

PUBLIC INQUIRY OF THE AUGMENTED ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION FOR QUEENSLAND

BEFORE: THE HON D COWDROY OAM QC (Chairperson of the  
Australian Electoral Commission)

MR D KALISCH (Australian Statistician and  
Member of the Electoral Commission)

MR T ROGERS (Electoral Commissioner,  
Australian Electoral Commission)

MR B WORRALL (Auditor-General of Queensland)

MR S JACOBY PSM (Executive Director, Land  
and Spatial Information, Department of  
Natural Resources and Mines).

MR T RYAN (Australian Electoral Officer for  
Queensland, Australian Electoral Commission)

Held at the Brisbane Marriott Hotel,  
515 Queen Street, Brisbane, QLD

On Wednesday, 13 December 2017 at 9.00am

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.  
2 Welcome to the public hearing convened by the  
3 augmented Electoral Commission for Queensland  
4 into the proposed redistribution.

5 My name is Dennis Cowdroy. I am the Chair  
6 of the augmented Electoral Commission. The other  
7 members of the Australian Electoral Commission  
8 present are: Mr David Kalisch, who is on my  
9 right. Mr Kalisch is the Australian  
10 Statistician. On my left is Mr Tom Rogers, who  
11 is the Electoral Commissioner. The other members  
12 who make up the augmented Electoral Commission  
13 are: Mr Brendan Worrall, the Auditor-General of  
14 Queensland, on my far right; and to my far left  
15 is Mr Thomas Ryan, the Australian Electoral  
16 Officer for Queensland; and on his right is  
17 Mr Steven Jacoby, the Executive Director of Land  
18 and Spatial Information in the Queensland  
19 Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

20 Part IV of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*  
21 *1918* sets out the requirements to be followed in  
22 conducting redistributions.

23 This redistribution is necessary because  
24 more than seven years has elapsed since the last  
25 redistribution was determined.

26 In accordance with section 66 of the  
27 Electoral Act, the Redistribution Committee for  
28 Queensland has prepared a proposal for the

1 redistribution of Queensland into 30 federal  
2 electoral divisions. The proposal, together with  
3 the written reasons for the proposal required by  
4 section 67 of the Electoral Act, was released by  
5 the Redistribution Committee on 29 September of  
6 this year.

7 In accordance with section 68 of the  
8 Electoral Act, interested individuals and  
9 organisations were invited to make written  
10 objections to this proposed redistribution and to  
11 provide written comments on those objections. A  
12 total of 23 objections and six comments on  
13 objections were received by the required time  
14 frames.

15 The augmented Electoral Commission is  
16 required by subsection 72(1) of the Electoral Act  
17 to consider all objections lodged in relation to  
18 the redistribution proposal and all comments on  
19 objections.

20 The inquiry here today provides the  
21 opportunity for members of the public to make  
22 oral submissions concerning those objections.

23 The Electoral Act specifies how the  
24 redistribution process is conducted and which  
25 factors are to be taken into account.

26 Subsection 73(4) of the Electoral Act states  
27 that the primary consideration for the augmented  
28 Electoral Commission is that each electoral

1 division meets certain numerical requirements in  
2 the form of a current enrolment quota and the  
3 projected enrolment quota and acceptable  
4 tolerances around those two quotas.

5 Subject to an electoral division satisfying  
6 those numbers, subsection 73(4) also requires  
7 that we have regard to communities of interest  
8 within electoral divisions - that is, economic,  
9 social and regional interests.

10 We are authorised to have regard to means of  
11 communication and travel within the electoral  
12 divisions and the physical features and area of  
13 the electoral divisions.

14 The boundaries of existing electoral  
15 divisions are also considered, although that is  
16 of lesser importance. Boundaries may change.  
17 Often there have to be compensating adjustments  
18 to make sure that the electoral divisions are  
19 within the numerical tolerances.

20 The inquiry today will be recorded, and  
21 transcripts of the proceedings will be made  
22 available as part of the augmented Electoral  
23 Commission's report and will therefore be on the  
24 Australian Electoral Commission website once the  
25 report has been tabled in parliament.

