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As a Gungahlin resident I would like to express my concern that the current electoral distribution disadvantages the Gungahlin community in an unnecessary and unfair way. The Gungahlin community is a “community of common interests” just the same as Belconnen, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong and other clearly identified communities. There is a need to identify communities of common interests as one of the main factors in establishing ACT electoral boundaries.

I believe that the ACT Electoral Commission needs to consider committing resources into exploring a range of options relating to electoral boundaries. This should be done in an effort to resolve the current issues and to provide the ACT community with a transparent and socially equitable model for electing members of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

There can be no dispute that Gungahlin is a disadvantaged community in relation to the way voters are split into two electorates. This has resulted in our under representation within the ACT Legislative Assembly and an associated lack of provision of services for the Gungahlin community. Under the current model Gungahlin makes up a small portion of the Ginninderra electorate and minor portion of the Molonglo electorate. Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly appear to consider the district as insignificant in relation to community issues.

In April 2007 Gungahlin will celebrate the 15th anniversary of our community. Facilities and services provided of other ACT communities, during their development stages, have not been available to Gungahlin; although the financial contributions made from land sales, rates and taxes from the Gungahlin district have made significant contributions to the ACT’s finances. Every audit comparing services and/ or facilities, within the ACT community, confirms that Gungahlin is a disadvantaged community and this situation has only deteriorated over recent years.

I believe that the Electoral Commission has a responsibility to work with the Gungahlin community to explore every possible solution to the current situation and implement changes that will ensure that Gungahlin is contained within one electorate for the 2008 ACT election and for future elections. If it is not possible to develop a suitable option that contains all communities of common interests within the same electorate, then there is a need to develop a process that rotates the disadvantage.

Gungahlin can be wholly contained within either the Molonglo or Ginninderra electorate, however this may impact on other parts of these electorate. At this time it may not be possible to structure electoral boundaries unless one or more communities of common interests are disadvantaged. If this is the case it is time that other districts are disadvantaged. Gungahlin has been split into two electorates for a number of ACT elections. In the 2008 ACT election, all Gungahlin suburbs should be contained within one electorate, how this is achieved is a challenge the ACT Electoral Commission will need to deal with.

Yours sincerely

T.I. Ruecroft