasonable base) over 10%.

Residents of Gungahlin feel that they have, and continue to, suffered from 'catch-up' remedial action in relation to many services facilities, services & amenities that they require. More growth is inevitable in Gungahlin as Kenny, Moncrief & Kinleyside are developed & populated.

Regardless of whether a complete review of electorate boundaries is undertaken shortly after the next ACT election there is a need to apply pro-active policies in addressing the needs of residents in growing areas in the ACT.

On 'paper' the proposed new electorate of Ginninderra would see a shortfall of 8.33% under quota at October 2012 if the suburbs of Lyneham, O'Connor & Turner were excluded. This variation from quota is based on population projections to October 2012 but the Gungahlin suburbs will continue to grow well after that date & a significant surplus situation could well occur within a short time afterwards, again placing the residents of that electorate at a representational disadvantage (under current terminology). Net growth in Gungahlin & Belconnen should significantly surpass that in Central & South Canberra so there is a need to anticipate this process.

Gungahlin residents in particular would prefer to see evidence of forward planning in relation to many of the issues they currently face. An electorate model that recognises the ramifications of rapid growth and an appropriate level of representation (both in terms of numbers of politicians & regional focus) should meet with a high degree of satisfaction.

Ewan Brown