

**ACT Greens Submission**

**ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries  
Redistribution 2015**

**December 2014**



## **ACT Greens Submission- ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2015**

The ACT Greens welcome the opportunity to provide input to the redistribution of electorate boundaries for the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The ACT Greens support increasing the size of the ACT Legislative Assembly. The current 17 member Assembly fulfils the duties of both state and local government, which results in lower representation of the ACT community and risks less accountability, transparency and participation for the community.

The ACT has proportionally fewer politicians than any other Australian jurisdiction, partly as a result of significant population increases over the past 20 years. The ACT Greens maintain the position that the best configurations for increasing the size of the Assembly in 2016 would be three electorates with between 7 and 9 members.

This structure would increase the likelihood for communities of interest to exist within a single electorate and would greatly improve the degree to which proportional representation would be achieved in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

### **New Electorate Boundaries for the ACT Legislative Assembly**

The ACT Greens provide the following suggestions with respect to the redrawing of electorate boundaries for ACT Legislative Assembly Elections.

The *Electoral Act 1992* provides guidance on the relevant factors that must be considered when deciding upon the drawing of boundaries for electorates.

The ACT Greens acknowledge these legislated criteria and expectations for the drawing of boundaries, and have sought to provide suggestions for electorates that would best serve the ACT community, while working within these criteria.

The ACT Greens support the inclusion of communities of interest as a factor for consideration. In considering where the boundaries should be drawn, the ACT Greens suggest that the definition of “communities of interest”, and in particular the social aspects of these communities extend to both current and historical cultural relationships and demographics of the residents within the relevant regions.

Additionally, the ACT Greens suggest that consideration of the “physical features”, as specified by the *Electoral Act 1992*, is extended to be inclusive of the natural ecological systems that reside within the geographical regions bound by electorates, and the wider Canberra region.

It is also acknowledged the *Electoral Act 1992* establishes strict criteria in relation to the population that resides in each electorate, with an expressed aim for the

population of the ACT to be distributed evenly across the five electorates, within a margin of 5 per cent of the relevant quota.

The ACT Greens welcome the projections provided by Elections ACT and the Australian Bureau of Statistics that can be used to inform the process of ensuring the required population distribution between electorates is achieved.

### **Locations of new ACT electorates**

With the above in mind, the ACT Greens offer the following suggestions for the drawing of electorate boundaries for ACT Legislative Assembly elections.

- Electorates, where possible, should be centred on the major populated districts of the ACT as defined under the *Districts Act 2002*. These being:
  - Canberra Central
  - Woden Valley
  - Belconnen
  - Weston Creek
  - Tuggeranong
  - Gungahlin
  - Molonglo Valley
- As necessary to fulfil the elector quota requirements for each of the five electorates, electorates should be formed using single districts, or a combination of districts with common interests.
- Individual suburbs may be exchanged between districts, where necessary to meet the elector quotas, while giving due consideration to the geographic, social, demographic, cultural and ecological relationships between the suburbs and their electorates.
- Regional districts and settlements should be allocated to electorates where it is logical to do so. For example, the allocation to Tharwa to a Tuggeranong based electorate, and Hall to an electorate centred on Belconnen, would be consistent with their geographical location and their current associations with electorates. However, cultural and demographic factors should also be considered. The ACT Greens recommended that the Redistribution Committee consult with the residents of these communities to confirm before the boundaries are finalised.

The ACT Greens suggest that the drawing of boundaries on this basis would assist the development of electorates consistent with the criteria outlined in the *Electoral Act 1992*. It is acknowledged that some suburbs, particularly those within Tuggeranong and Belconnen, may need to be allocated to an electorate based on town centres that are different to their traditional associations.

## **Electorate names**

The Greens support maintaining existing electorate names where possible, noting that two electorates will need entirely new names.

