



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Public suggestion 3

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2 pages

SUGGESTION FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY REDISTRIBUTION 2016

(Dr Mark Mulcair)

Introduction:

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the NT federal redistribution. I am an independent person with no affiliation to any political party. I am not from the Northern Territory, but I have had an interest in the redistribution process, and have made submissions to many state and federal redistributions over the years. I hope that Submissions by independent people like myself will be of benefit to the Committee in their deliberations.

General Approach:

While both Northern Territory Divisions are experiencing reasonable growth, Solomon's enrolment will lie just above the permissible range at the projection time, and Lingiari's will lie just under. A small transfer of electors from Solomon to Lingiari will be necessary to ensure both are within the quota at the projection time.

This is not quite as straightforward as it sounds, because there is not enough remaining semi-rural territory in Solomon to bring both Divisions within quota. Inevitably, some part of suburban Darwin or Palmerston will need to be included in a Division that stretches to the South Australian border.

There are two basic approaches: a minimal "conservative" option, or a more radical option.

1) "Conservative" option.

The conservative option simply involves placing Solomon's remaining semi-rural areas (*i.e.* Litchfield Council), plus a small part of either Palmerston or North Darwin, into Lingiari.

This has the advantage of minimal change, with only a few thousand electors transferred, and leaving the vast majority of the Darwin urban area in Solomon. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that it splits a small part of suburban Darwin off from the remainder of the city, and places it in a vast Outback electorate with which it has few links.

2) "Radical" option

A more radical arrangement would see all of Palmerston transferred to Lingiari, with some semi-rural areas and outlying communities such as Tiwi Islands then transferred to Solomon to balance the numbers.

This solution has the advantage of retaining the whole of Palmerston in a single Division. Population trends, geographic factors, and Palmerston's strong independent identity means that there is some logic in permanently separating Palmerston from Darwin proper.

This arrangement would, however, cause much greater disruption to electors, and would significantly alter the character of Solomon. The Committee would probably be reluctant to make such a major change, although given Palmerston’s strong growth, I do think they will need to address this issue in the near future.

My proposals:

While I would probably not object to a more radical proposal, I am proposing only minimal change at this redistribution.

I suggest that the following areas be transferred from Solomon to Lingiari.

a) The remainder of Litchfield Council, including the balance of Howard Springs and Robertson Barracks. North of the Stuart Highway, the new boundary would simply follow the LGA boundary, which forms a fairly clear divide between urban Darwin and the semi-rural areas further east.

b) The Palmerston suburbs of Johnston, Zuccoli, Archer, and Mitchell (basically, the Palmerston-South SA2). These are newer, developing areas that are somewhat different from the more established Palmerston suburbs. While their community of interest lies mostly with the remainder of Palmerston, they would not be out of place with other newly-developing areas such as Howard Springs.

This transfers around 2000 electors, bringing both Lingiari and Solomon within tolerance at the projection time.

Enrolments:

LINGIARI	CURRENT	PROJECTED
Existing	61,872	67,024
+ Litchfield	894	959
+ Palmerston Sth	832	940
Proposed	63,598	68,923
	-1.83%	-2.50%
SOLOMON	CURRENT	PROJECTED
Existing	67,699	74,352
-Litchfield	894	959
- Palmerston Sth	832	940
Proposed	65,973	72,453
	+1.83%	+2.50%