

Mr Philip Green
ACT Electoral Commissioner
PO Box 272
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
By email: elections@act.gov.au

26 June 2007

Dear Mr Green

The Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) wishes to lodge the following objection to the proposed 2007 electoral boundary review.

As stated in our previous submission, the GCC is concerned that the current anomaly with the electoral boundary between Ginninderra and Molonglo that leaves just Nicholls in a different electorate should not continue indefinitely. This has resulted in our community being under-represented in each of these electorates, leading to disadvantage for our community in the way of planning, services and infrastructure provision. It was apparent from the Committee's report that considerable weight was given to this argument, and we appreciate this. We had similar problems making the numbers add up to an undivided Gungahlin area.

Of even greater concern to us is that the electorate of Molonglo stretches from near Tuggeranong all the way to the northern ACT border, wrapping all the way around Ginninderra as well. The result of this is that we are represented by some people who themselves live around an hour's weekday travel time from Gungahlin - we don't see much of them, and they have a far lower appreciation for the issues facing the Gungahlin community.

We have remodelled the electorates using the revised population projections, which were surprisingly different from the numbers provided and used for our original submission. The variances cast some doubt over the projection method that was previously used. We have remodelled a solution that conforms to the current 7-5-5 legislative situation, and another that considers the three seven-member electorate solution that has been the topic of public debate in recent weeks.

7-5-5 member solution

As stated in our original submission, the Molonglo electorate does not currently have much consideration of the 'common community of interest' provision. We predicted that the committee would be faced with merely 'tinkering' with this current situation, or making a substantial change to build in provision for future shifts and correct the Molonglo sprawl. The proposed solution from the Committee did indeed opt for a minimal change, with yet another Gungahlin suburb shifted into Ginninderra. We object to this proposal as not addressing the key issues facing the Molonglo electorate now and not planning for it in the future.



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Population growth in the next decade will occur mainly in the Gungahlin, Molonglo and City areas - mostly north of the Molonglo River. Therefore any boundary realignment should take into account this growth by setting the electorates up for incremental changes rather than wholesale. The current electorates do not provide for this, nor do the proposed boundaries address it.

In our previous submission, we pointed out that:

- The Molonglo River is a natural boundary to aim for, but the numbers do not work for a 7-5-5 distribution at this point. However, our modelling has shown that Brindabella would work as the 7-member electorate, including all of the suburbs south of the river except for South Canberra, Deakin and Hughes.
- Two 5-member electorates north of the river would provide for the future population growth areas, and contain the electorates within fairly close geographical and social proximity – quite different from the current situation. Ginninderra could remain as a Belconnen electorate, and Molonglo would encompass South and North Canberra, plus Gungahlin.
- As population grows at Gungahlin and then Molonglo, subsequent boundary realignments could see the Molonglo electorate retreat from South Canberra to the river/lake.

We have remodelled this solution using the new population projections, with the following results:

Assembly Reps	Quota
17	14,060

Electorate	Quotas	Members	Variance
Brindabella	7.231	7	3.20%
Ginninderra	4.808	5	-3.99%
Molonglo	4.961	5	-0.79%

The exact distribution is shown on the map in Attachment 1. Unfortunately with the current numbers, one Gungahlin suburb (likely to continue as Nicholls) would still be split off from the rest of Gungahlin. However, we would find this a far more acceptable solution than the Committee’s proposal, given that our proposal would result in a major retraction of the geographic spread of Molonglo. It would bring our elected members closer to our area, and would be set up so as to improve further as population grows in our area.

As population grows, there would likely be an increase in the number of members, so an additional two members could be introduced to one of the northern electorates, while maintaining the overall odd-number total, or preferably all electorates could be converted to 7 members, as below.



Electorate restructure

As mentioned in our previous submission, we feel that a government such as the ACT's with no upper house needs a diversity of elected members to maintain accountability. Governments with absolute majorities are not in the ACT community's interest, as accountability is essentially limited to once every four years only.

We are swayed by recent public debate that has pointed out that the best way to achieve minority or independent representation is via the larger seven-member electorates. We recognise this is counter to our previous arguments, but the evidence doesn't support that position.

Using our modelling tool with the new population projections, we were able to relatively easily come up with a solution for three seven-member electorates, as shown in Attachment 2 and the following table. This solution would have all of Gungahlin and most of Belconnen in Ginninderra, Molonglo covering North and South Canberra plus Woden, and Brindabella also including Weston. The division of a small part of Belconnen out of Ginninderra would likely be corrected at the next boundary review.

Assembly Reps	Quota
21	11,382

Electorate	Quotas	Members	Variance
Brindabella	7.024	7	0.34%
Ginninderra	6.819	7	-2.66%
Molonglo	7.157	7	2.20%

Conclusion

In summary then, GCC does not support the minimal change proposal put forward by the Electoral Redistribution Committee. It is a minimal change scenario that exacerbates the division of Gungahlin and does nothing to correct the sprawl and unrepresentative nature of Molonglo.

Instead we reiterate our previous proposal for two five-member electorates covering the northern half of Canberra, albeit with some temporarily continued division of Gungahlin between them, and a seven-member electorate covering the southern half of Canberra.

Although it is beyond the scope of the Committee's powers, we also request that our support for the three seven-member electorate model is conveyed to the Government.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.