The Greens would support the Electoral Commission investigating the option of suitable indigenous names in consultation with the relevant local groups for electorates if possible. However, we have also suggested the following electorate names, after informal discussions within the party:

### **Belconnen region – Ginninderra**

This is the existing name for the Belconnen-based electorate, and also describes the geographic area of Ginninderra Creek and Lake, which runs through the electorate.

### **Gungahlin – Gungaderra**

This is a new electorate, and Gungaderra is the name of a homestead on the Gungahlin area.

### **Inner North and Inner South – Griffin**

This is also a new electorate, that incorporates the older areas of Canberra that were in the original Marion and Walter Burley Griffin design and the name Griffin reflects both the historical background of Canberra as a planned city, as well as the fact that Lake Burley Griffin is the centre of this new electorate.

### **Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo Valley – Stromlo**

This could be treated as a new electorate. We propose the name Stromlo as the area contains Mount Stromlo, which has the historical observatory and is an important part of Canberra's history. However, if any electorate were to retain the name Molonglo, this would be the most appropriate electorate as it contains both the Molonglo Valley suburbs (and will contain the Molonglo town centre) as well as the Molonglo River.

### **Tuggeranong – Brindabella**

This is the existing name for the Tuggeranong electorate and reflects the views throughout the Tuggeranong Valley of the Brindabella mountain ranges.

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## **Electorate 1: Gungaderra**

The ACT Greens suggest that there be an electorate centred on the Gungahlin District, with the addition of the suburbs of Giralang, Kaleen and Bruce from the Belconnen district, as well as the suburb of Lyneham from the Canberra Central district.

The district of Gungahlin has insufficient population to meet the elector quota requirement as a distinct district. The ACT Greens propose that some suburbs within the Belconnen district be allocated to this electorate.

The suburbs of Giralang, Kaleen and Bruce would provide a sufficient number of additional electors to satisfy the population requirements. Each of these suburbs is reasonably geographically distinct from the remaining Belconnen suburbs as to allow their allocation without causing electoral boundaries to be drawn through otherwise contiguous residential areas.

It is also suggested that the portion of Lyneham that resides north of Ginninderra Drive and Mouat Street, be allocated to the proposed Gungaderra electorate. The “North Lyneham” area was developed separately to the rest of Lyneham, and as a result, has distinct demographic characteristics. Ginninderra Drive would act as a more appropriate line of separation than the border of Lyneham that runs long Wattle Street, which intersects a continuous residential area.

Forming an electorate on this basis would encapsulate the system of waterways formed by the Gungahlin and Yerrabi Ponds, as well as ensuring that the Mulangarri and Gungaderra Grasslands are contained within the same electorate.

It is noted that recent residential developments within the Gungahlin district are likely to see the population of Gungahlin suburbs grow at rates higher than the ACT wide average. Should the size of the Assembly remain constant, and the five electorates be maintained, the ACT Greens would encourage the reconsideration of the electoral boundaries after the 2016 election, with a view to reincorporating the suburbs of North Lyneham, Bruce, Kaleen, and Giralang, respectively, into electorates based on the districts they are traditionally associated with, depending on the population growth in Gungahlin

