



# Suggestion 16

## Canberra Liberals

7 pages

# Suggestions Submission to the Redistribution Committee for the Australian Capital Territory

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Australia (ACT Division)

## **Suggestions for the Redistribution of electoral Boundaries in the Australian Capital Territory**

Dear Commissioners,

The Canberra Liberals welcome the addition of Federal Division to the representation of the Australian Capital Territory in the Australian Parliament.

In making this Public Suggestion, the Canberra Liberals acknowledge the requirements of the *Electoral Act 1918* in relation to the making of redistributions, namely that:

the Redistribution Committee is required by the Act to:

1. Ensure the number of electors in each proposed electoral division must not deviate by more than 10 per cent above or below the current enrolment quota. The current enrolment quota for the Australian Capital Territory was determined by the Electoral Commissioner to be 119,503.
2. As far as practicable, the Redistribution Committee will ensure that the number of electors enrolled in each electoral division at 20 January 2022 (the projection time) will not deviate by more than 3.5 per cent above or below the projected enrolment quota of 122,731.
3. Give due consideration, in relation to each proposed Electoral Division, to:
  - (i) community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social and regional interests;
  - (ii) means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;
  - (iv) the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division; and
  - (v) the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory
4. Consideration of existing boundaries is subordinate to the other factors set out above.

## **Proposed Naming:**

The Canberra Liberals propose the new Division to be named Stromlo.

The Canberra Liberals have suggested the name Stromlo as Mt Stromlo is a prominent geographic feature that lies at the centre of the proposed electorate, between the urban populations in Belconnen and Molonglo and the rural areas in the south west of Canberra.

In accordance with the guidelines for naming Federal Divisions, Mount Stromlo is a significant, identifiable, historic and iconic geographical feature within the suggested new Division to be created in the ACT.

Stromlo is adjacent to Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley in Canberra's south and has a strong connection to Canberra's history – from European settlement, to Canberra's world-class astronomical research facilities, the Stromlo Forest Park and the devastating bush fires of 2003.

The Stromlo Forest Park is an historic part of Canberra, having being visited as early as 1820 by European settlers, used as pastoral land.

Mount Stromlo has also been an important part of the astronomical history of Canberra since around 1910 when the first astronomical observations from Mount Stromlo were recorded. In 1924 the Mt Stromlo Observatory was officially established as a solar observatory and today Mount Stromlo Observatory is the headquarters of the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics.

Stromlo has been ravaged by bushfires on multiple occasions in the 1950s, then in 2001 and tragically in 2003 when four Canberrans lost their lives as a devastating bushfire swept through the pine plantation, destroying almost 70% of the ACT's pastures, pine plantations and nature parks and more than 500 homes.

Today Stromlo Forest Park, officially opened in 2007, is a multi-use recreational sporting facility that embraces various outdoor activities such as a 1.2km cycle circuit, a 2.5km grass cross country running track and kilometres of equestrian and mountain bike trails.

Stromlo has played an important role in Canberra's history, it represents the resilience of Canberrans to respond in times of great adversity, while also providing a connection to our world-class research facilities and the beauty of our surrounding environment.

The existing Division of Fenner ought to keep its name from a recent redistribution. Fenner contains the communities of Gungahlin and the Inner North suburbs of Canberra and the ACT CBD as well as ACT industrial areas. The existing Division of Canberra was created in 1974 following the division of the Division of the ACT. The electorate continues to hold its communities of interest in the Inner South, Woden and Tuggeranong.

## Approach to this Redistribution

### *Communities of Interest*

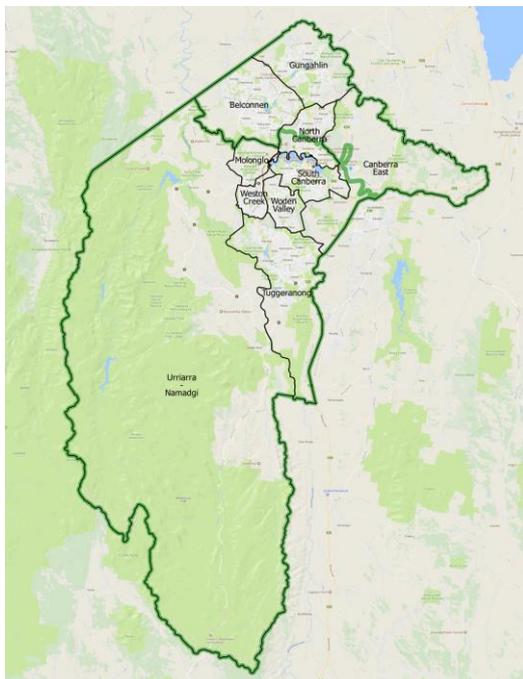
The starting point for the Canberra Liberals has been the geographic groupings which are generally well-understood by Canberrans: from the north, Gungahlin, Belconnen and North Canberra, with Fyshwick-Pialligo in the east, then the Inner South, the Woden Valley, Weston Creek to the west, then Tuggeranong in the far south. The rural balance of the territory with only limited population is to the west and south of metropolitan Canberra.