26 We would ask people making submissions to  
27 come to the lectern in front and please state  
28 their name before they commence their

1 presentation. After the inquiry, we will  
2 deliberate on what we have heard and also the  
3 written comments.

4 May I make the following points: firstly, we  
5 will endeavour to make a public announcement as  
6 soon as practicable. We would ask speakers to be  
7 as concise as possible. The purpose of the  
8 hearing is to listen to your submissions and,  
9 thereafter, for the Commission to consider your  
10 comments. The hearing does not engage in  
11 discussion concerning the merits of any proposal,  
12 nor does it accept questions on the deliberations  
13 of the Redistribution Committee nor of the  
14 augmented Commission.

15 I understand the first speaker who would  
16 like to address the augmented Electoral  
17 Commission is Simone Karandrews, who has provided  
18 an objection, and the objection is objection  
19 number 22.

20 Is Ms Karandrews here? Yes. Would you like  
21 to come forward, please, Ms Karandrews.

22 MS KARANDREWS: May I bring also one of my  
23 respondents to --

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, by all means, yes.

25 MS KARANDREWS: This is Wendy de Graaf.

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: If you wouldn't mind,  
27 Ms Karandrews, would you mind, please, stating  
28 your full name for the transcript, which is going

1 to be recorded.

2 And would you like your name to be recorded  
3 as well, please?

4 If you can each state your names, please.

5 MS KARANDREWS: My name is Simone Karandrews.

6 MS DE GRAAF: And my name is Wendy de Graaf.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Very well.

8 MS KARANDREWS: Thank you to the augmented Electoral  
9 Commission for the invitation to attend today's  
10 meeting.

11 I have prepared a submission on behalf of  
12 many of the local residents in the Karana Downs,  
13 Mount Crosby and Lake Manchester regions.

14 Our region has, obviously in your proposal,  
15 been suggested to move from the current electoral  
16 region of Ryan to Blair.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

18 MS KARANDREWS: This region has previously been in  
19 Blair and has moved back to Ryan in 2003.

20 We are a strong little community and we  
21 particularly feel that we resonate strongly with  
22 the surrounding Moggill and surrounding regions  
23 of Ryan. We have a strong relationship with that  
24 region. We don't feel that we have quite the  
25 same relationship with the Ipswich region.  
26 Obviously the Blair region being such a large  
27 Ipswich, and surrounding region,  
28 based-electorate, we felt that we strongly, as

1 I said, associate with the existing Ryan  
2 electorate.

3 In my submission, I tried to prepare as much  
4 as I could with regard to information available  
5 upon your report. Looking at the electoral  
6 numbers that would be moving, we felt, in my  
7 submission, that the numbers from our region,  
8 being relatively low population, would not  
9 significantly change the quota, and we also do  
10 not have a strong population growth in our  
11 region.

12 MS DE GRAAF: To add to that, Blair has a very big  
13 growth sector coming about in the near future  
14 that has been recorded in statistics of the years  
15 to come. What we fear is that, by moving us to  
16 Blair, we could end up again being moved back or  
17 moved somewhere else again in the future.

18 The residents of the area feel that we have  
19 been a portion of the area that has been  
20 constantly shuffled around backwards and forwards  
21 and, as far as state and federal, and even local  
22 government, we do not get enough support because  
23 it is sort of like, "Well, how long are we going  
24 to be in this area", and therefore there is no  
25 stability.

26 MS KARANDREWS: Further to that, we have put in my  
27 submission to the Electoral Commission about the  
28 community interest criteria. Part of that

1 obviously is the factors I mentioned previously:  
2 that we identify strongly with the remainder of  
3 the Brisbane region of our surrounds.

4 We also are very much demarcated by the  
5 Brisbane River, being our locality boundary  
6 between Brisbane and Ipswich. I very much tried  
7 to emphasise in my submission our community of  
8 interest criteria, which I believe strongly cater  
9 to all of those particular conditions.

10 I think if I just reference that to my  
11 submission, I basically had drawn on the fact  
12 that we will lose our alignment with our local  
13 and state boundaries. We also will be crossing a  
14 natural feature, which is the Brisbane River, by  
15 changing the electorate, and the Electoral Act  
16 does say that it does need to provide strong  
17 boundaries and, where possible, to avoid crossing  
18 the Brisbane River.