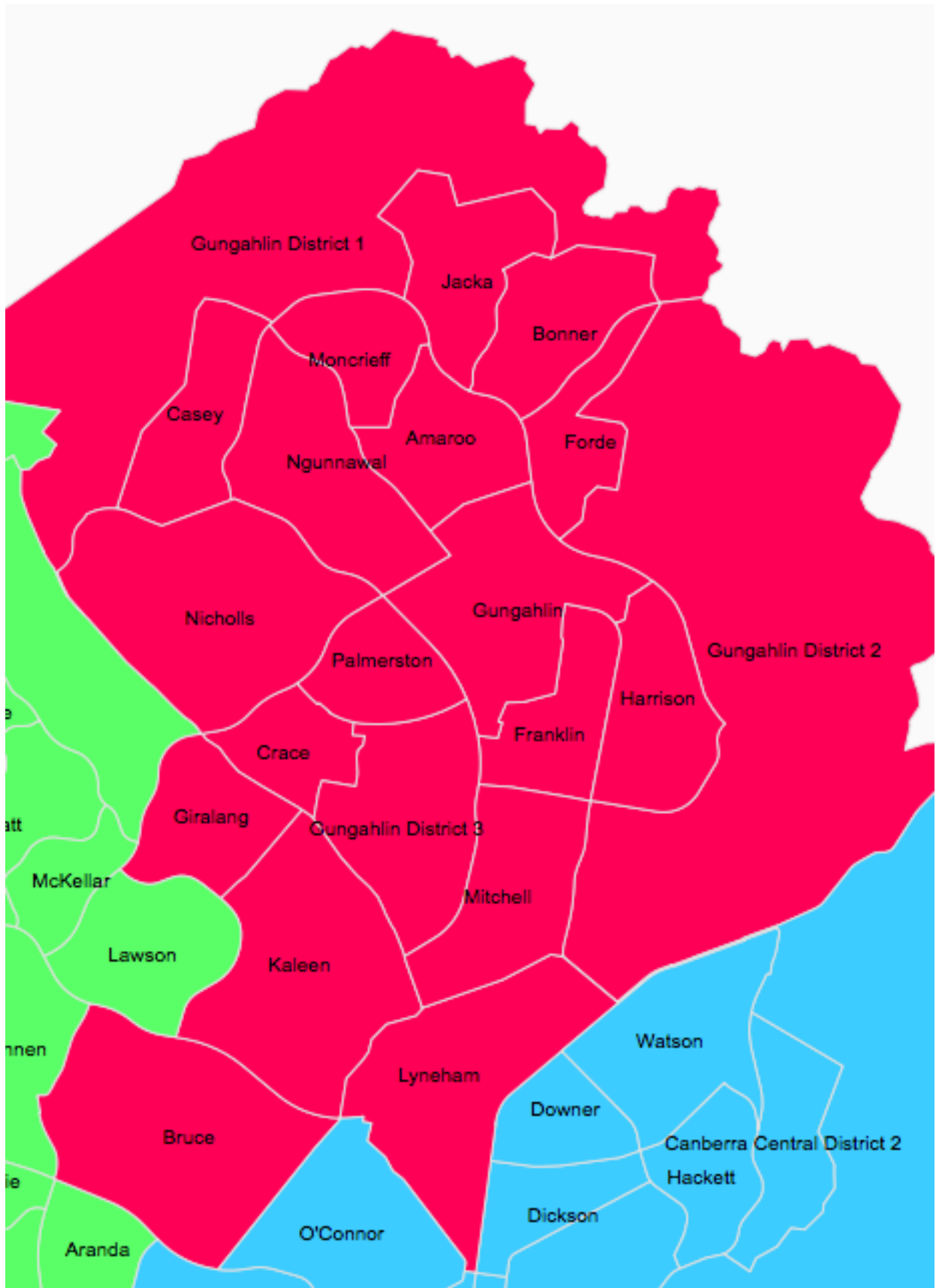


Figure 1 - Proposed Boundary for electorate centred on the Gungahlin District (red) - please note that only North Lyneham is suggested for this electorate