The new development to this picture is the growth of the Molonglo Valley, a substantial residential area extending from the western end of Lake Burley Griffin.<sup>1</sup>

The Canberra Liberals consider that these geographic areas provide a basis upon which communities of interests can be understood within the Territory and electorate boundaries should be formed

The Canberra Liberals have examined the enrolment statistics provided for the purposes and concluded that the range of options available will require that at least one of these geographic areas will have to be divided.

*Figure 1: the ACT's geographic regions (sources ABS & Google Maps)*



<sup>1</sup> Refer to Figure 1, the ACT's geographic regions, according to Statistical Areas Level 3, Australian Statistical Geography Standard 2016, ABS.

## ***Means of Communication and travel***

Transportation links across the entire of the ACT are relatively strong. With an average of 1.8 motor vehicles per dwelling the city is designed to facilitate car transport, with major roads running from North to South on both the East and the West of the Capital means transport is not a huge factor of consideration in Canberra.

There is no real differentiation in Transport options that should impact on the decision of electoral boundaries. The proposed plan by the Canberra Liberals Fenner with Northbourne Avenue, Horse Park Drive, Gungahlin Drive and Flemington Road and the Majura Parkway. Fenner is linked with public transport through the *Red Rapid* bus service from Fyshwick to Gungahlin and will also be linked by the City-Gungahlin light rail from Civic to Gungahlin.

Canberra division has major roads including Adelaide Avenue, Canberra and Wentworth Avenue. Bus services include the *Green Rapid* and the *Blue Rapid*.

The proposed new Division of Stromlo is linked by the major roads including the Tuggeranong Parkway, Caswell Drive and the GDE.

## ***Physical features and area***

Fenner Division is identifiably the northern Division, taking in the extent of the north-west to south-east Australian Capital Territory boundary.

The suggested boundaries of Canberra no longer include the CBD, however the significant landmarks within the Parliamentary Triangle are all contained, as are historic Inner South suburbs.

The suggested new division of Stromlo takes in Mount Stromlo.

## ***Existing boundaries***

The current two divisions essentially take the form of a northern one – Fenner (formerly Fraser) – and a southern one – Canberra, with a relatively horizontal dividing line about the mid-point of Canberra.

In 1998 these boundaries were established elegantly following the Molonglo River and Lake Burley Griffin and were in effect through to the 2013 election. The required adjustment to take effect for the 2016 election shifted the dividing line northwards, however the essential nature of a northern and southern Division remained.

The compact boundaries of the Australian Capital Territory, the physical characteristics including nature parks which tend to divide the capital's urban area and the specific numerical requirements of the *Electoral Act* mean there's no such obvious solution for three divisions.

The requirement to add a division renders consideration of existing divisional boundaries as impractical.

## Proposal

The Canberra Liberals' suggestion takes into account the numerical requirements specified in the *Electoral Act* and the requirements to contain the Jervis Bay Territory within Fenner and Norfolk Island within Canberra.

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The Canberra Liberals propose that the electorate of Canberra incorporates the town centres of Tuggeranong and Woden, as well as suburbs within the inner south. While the current seat of Canberra includes all suburbs south of the lake, as well as the CBD, the new boundaries would exclude Weston Creek, the Molonglo Valley and Kingston.

While Kingston would ideally be included as a part of the Inner South, it is impossible to ensure that all communities of interest align, as previously mentioned some communities will have to be split. Consequently, as Kingston is a lakeside community it makes sense to include this area with the Lake Burley Griffin and the CBD as a compromise.

The electorate of Stromlo will be centred on the western border. Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley form a distinct community that is becoming more connected to the North of Canberra. With the recent announcement for the ACT Government to release land in the new suburb of Whitlam, this will act as a true connection between the Weston Creek/Molonglo Valley region and North West side of Canberra in the Belconnen region.

The growth in this area forms the basis of the new seat of Stromlo which acknowledges the new communities that are forming on the western side of the ACT.

The seat of Fenner will have a similar profile to its current boundaries, without the Belconnen community. The split down the Gungahlin Drive and up the Barton Highway is a clear boundary that causes no split between communities.

The Canberra Liberals believe these proposed boundaries provide the clearest divide between the new electorates with minimal splits in communities while working within the AEC guidelines.

Electors	
Fenner	94,455
Canberra	99,592
Stromlo	90,517
<b>ACT</b>	<b>284,564</b>

