
From: Ian Ruecroft
Sent: Monday, 16 May 2011 8:58 PM
To: Elections
Subject: Redistribution of Electoral Boundries submission from Ian Ruecroft
Attachments: Electoral boundries 15.5.11.doc

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As a Gungahlin resident I would like to express my concern at the recommendation that the suburbs of Palmerston and Crace be transferred from the electorate of Molonglo to the electorate of Ginninderra. This proposal would further disadvantage the Gungahlin community and compound the electoral disadvantage of Gungahlin voters.

The Gungahlin community is a "community of common interests" just the same as Belconnen, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong and other clearly identified communities. The needs of any community experiencing sustained growth must be an important factor when determining electoral boundaries. Gungahlin has been a community since 1992 and now has a substantial population. Because our voting power is split over two electorates, MLAs do not focus on Gungahlin issues and this is reflected in the level of community infrastructure. I note that legislation requires the Electoral Commission to duly consider the community of interests within each proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests.

The proposed distribution will maintain the existing Gungahlin status, where we are a minor community within 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. Politicians from both electorates have difficulty in recognising that Gungahlin even belongs in their electorate. As an example - following the outcome of the 2008 ACT election, Jon Stanhope (speaking in front of TV cameras) thanked the voters of "Belconnen" for electing him to office. If the most-senior politician can't remember that Nicholls was also in his electorate, how well is Gungahlin represented in the ACT Legislative Assembly?

In April 2012 Gungahlin will celebrate the 20th 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, stamp duty and rates 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 continued to deteriorate over recent years. Successive ACT Governments have failed to respond to community representation or to deliver reasonable levels of infrastructure. They have also failed to create incentives to attract employment to the Gungahlin/ Mitchell district and failed to provide public transport initiatives or road networks that are adequate for the growing population.

There are many options that would bring all the Gungahlin suburbs into one electorate. 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 2012 ACT election and for future elections. Gungahlin will be a major community within one electorate or two minor communities within two electorates.

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. Without major changes to electoral boundaries 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 too long. In the 2012 ACT election, all Gungahlin suburbs must be contained within one electorate. This should be a non-negotiable consideration, as it is required 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.

Yours sincerely
T.I. Ruecroft