## **Electorate 2: Griffin**

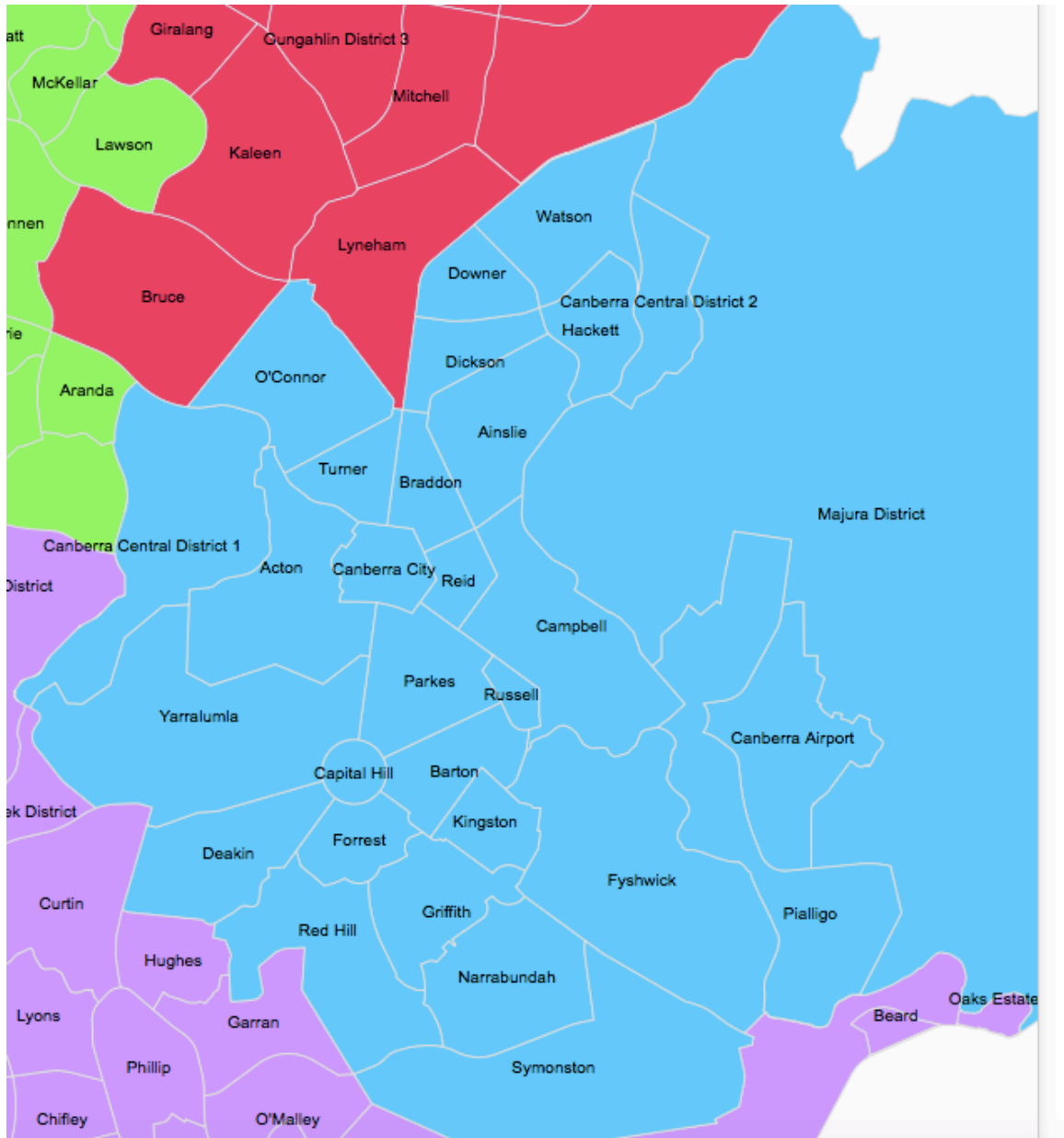
The ACT Greens suggest that an electorate also be established around the District of Central Canberra, comprising suburbs traditionally understood to comprise the “Inner North” and “Inner South”.

After the allocation of North Lyneham to a Gungahlin centred electorate, the elector quota can be satisfied using the remaining suburbs solely from the Central Canberra district (inclusive of the southern portion of Lyneham). This allows contiguous communities of interest to be incorporated within a single electorate.

On ecological grounds, an electorate drawn in this way would also incorporate the bulk of Lake Burley Griffin and relevant source waterways, including Sullivans Creek and the Molonglo River. Likewise, it would ensure the Mt Majura Nature Reserve and wider Majura Valley in the east, and the Black Mountain area in the west, would reside within a single electorate.

