Dear Redistribution Committee Members,

I make this submission on behalf of ACT Labor as the party's Secretary and Registered Officer.

ACT Labor welcomes the release of draft boundaries for the divisions of the ACT and we thank the Committee for this opportunity to make comment on the proposal.

We endorse the recommendations regarding boundaries for Yerrabi and Ginninderra, and the recommendation to shift part of Kambah from Murrumbidgee into Brindabella. However, we do have concerns about the recommended changes to the divisions of Murrumbidgee and Kurrajong and our views are outlined below.

I look forward to seeing the results of this process.

Kind regards

Matthew Byrne
Secretary, ACT Labor

Comments and Objections

The proposal to redistribute the suburbs of Lawson, Evatt and McKellar from Yerrabi into Ginninderra is broadly consistent with our submission and we welcome this move.

The proposal to redistribute Kambah East from Murrumbidgee into Brindabella is also consistent with our submission and we welcome this move.

We believe that the proposal to redistribute the inner south suburbs of Deakin and Yarralumla from Kurrajong into Murrumbidgee creates a significant problem for maintaining this community of interest together and providing for good democratic representation for the residents of this area.

We note the community feedback raised in the media when the draft boundaries were released and we urge the Redistribution Committee to reconsider their proposal.

In our submission to the drafting stage we argued that it is worth examining the criteria used in Part 4, 36 of the Electoral Act to consider the redistribution of divisional boundaries.

Paragraph '36) b)' says "[the Commission shall] endeavour to ensure, as far as practicable, that the number of electors in an electorate at the time of the next general election of members of the Legislative Assembly will not be greater than 105%, or less than 95%, of the expected quota for the electorate at that time ascertained in accordance with the formula…".

We understand that one may take a narrow reading of this paragraph and interpret its aim purely as ensuring that no 'zig-zagging' of divisional boundaries would occur. However we believe that community interest calls on the Redistribution Committee to take a broader, more inclusive view.

Paragraph '36) c)' outlines the other criteria that the Commission must also take into account when considering the redistribution of boundaries i.e. communities of interest, means of communication and transport, existing boundaries of districts and electorates and natural features.

It is our view that the Commission should consider whether it is practicable to redistribute a single suburb from the electorate that incorporates its natural community of interest – Kurrajong – into an electorate with which it has very little relationship – Murrumbidgee.

We believe that this would create unnecessary confusion for the residents of whichever suburb is redistributed as to who their local representatives are. We think that this will create an inequity of representation for those residents in the inner south because they are unlikely to receive the same level of representation when placed in an electorate with which they have little connection.

We believe that the costs to the local community outweigh the problem of Murrumbidgee falling 1.66% below the projected quota threshold.

We therefore request that the Redistribution Committee reconsider their proposal concerning the boundaries for Kurrajong and Murrumbidgee and maintain Yarralumla and Deakin within the division of Kurrajong.