19 If I go back to then have a look at the  
20 other surrounding electorates of Brisbane, if  
21 I have a look at the map, the regions of Oxley,  
22 Moreton, Griffith and Brisbane have all used the  
23 Brisbane River as a strong delineator between the  
24 electorates.

25 I also have noted that, previously, there  
26 has been a precedent where South Brisbane and  
27 West End were proposed to split, but there was  
28 actually a precedent where the Brisbane River was



1 used as a reason for showing community of  
2 interest and, for those reasons, should not be  
3 split. I believe that that should also apply to  
4 us and that we should continue the Brisbane River  
5 as the demarcation between those electorates.

6 MS DE GRAAF: In adding to that, we feel that we  
7 would not be needed to be moved if the other  
8 boundaries were not imposing into Ryan. What we  
9 would like to suggest is maybe those boundaries  
10 moving from Brisbane to Ryan could be limited to  
11 keep us within the Ryan area.

12 MS KARANDREWS: The northern component of the Ryan  
13 electorate proposal was to also see a split,  
14 I believe, between the golf club - where the golf  
15 would continue to be within one electorate of  
16 Ryan and the remains of the golf club would have  
17 then move through to Dickson. I just wondered  
18 whether there may be some allowance for review of  
19 the northern reach of the Ryan electorate to  
20 basically compensate for us to be able to keep  
21 within the region in which we exist now.

22 MS DE GRAAF: I would just like to reiterate the same  
23 thing for our community.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

25 MS KARANDREWS: Thank you very much.

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, we've made notes of what you  
27 have said and that will be certainly considered.  
28 As I said, it is all being transcribed and we

1           will be looking at it carefully.

2   MS KARANDREWS:   Thank you very much.

3   MS DE GRAAF:    Thank you very much.

4   THE CHAIRPERSON:   Thank you.  Thank you for your

5           trouble in coming.

6   MS DE GRAAF:    Thank you.

7   THE CHAIRPERSON:   Thank you, indeed.

8           The next person is Ms Wendy de Graaf.

9   MS DE GRAAF:    Oh, that was me.

10  THE CHAIRPERSON:   I'm sorry.  Yes, sorry, I missed

11           that.  Alan Gaskell?

12  MR MCGARRIGLE:   No, it's Alan McGarrigle.

13  THE CHAIRPERSON:   McGarrigle, I'm sorry, it's the

14           handwriting.

15  MR MCGARRIGLE:   I don't have anything else to say.

16  THE CHAIRPERSON:   Yes, Mr McGarrigle, you have the

17           same community of interest, do you?

18  MR MCGARRIGLE:   Yes, I do, and I actually did not

19           propose to make a statement.

20  THE CHAIRPERSON:   No, you don't have to.  It is all -

21           we have --

22  MR MCGARRIGLE:   But as per your meeting conduct

23           comments, I can't - thought I might have a

24           question at some stage.

25  THE CHAIRPERSON:   Look, we are really here to hear

26           what the views are of the residents, but thank

27           you for that.

28           I think the next person is Michelle Lawson.

1           Would you mind coming up, please, Ms Lawson.

2   MS LAWSON:    Good morning.

3   THE CHAIRPERSON:    Good morning, Ms Lawson.  Could you  
4           just state for the record, Ms Lawson, your full  
5           name.

6   MS LAWSON:    My name is Michelle Janette Lawson, for  
7           the record.

8   THE CHAIRPERSON:    Thank you.

9   MS LAWSON:    Good morning.  I would like to state my  
10           reasons for objecting to the proposed move of our  
11           local area from the federal seat of Brisbane into  
12           the federal seat of Ryan.

13   THE CHAIRPERSON:    Yes.

14   MS LAWSON:    My husband and I moved into Canberra  
15           Drive in the Oakleigh community precinct of  
16           Ashgrove nearly 20 years ago.  We love our  
17           community and, over nearly two decades, have very  
18           much enjoyed being involved in anything and  
19           everything local, from the kindergarten to the  
20           wonderful Oakleigh State School to the church  
21           youth group, to Neighbourhood Watch, street  
22           parties and more.