Recognising the existing transport links that exist between the Central Canberra district, and the outer areas of the Canberra Airport, Fyshwick and Pialligo, it is suggested that they be incorporated within this centrally based electorate.

Additionally, all of these suburbs currently reside within the single electorate (the current electorate of Molonglo) and would provide some consistency with current electoral activities within these suburbs.



**Figure 2 - Proposed Boundary for electorate centred on the Canberra Central District (blue) - please note the inclusion of Lyneham**



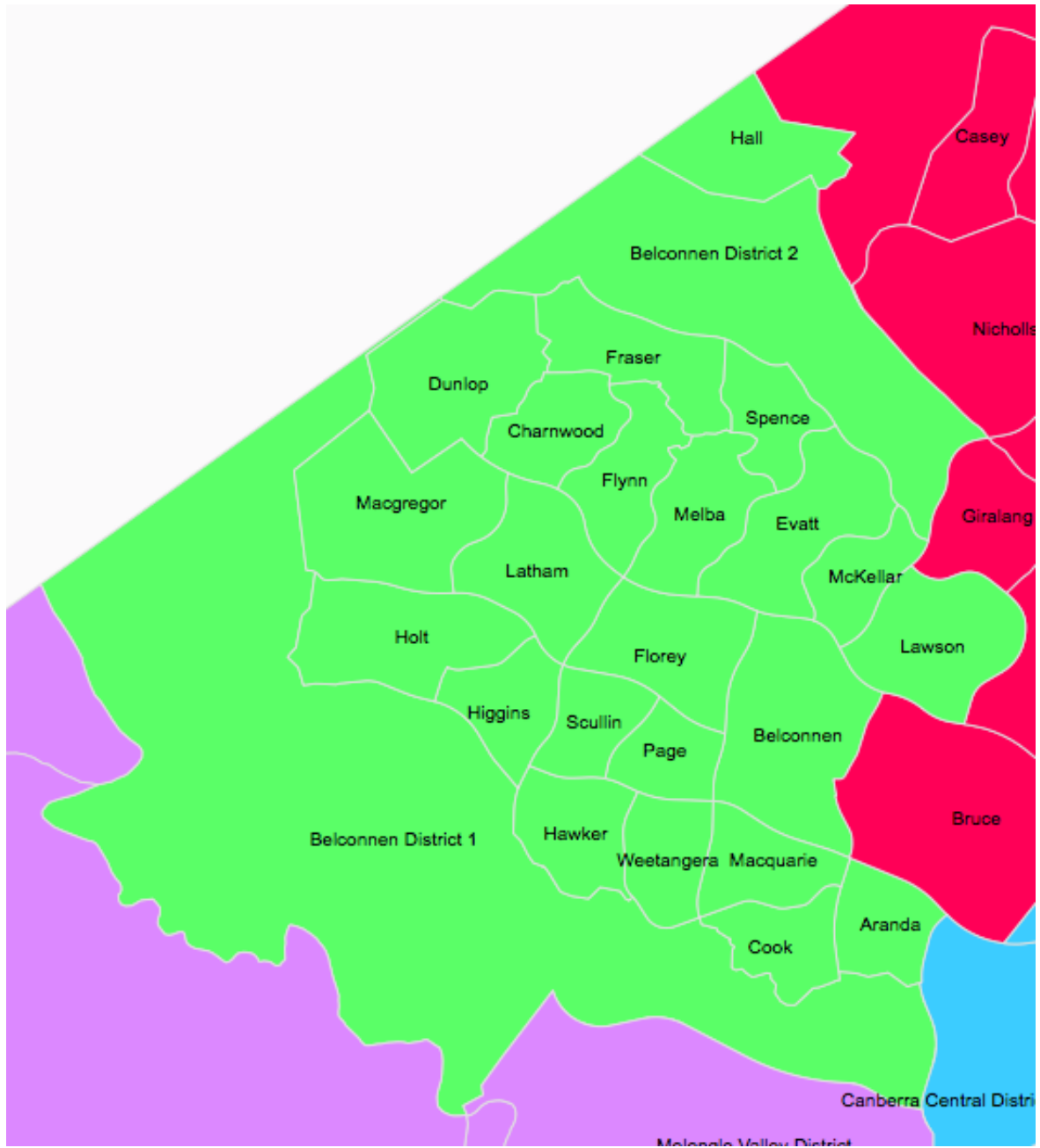
### **Electorate 3: Ginninderra**

The ACT Greens suggest that an electorate be centred on the district of Belconnen, with the inclusion of the neighbouring district of Hall.

