
From: Alan Kerlin
Sent: Thursday, 2 June 2011 11:53 PM
To: Elections
Subject: Objection to proposed electoral boundary redistribution

Dear Mr Green

Thank you for considering our submission on the 2011 boundary redistribution.

We are disappointed that the committee dismissed our proposal and instead opted for a proposal of further incremental tinkering, rather than seeking to resolve the problem that is the Molonglo electorate. Instead, the committee proposes to pull more suburbs from the main Gungahlin electorate.

The effect of what the committee is proposing is that both the Woden and Gungahlin electorates would have multiple suburbs carved off into neighbouring electorates without any apparent regard to the requirements of the legislation that calls for common communities of interest. Gungahlin would have Nicholls, Crace and Palmerston in Ginninderra, and Woden already has Chifley, Pearce, Torrens and Farrer separated into Brindabella. The problem with Molonglo is that it is strung most of the length of Canberra. But instead of withdrawing from one end OR the other towards an eventually more compact electorate, the committee has over several redistributions actually made things worse rather than better

The legislation requires the committee to "duly consider —

1. the community of interests within each proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests;
2. the means of communication and travel within each proposed electorate;
3. the physical features and area of each proposed electorate;
4. the boundaries of existing electorates; and
5. the boundaries of divisions and sections fixed under the Districts Act 2002."

The legislation either intended the options to be in priority order as listed, or of equal importance. Our key point is that the second last criterion on the list seems to get most of the committee's consideration, disproportionately compared to the first criterion on the list. And by the way they are pursuing stability of the boundaries, the committee is instead ensuring precisely the opposite - ongoing need for continuous change.

We have proposed a major change that would have the effect of correcting the obvious problems that exist with the current Molonglo, and would set things up for the future growth areas to be incorporated into Molonglo and Ginninderra without constant future changes. Brindabella covering the southern band of the ACT across would cover all of Weston and Tuggeranong. With limited future growth Brindabella should be over quota. But by including Weston it provides a physical connection to the new development district of Molonglo (not the electorate), it can be expanded into that area if necessary at some stage in the future.

Molonglo would cover the central band of Woden, South Canberra and almost all of North Canberra. The new district of Molonglo would also be incorporated into it over the next few years, so this electorate should be somewhat under quota.

Ginninderra would cover the entire northern communities of Belconnen and Gungahlin and with the majority of the next few years' population growth, should be significantly under quota - at the very margin of the allowed variance.

Admittedly one or two suburbs of North Canberra would temporarily need to be in Ginninderra, but the off-set of this is that the fragmentation of both Woden and Gungahlin districts are corrected - in a lasting way - and the districts of

Tuggeranong, South Canberra, Belconnen and Weston Creek are maintained as wholes and in a manner that will last. There can be no question that the solution reduces current fragmentation and will prevent future fragmentation for far more of the ACT than the alternatives put forth by the committee.

We were disappointed to see the committee buried its very important observation that the proposals made by us could win through if there were significant community support back in page 20. We would have thought that such a significant concession warranted some mention in the summary of the report.

We wish to point out that, apart from any submissions the committee may receive, there has been a degree of discussion about our proposal on the online forums of GCC's Facebook site and the-riotact.com, with significant support for, and no dissent against, it.

With regard to the electorate names, we point to the difficulty experienced herein of discerning between the district and the electorate of the same name. It will only get worse. We suggest the committee consider the name of Griffin for the central electorate, in recognition that the central band of Canberra (in the GCC proposed redistribution) contains most of the core areas designed by Walter Burley Griffin.

We also wish to finish off by reminding the committee that our preferred position is for an expanded Assembly, with five five-member electorates. Through the committee, we urge all members of the Assembly, regardless of their political party, to do the right thing by the ACT's democratic representation, and seek Commonwealth support for amendments to the legislation to enact this larger Assembly.

Regards,

Alan Kerlin
Gungahlin Community Council
Spokesman - Planning, Transport and Environment