23           We are the proud parents of two children.  
24           Our 14-year-old daughter is one of two known  
25           cases in the world with her ultra rare  
26           disability.  Our 11-year-old son has an autism  
27           spectrum diagnosis.  We are a family whose needs  
28           are many and varied and often exceedingly

1 unusual. Because of that, I have had far more  
2 than the average voter interaction with our local  
3 councillor, state and federal members of  
4 parliament.

5 When I discovered the proposal to move our  
6 pocket of Oakleigh and Dorrington from the  
7 federal seat of Brisbane into the seat of Ryan,  
8 I was appalled. There was a lot of discussion  
9 about this within our community. We have already  
10 been subjected to our electorate being moved at a  
11 local and a state level. The consensus is that  
12 the boundary changes have not benefited our  
13 community and why I decided to lodge a written  
14 objection to this proposed boundary change, as  
15 did quite a number of my fellow community members  
16 and Oakleigh residents.

17 One person who lodged an objection to the  
18 proposed move was Sylvia Richmond. Sylvia is one  
19 of my fellow Oakleigh State School parents. Due  
20 to her work commitments, Sylvia is unable to  
21 appear in person today, but has asked me to read  
22 the following statement on her behalf. I quote:

23 My point with this proposed move is  
24 the same as the problem with us being  
25 moved out of Ashgrove and into the  
26 Ferny Grove electorate at a state  
27 level.  
28 The issues that concern a  
predominantly Ferny Grove person are  
not really similar to those we in  
Oakleigh are concerned with.  
Basing distribution on population does  
not account for our local area and  
what needs to be addressed by those

1           who represent us. The fact that they  
2           keep thinking they can carve up  
3           Oakleigh and Ashgrove in a dozen  
4           different ways for school catchments,  
5           such as the three different high  
6           school catchments for our local area  
7           alone, state representation, federal  
8           representation, and council wards is  
9           ridiculous.

10          I do not understand how any of the  
11          issues that concern us get addressed  
12          by representatives who are located  
13          further away from the city than we  
14          are.

15          I have been an Oakleigh State School mum for  
16          nearly a decade between P&C, the school  
17          fundraising team, the tuck shop, the fair, the  
18          capital works action group and more. There is  
19          little at Oakleigh I have not yet contributed to.  
20          It is a wonderful community and, because of its  
21          popularity, it is an enrolment-managed school.  
22          You have to live within Education Queensland  
23          catchment boundaries for automatic entry to  
24          Oakleigh. Nearly all of that catchment falls  
25          into the federal seat of Brisbane.

26          Because of the army base, from Oakleigh, you  
27          are not actually able to access the seat of Ryan  
28          without first commuting through the seat of  
29          Brisbane.

30          Oakleigh faces Brisbane City to its east.  
31          Most of the population of Ryan is in the western  
32          suburbs, which is in completely the opposite  
33          direction. Most of the needs of someone living  
34          in the western suburbs are very different to the

1 issues relevant to us in Oakleigh. All of our  
2 local facilities - Dorrington Park, the Ashgrove  
3 library, shops, post office, bus stops, train  
4 stations, and I could go on - are in the seat of  
5 Brisbane. I believe those amenities having  
6 disparate representation to many of their daily  
7 users is inefficient and not in our best  
8 interests.

9 Most days I can be found at least once,  
10 along with many of our friends, both furry and  
11 human, at the off-leash dog park in Dorrington  
12 Park. We dog-park mates are a tight-knit bunch.  
13 Our daily meet-ups give lots of opportunities to  
14 hear the views of others on a seemingly  
15 never-ending variety of topics. We are never  
16 lost for conversation.

17 As it stands, we are all in the federal  
18 electorate of Brisbane. If we have an issue, as  
19 has happened previously, we are all going to go  
20 to the one place for representation. Having us  
21 potentially split across electorates would dilute  
22 our contact with elected members and their  
23 understanding of our needs and wants. We have  
24 seen this happen at a local and state level and  
25 do not want it to happen again.