The suburbs as indicated in Figure 3 below are located within the current electorate of Ginninderra, providing a degree of electoral consistency for residents. While somewhat geographically separated from the Belconnen district, the area of Hall is currently included within the electorate of Ginninderra, and the ACT Greens suggest that this association should be retained where possible.

The district of Belconnen represents a clear community of interest, and the allocation of suburbs to this electorate in this way would recognise the established community served by the Belconnen town centre.

This allocation satisfies the elector quota requirements while ensuring geographical and ecological features, particularly Lake Ginninderra and related waterways (such as flows through Lawson and McKellar) are included within a single electorate.



**Figure 3 - Proposed Boundary for electorate centred on the Belconnen District (Green)**

#### **Electorate 4: Stromlo**

The ACT Greens suggest that one electorate incorporate the districts of the Woden Valley, Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley.

The combination of these areas would follow the principle of recognising communities of interest, noting that Woden Town Centre is used by residents of these areas, and would allow each of them to be contained, as a whole, within a single electorate.

However, despite combining districts, the elector quota cannot be met without the addition of populations residing within another district. The remaining Tuggeranong District contains a population that exceeds the elector quota. The ACT Greens therefore suggest that the suburb of Kambah, from the Tuggeranong District, be incorporated within this electorate.

This allocation would satisfy the population requirements while keeping Tuggeranong as a single contiguous region as much as possible, while limiting the discontinuities that result from accounting for the “Tuggeranong District 1” SA2 region as a single continuous area.

It is acknowledged that Kambah was established earlier than the majority of Tuggeranong, and at a similar period to the nearby suburbs in Weston Creek (Chapman and Fisher), thus the demographics of Kambah are more similar to Weston Creek than Tuggeranong generally. Given the development of new residential areas in the Molonglo Valley, the ACT Greens support the reconsideration of Kambah in the future, with the view to potentially reincorporating it within a Tuggeranong electorate, subject to population criteria.

The allocation of suburbs and regions in this way also ensures that nature areas contained within the Stromlo region, the Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve, the Lower Molonglo Nature Reserve and the Cotter River district are all contained in a single electorate.

On the eastern side of this electorate, the Molonglo River has been used as a natural feature as an electorate boundary, ensuring that the smaller settlements of Oaks Estate, Beard and HMAS Harman are all included within a single electorate, along with the “Jerrabomberra District” region.

