

**RECEIVED**  
23 FEB 2000  
ACT ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION

8 Fortescue Place  
KALEEN A.C.T. 2617  
22 February 2000

Redistribution Committee  
ACT Electoral Commission  
Plaza Level, Allara House  
50 Allara Street  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2601  
FAX: 6205 0382

The Chair

Attached herewith, is my submission in respect of the A.C.T. Electoral Boundaries redistribution for 2000.

I can be contacted at the above address and on telephone number 6241 4730. Please note my Fax facility at the present point of time only operates externally.

Yours Faithfully

[signed]  
Kevin Connor

**PREAMBLE**

**1.1** Whilst the terms of calling for public comment, relate to the electoral boundaries under the existing Hare-Clark electoral system, my comments question the efficacy of this system, and indicate my preference for single-member electorates as is the practice in all the mainland states and the Northern Territory.

**1.2** Recognising that over two-thirds of the electorate voted for Hare-Clark in the 1992 referendum, and a similar majority voted in the 1995 Referendum to Entrench Hare-Clark, this does not mean that the current system cannot be changed. Admittedly it would be difficult [as a consequence of entrenchment], but I feel that in conjunction with this electoral redistribution, and after three elections under Hare-Clark, it is an appropriate time to evaluate the system.

**REDISTRIBUTION UNDER HARE-CLARK**

**2.1** In accordance with the existing Electoral Act, there is a statutory requirement to change the boundaries. However inherent within any of my comments relating to the redistribution under Hare-Clark [H-C], is my belief, that Single-Member Electorates [SMEs] can offer much closer identification with the community, and because of a lower [individual] quota, is therefore, I believe, more representational than the current system.

**2.2** There are several options for apportioning the existing boundaries under H-C. These are:

- i. Two electorates of six Members of the Legislative Assembly [MLAs], and one of five MLAs.
- ii. Two electorates of seven MLAs, and one of three MLAs.
- iii. Three electorates each having five MLAs.
- iv. Five electorates of three MLAs and one of two MLAs.

**2.3** In all of the above four options there are shortcomings, not the least being the existence of multi-member electorates, which on one hand give favour, because of a lower quota, e.g. options one and two, to the electorates with the most MLAs. Option four with its six electorates is closer to my own ideal, but this option is deficient because there is a higher individual quota needed [under the proportional representation process] to cross the line to gain election to the Legislative Assembly. For Option Three, by a reduction in the number of MLAs, it would be, I suggest, regressive, in respect of a lessening in legislative representation at the grass-roots level.

**2.4** Option four is probably, of all the four H-C options I have considered, as stated above, is the option I would prefer. However by introducing this option, it could negate the principle of the Hare-Clark system, [as practised in the A.C.T.], which is predicated upon multi-member electorates and coterminous, proportional representation, with the least number of electorates.

## REDISTRIBUTION WITH SINGLE MEMBER ELECTORATES

3.1 Recognising that it would need legislation to repeal the existing entrenchment of the Hare-Clark system, I am still of the opinion that Single-member electorates [SMEs] provides the best form of representation at the grass roots. MLAs would be subject to more public scrutiny, and thereby more accountable to the electorate at large, than under the existing system.

3.2 In regards to SMEs I suggest two options. They are:

- i. A Legislative Assembly with 17 MLAs or
- ii. A Legislative Assembly with 19 MLAs.

I favour the second option. Whilst opponents may argue at the cost of redistribution under this system, the same issue exist under the current system.

3.3 By favouring Option Two, I support the need for additional representation at the grass roots of the territory's polity. I believe we are under represented. I would support a minimum increase in MLAs under SMEs to allow for a larger spread of Legislative Assembly representation. It is also noted at this point, that because of the hybrid combination of functions of State and Local Government, in the A.C.T., Territorians do not have representation at the very local level, something that does not even occur in the Northern Territory which has a much smaller population than we have.

3.4 My position in respect of support for this option, is not I would argue, contradictory to my support of Option four under Hare-Clark. In regards to the latter, my choice refers to arguments relating to Multi-Member Electorates, and the specific requirement in the A.C.T. that the Legislative Assembly must have an odd number of legislators. My support for my option four, H-C, pertains to the least unsatisfactory option, in what I regard is an wholly unsatisfactory system of electing our legislators.

## SUMMARY

4.1 My arguments relate to my dislike of the Hare-Clark system of voting and a preference for Single-Member Electorates. The prime thrust of my submission is for a review of the existing method of electing MLAs to the Legislative Assembly. In this regard I believe that the expression *Community of Interest* is best served by considering Single Member Electorates that focus on smaller districts that have some commonality of interest. This has not happened in Molonglo, and could be disturbed in Ginninderra, the electorate, which under Hare-Clark is under quota and therefore over represented! As a voter in Ginninderra I would like something better.