26 The Oakleigh precinct is a small area. The  
27 number of residents in our community does not  
28 significantly impact on either Brisbane or Ryan,

1 but our quality of life is critically important  
2 to us. I do believe that this proposed change  
3 can be easily undone, leaving our community  
4 intact and without affecting the state-wide  
5 solution.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. Thank you for  
8 your assistance, Ms Lawson.

9 Is Mr Trevor Evans here? Would you like to  
10 speak, Mr Evans?

11 MR EVANS: No, I was just here to observe.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very well, yes.

13 MR EVANS: A number of the dot points relate to my  
14 electorate so I just thought I would --

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: Certainly. Thank you. Thank you  
16 for your attendance, anyway.

17 In that case, the next speaker is Mr Mark  
18 Yore. Yes, come forward, Mr Yore. Perhaps you  
19 could just state for the transcript, Mr Yore,  
20 please, your full name.

21 MR YORE: Yes, if you can give me just a moment.

22 Hi, my name is Mark Andrew Yore, and I guess  
23 I am one of those terrible election geeks, as  
24 I am sure some of the names are familiar to you,  
25 who know a lot more than I do.

26 First off, though, I would like to thank the  
27 members of the committee on their attempts to  
28 answer the majority of individual submissions as

1 contained in appendix F of the report. This is a  
2 very, very, very welcome change to the process.  
3 By actually sitting there indexing the individual  
4 issues, identifying who made them and providing a  
5 response, it has made the job a lot easier.

6 There was an issue where the committee felt  
7 the need to twice comment on particular  
8 contributors, noting:

9 The following suggestions were  
10 submitted by individuals who were not  
11 residents of Queensland at the time of  
12 the lodgement.

13 I believe that the comment was gratuitous, the  
14 Act not specifying a resident's qualification,  
15 and there were no other demographic observations  
16 made. I know that it did annoy a number of the  
17 outside contributors.

18 I would like speak now about minor boundary  
19 changes, in particular, Collinsville, which is  
20 part of Whitsunday Regional Council and located  
21 in Capricornia, which is based in Rockhampton.

22 The majority of the electorate of Dawson,  
23 based in Mackay, is closer. You virtually have  
24 to drive through Mackay to get to Collinsville.  
25 It has direct transport links with Bowen and  
26 Mackay, both part of Dawson.

27 As we spoke before about the need for  
28 regional communities to be integrated, this is an  
example of quite a few communities that feel a



1 little bit apart from their local region.

2 Another example is Moreton Island, which is  
3 currently in the federal seat of Bonner, located  
4 in south-east Brisbane, the state seat of  
5 Redcliffe, and the Brisbane City Council ward of  
6 Deagon, none of which share any common area  
7 except Moreton Island.

8 My suggestion was to either move it to  
9 Petrie, so it and Redcliffe are located in the  
10 same geographic area, or Lilley, in conjunction  
11 with the council ward.

12 The new transport links from Redcliffe are  
13 currently underway and will commence next year,  
14 and air transport is principally from Redcliffe  
15 Aerodrome, Archerfield Airport to Brisbane  
16 Airport, none of which are in Bonner. It is a  
17 relatively small population of between 200 and  
18 250 people, but the ability to not have to drive  
19 between federal and state offices a distance of  
20 around 60 kilometre would be helpful.

21 The regional cities: the draft  
22 redistribution stated, in section 89:

23 Following the modelling and analysis  
24 of submissions, the Redistribution  
25 Committee formed the opinion that  
26 attempts to unify regional cities in a  
27 single electoral division could not be  
28 achieved at this time.

27 As a number of submissions actually detail how  
28 this could be achieved, I do not believe that

1 that was a sufficient justification for it. One  
2 of the prime examples of that was the immigration  
3 of the - I am just trying to remember the name of  
4 the suburb now which was transferred from  
5 Leichhardt into Kennedy. It is seven kilometres  
6 from the CBD of Cairns and yet it is in a seat  
7 effectively based in Mount Isa.

8 The unfortunate thing - I will mention this  
9 as an aside - is that Leichhardt is the only seat  
10 in Queensland which shares only one common  
11 border, that with Kennedy. The opportunity to  
12 shift electors between it is, therefore, only  
13 limited to one seat. No other seat in Queensland  
14 has only one electorate to move the population  
15 into.