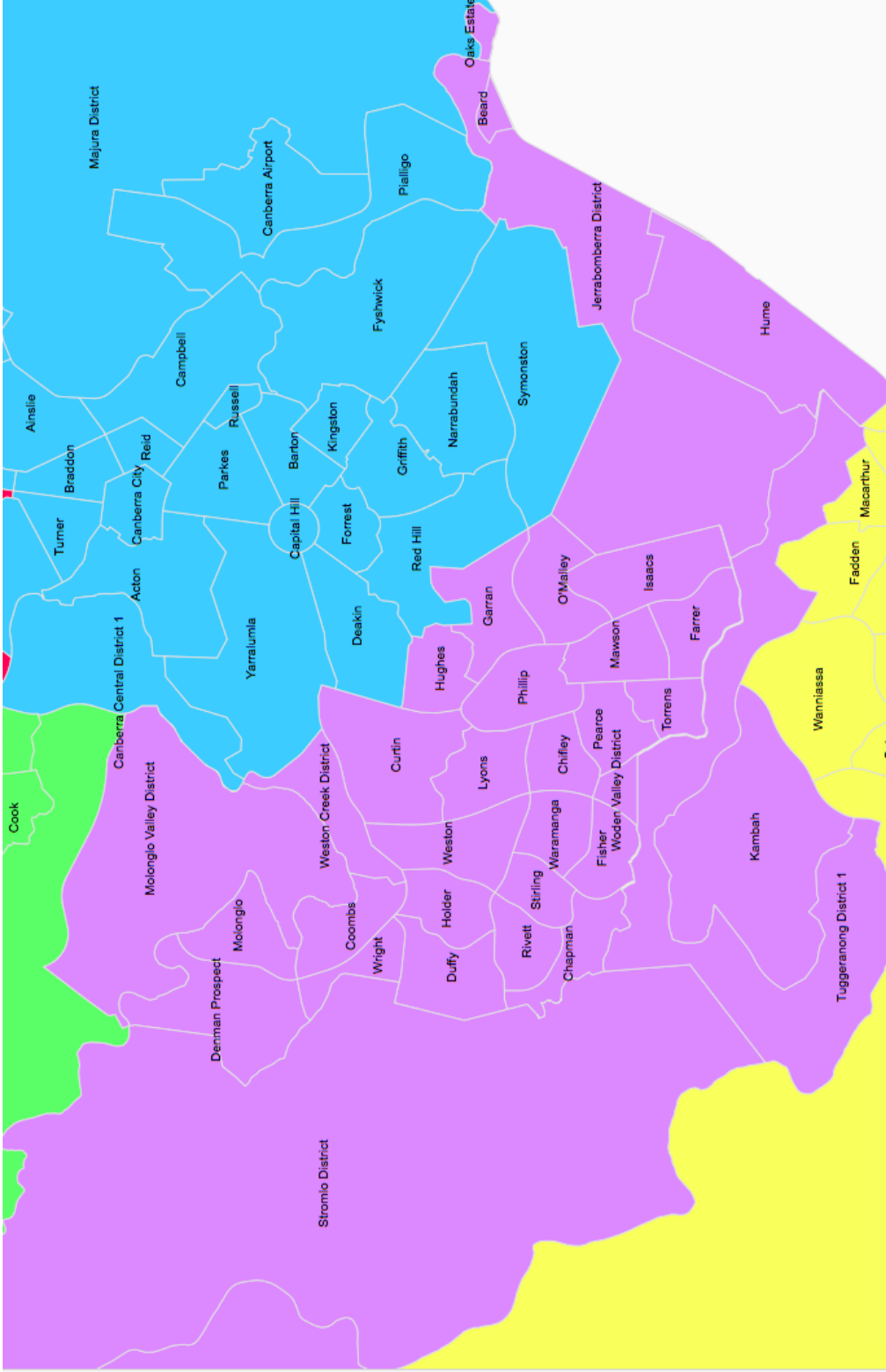


Figure 4 - Proposed Boundary for electorate centred on the Weston Creek and Woden Valley District (Purple)