Regards,

Alan Kerlin
President Gungahlin Community Council

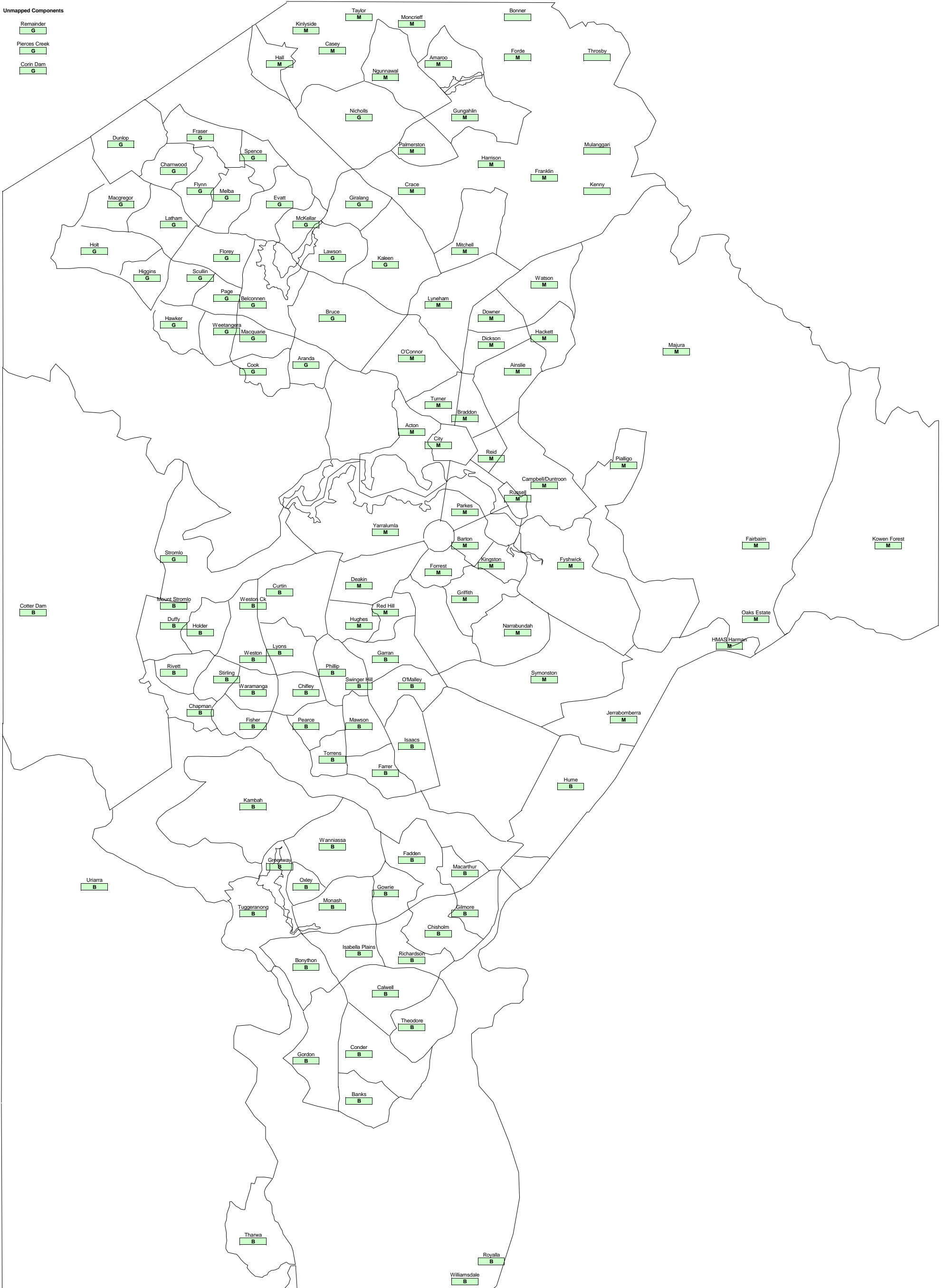
Attachment 1 Gungahlin Community Council 7-5-5 redistribution solution

Electorate	Code	Electors	%
Brindabella	B	101,673	42.54%
Ginninderra	G	67,603	28.28%
Molonglo	M	69,750	29.18%
Alpha	A		
Charlie	C		
Delta	D		
Echo	E		
Foxtrof	F		
Indigo	I		
Juliet	J		
Unallocated			
TOTAL		239,026	100.0%

Assembly Reps		Quota	
Electorate	Code	Quotas	Members
Brindabella	B	7,231	7
Ginninderra	G	4,808	5
Molonglo	M	4,961	5
Alpha	A		
Charlie	C		
Delta	D		
Echo	E		
Foxtrof	F		
Indigo	I		
Juliet	J		
Unallocated			
TOTAL		17,000	17

Quota Rounding Error

- Unmapped Components
- Remainder G
 - Pierces Creek G
 - Corin Dam G



Attachment 2 Gungahlin Community Council 7-7 redistribution solution

Electorate	Code	Electors	%
Brindabella	B	79,949	33.45%
Ginninderra	G	77,612	32.47%
Molonglo	M	81,465	34.08%
Alpha	A		
Charlie	C		
Delta	D		
Echo	E		
Foxtrof	F		
Indigo	I		
Juliet	J		
Unallocated			
TOTAL		239,026	100.0%

Assembly Reps		Quota	
Electorate	Code	Quotas	Members
Brindabella	B	7,024	7
Ginninderra	G	6,819	7
Molonglo	M	7,157	7
Alpha	A		
Charlie	C		
Delta	D		
Echo	E		
Foxtrof	F		
Indigo	I		
Juliet	J		
Unallocated			
TOTAL		21,000	21
Quota Rounding Error			

- Unmapped Components
- Remainder B
 - Pierces Creek B
 - Corin Dam B

