



The Liberal Party of Australia

A.C.T. DIVISION INCORPORATED

Mail: PO Box 66
Deakin West ACT 2600
Office: Suite 4, "Deakin House"
50 Geills Court
Deakin ACT 2600
Tel: 02-6273 5155
Fax: 02-6273 0449
ABN: 65 727 304 134
Email: info@canberraliberals.org.au
Web: www.canberraliberals.org.au

RECEIVED

23 FEB 2007

ACT ELECTORAL
COMMISSION

The Redistribution Committee
ACT Electoral Commission
Po Box 272
Civic Square ACT 2608

Dear Mr Green and colleagues

The Liberal Party of Australia – ACT Division submits that the Redistribution Committee should make no change to the boundaries of the existing ACT electorates on this occasion. We support the existing boundaries for the following reasons.

1. The population projections provided by the Commission forecast that if the ACT electoral boundaries remain unchanged, then existing constituencies will remain *within the statutory tolerance* for ACT electorate sizes. A rearrangement of boundaries should ordinarily only commence where the forecast populations of enrolled voters exceed statutory thresholds. That trigger does not exist on this occasion and there are no other apparent extraordinary circumstances to warrant a reconfiguration.
2. It is more important to satisfy the *public desire for continuity of boundaries*, than to eliminate all variance as far as it is possible. In previous redistributions, parties of all political colours have submitted to this Committee that the Canberra public is seeking consistency and certainty in boundary positioning. By avoiding disruptive and confusing changes in the past, the Commission has both enhanced the integrity of the current electoral system and provided continuity of linkage between citizens and their respective MLAs. It should be remembered that one of the reasons Canberrans voted for the Hare Clark system in 1992 was the argument in the official referendum booklet that this system would mean that "boundaries will seldom change."
3. The present configuration of ACT electorates is one that avoids sub-division within the existing town-centres, so far as it is possible (with only four suburbs separated from their closest town-centres). If a suburb or two were redistributed prior to 2004 just to minimise variance from quota, then such changes would inevitably:
 - further divide existing *community of interests*;
 - cut across the dominant physical features of the landscape (including ridgelines and valleys); and
 - sub-divide zones of travel and communication within the current electorates.

The strongest population growth is projected in the electorate of Molonglo. There is strong growth in Gungahlin, however there are other hotspots of growth throughout the electorate

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including in Turner, Braddon, the City, Barton, Kingston, O'Malley and Phillip. Given that the projected population growth is greatest in Molonglo, then the most obvious rearrangement options would either involve hiving off parts of Gungahlin into Ginninderra (to join Nicholls) or parts of southern Woden into Brindabella (to join the suburbs flanking Mount Taylor). We consider that changes in either category would be unacceptable, because such options would unnecessarily divide communities of interest.

Particular regard should be given to the fact that Gungahlin is a new community and, as such, is relatively disadvantaged in terms of services and infrastructure. It is important for such a community to have as unified and strong a voice as is possible in the Legislative Assembly. We therefore oppose any further shift of Gungahlin suburbs into Ginninderra, notwithstanding projected growth. It cannot be assumed that the present government will follow policies which have underpinned strong population growth in the ACT in previous years. Notwithstanding recent jobs growth in Commonwealth departments, the ACT Labor government has rationed land release at levels below market demand in order to drive land prices artificially high.

For the reasons given above, we submit there is insufficient imperative to make any boundary adjustment for the 2008 election.

Yours sincerely

SIGNED 23/2/2007

Gary Kent
President

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