## **Electorate 5: Brindabella**

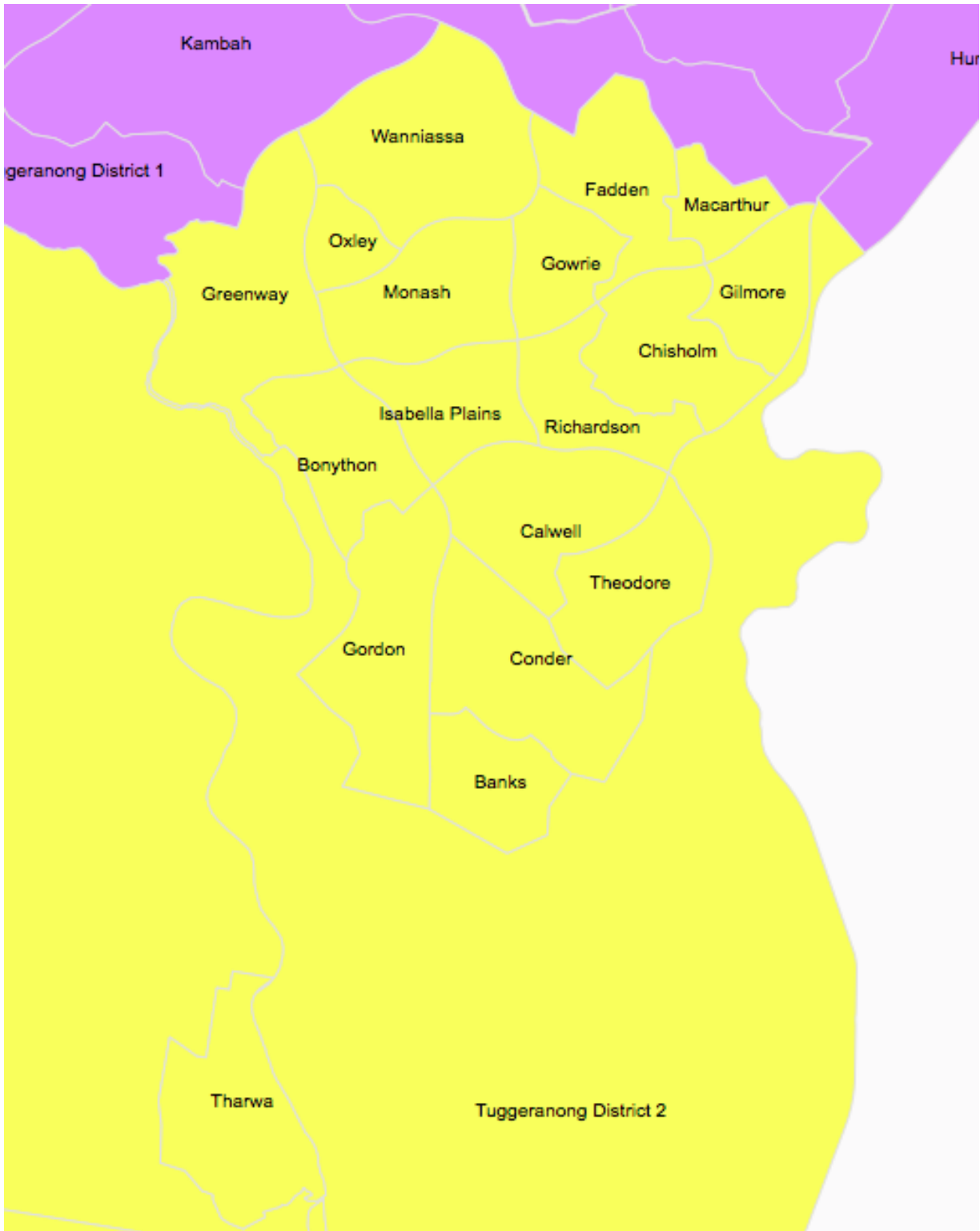
The ACT Greens suggest that an electorate also be centred on the Tuggeranong District.

As has been recognised in all of the previous electorate suggestions, the district of Tuggeranong represents another clear community of common interest.

Currently, the whole district of Tuggeranong, and the surrounding regional areas (extending to the Tharwa, Paddy's River and Tennent Districts) are all included within the single electorate of Brindabella.

While one suburb in the northern portion of the Brindabella electorate would be moved into a new electorate, the remaining Tuggeranong suburbs, satisfying the elector quota requirements, would remain as a single electorate.

Tuggeranong represents a clear community of interest, with several physical features of the region also being retained in a single electorate. Tidbinbilla, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and most of the Namadgi National Park would be contained also within a single electorate. This would continue the association of these areas with the Tuggeranong region with respect to electoral boundaries.



**Figure 5 - Proposed Boundary for electorate centred on the Tuggeranong District (Yellow)**