16 I also believe the redistribution did give  
17 due consideration to the requirements of the  
18 Electoral Act, when looking at section (iv),  
19 where it states:

20 The boundaries of existing electoral  
21 divisions in Queensland, with this  
22 factor being subordinate to the  
consideration (i), (ii) and (iv) ...

23 In a number of cases, it was more important, it  
24 appeared, to maintain existing electorate  
25 boundaries than to fix a number of errors with  
26 communities of interest guidelines and transport  
27 guidelines.

28 In terms of the regional cities, electoral

1 enrolment at the time of the 2016 local  
2 government elections was: Cairns Regional  
3 Council, 99,479; Townsville City Council,  
4 125,147; Mackay Regional Council, 76,756;  
5 Rockhampton Regional Council, 54,340; Gladstone  
6 Regional Council, 40,522; and Fraser Coast  
7 Regional Council, comprising Maryborough and  
8 Hervey Bay, which are both in separate federal  
9 electorates, 73,185.

10 The idea that each of those could provide a  
11 core basis for a federal electorate was  
12 effectively put in the too-hard basket. For  
13 reference, the population of similar south-east  
14 Queensland regional cities are: Ipswich City  
15 Council, 116,169; Toowoomba City Council,  
16 110,214; and Redland City Council, 103,783.

17 Ipswich City Council is split between the  
18 electorates of Wright, Blair and Oxley; Redland  
19 City Council is wholly within Bowman; and  
20 Toowoomba City Council is almost completely  
21 contained within the electorate of Groom.

22 In the majority of these cases, a natural  
23 electorate based on the major population area  
24 within single or multiple local government areas  
25 could be easily drawn; for example, the  
26 electorate of Dawson, by adding Mackay Regional  
27 Council and Whitsunday Regional Council, would  
28 actually meet the criteria.

1 I note again that the AEC maintains it  
2 cannot be achieved at this time. However,  
3 I believe it is important for the AEC to  
4 establish their position on when it can be done,  
5 and if building electorates in Queensland based  
6 on regional communities of interest is a priority  
7 within the Act.

8 As I mentioned, from a mapping point of  
9 view, the big problem in Queensland is that  
10 Leichhardt shares its boundaries with only one  
11 seat, that of Kennedy. I believe that, in the  
12 short term especially, it is important to provide  
13 another access point to the seat of Leichhardt,  
14 because, at the moment, simply transferring  
15 electors along that boundary as the seat of  
16 Leichhardt grows in Cairns and Kennedy shrinks -  
17 which is what the population projections are  
18 telling us - will simply mean that Kennedy will  
19 get closer and closer to the CBD of Cairns, which  
20 is not an optimal solution.

21 One issue with the redistribution lies in  
22 the inability to read the likely direction the  
23 Redistribution Committee will take towards  
24 submissions. My suggestion would be for the AEC  
25 to treat redistributions on an ongoing basis,  
26 calling for public comment as circumstances  
27 change.

28 Certainly this can be done with seat names,

1 to provide a list for future use. Major  
2 developments, such as Caloundra South in Fisher,  
3 which is adding another 50,000 people, should  
4 also be flagged well in advance of the time set  
5 for redistribution.

6 I know it is not the easiest job to prepare  
7 the information for a redistribution and to  
8 balance the competing interest, but at least  
9 having an indication of which way the  
10 Redistribution Committee is thinking over that  
11 seven-year period, or shorter, would be very,  
12 very helpful. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much for your  
14 contribution, Mr Yore.

15 Is there any other person who wished to make  
16 any submissions to the public hearing? If there  
17 is not, and it appears there is no-one else, we  
18 will conclude the hearing.

19 I stress to those who have come here that we  
20 will give the submissions you have made, both  
21 orally and in writing, careful consideration.  
22 They will not be ignored. Whether they can be  
23 met, in whole or in part or not at all, I don't  
24 know at this stage, but I am very grateful, and  
25 the augmented Commission thanks you indeed for  
26 your attendance and your contribution. Thank  
27 you.

28 We will now conclude the hearing and we will

1 continue our deliberations. Thank you for your  
2 attendance.

3 AT 9.32AM, THE HEARING ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY

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