



AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
Australian Capital Territory Branch

**Augmented ACT Electoral Commission
Level 2, 12 Moore St
CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Dear Commissioners and Committee Members

Objection to Augmented Commission's Redistribution Proposal

As Secretary and Registered Officer of the Australian Labor Party (ACT Branch) I write to object to the determination of the Augmented ACT Electoral Commission's (the Commission) conclusions regarding the redistribution of the ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries. I believe the Commission has erred in its conclusion and that the original proposal of the Redistribution Committee should stand.

As I indicated in my original submission to the Redistribution Committee, while the legislation allows for a 5% positive or negative variance on the estimated quota for an electorate at the time of the next election, ACT Labor believes that the Committee, and now the Commission, should still seek to best protect the principle of 'one vote, one value' and accordingly look to minimise such variances.

As the Commission's own Redistribution Statement indicates, the parameters and tolerances stipulated in the Act are intended to provide for the principle of "one vote, one value" in ACT Elections. That being accepted, the original proposal of the Redistribution Committee meant that the difference between the variance from quota for each electorate was significantly lower than the difference between the variance from quota for each electorate as a result of the Commission's proposal.

On this basis alone the Commission should provide a final proposal in line with the original recommendation of the Redistribution Committee i.e. move Palmerston into Ginninderra and Farrer into Brindabella.



ACT Labor has previously noted its concern over the separation of the suburb Nicholls from the electorate that contains the majority of other suburbs that make up the Gungahlin region.

ACT Labor has previously stated that it would be ideal if all of the Gungahlin suburbs were contained within the one ACT Electorate, however as noted in our submission in 2000 we recognise that having some Gungahlin suburbs in the Ginninderra Electorate is the only way to maintain the current electoral structure without major or radical change.

In light of that, I am strongly of the view that if all of the Gungahlin suburbs can not be accommodated in the one electorate then for the purposes of achieving better representative democracy there should be a more even spread of Gungahlin suburbs between the electorates of Molonglo and Ginninderra. The residents of Nichols specifically, and all Gungahlin residents generally, would have greater representation if there were a critical mass of Gungahlin electors based in both electorates. Gungahlin as a region would then be served by the MLAs of both electorates and the residents of Nicholls would no longer be the single suburb in the electorate of Ginninderra that is separate from the region of which it is part.

This goes further to the question of if only one suburb is to be redistributed out of Molonglo then which should it be. While my position still remains that both Farrer and Palmerston should both be redistributed out of Molonglo, if the Commission determines that only one is to be redistributed then it should in fact be Palmerston.

Further to the argument above regarding Palmerston being redistributed into Ginninderra, the Commission's own figures provide the most compelling argument for such a decision within the context of only moving one suburb.

The total accumulated variance from quota for all three electorates by moving Farrer into Brindabella is 6.49%, however it is only 5.73% for the Palmerston into Ginninderra option. In seeking to best protect the "one vote, one value" principle the redistribution of Palmerston into Ginninderra is the better outcome of the two options.

I hope the Commission will reconsider its proposal and I am happy to provide further argument or clarification on my support for the original Redistribution Committee's recommendation or at the very least the redistribution of Palmerston into Ginninderra as opposed to Farrer into Brindabella.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Cossey
ACT Secretary
Australian Labor Party

22 August 2007