

Dear Expert Reference Group, thankyou for the opportunity to compose public submissions regarding the Review into the size of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

I have composed the following proposal, setting out the case for an expansion of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

I run a charity providing poverty relief to people of the ACT. I believe there are many smaller community groups and interests in the ACT that struggle to find a political voice and representation due to the current size of the ACT Legislative Assembly, therefore I am proposing an increase to the size of the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Is increasing the number of Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly justified?

Yes.

Why or why not?

To provide better community representation (improved representatives to population ratio) and opportunity for a more diverse presentation of community views (providing an opportunity for smaller parties, community groups and community interests to compete with larger parties).

2. If there is to be an increase in the number of Members:
  - what should that number be;

Preference for an odd number between 20-36.

- what number of electorates should there be and how many members elected from each?

Five electorates with boundaries roughly based on Canberra's major population blocks.

1. Canberra Central (Inner North, City Centre and Inner South) 2. Belconnen 3. Gungahlin 4. Woden/Weston Creek 5. Tuggeranong

with appropriate distribution of MLAs to population for each major centre, ranging from 5-9 MLAs per electorate. Five electorates would allow more community issues and interests to come to the fore.

For example, in a hypothetical case, if the Expert Reference Group agreed to set a ratio of one MLA per 20,000 people, this would produce 5 MLAs in an electorate of 100,000 people.

My friendly advice to the Expert Reference Group is to first, decide on the number of electorates, second, establish a suitable MLA per population ratio, and third, the number of MLAs per electorate will be thus decided by the previous two decisions.

God bless the Expert Reference Group and God bless Canberra :-)

Reverend Mijina McDowall