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Submission CS10

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Maranoa: Five Draft Comments

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Five alternative comments opposing Labor's proposal to move the Somerset Region into Maranoa and supporting the S62 approach, each built on a different argument, for David Littleproud to choose between. Comments close at 6 pm AEST on Friday 30 October.

The evidence base

Under Labor's suggestion, about one in six Maranoa electors would live in a South East Queensland council. All five drafts draw on the same facts, so any of them can be lodged without contradicting the party's comments.

What each suggestion does to Maranoa

	Labor (S60)	LNP (S62)
Gains	The whole Somerset Region from Blair: Esk, Kilcoy, Toogoolawah, Lowood and Fernvale (about 20,700 electors)	The rural fringe of the Toowoomba Regional Council: Crows Nest, Rosalie, Jondaryan, Pittsworth, Clifton, Cambooya and Wyreema (about 24,500), plus Boulia Shire
Loses	Clifton and Crows Nest to Groom, needed only because the Somerset transfer pushes Maranoa over	Kingaroy, Nanango and surrounds to Flynn (about 15,500)
Current enrolment	132,396 (+4.04%, on Labor's figures)	126,729 (−0.42%)
Projected enrolment	135,756 (+2.44%)	129,970 (−1.93%)

Elector counts come from SA1-level analysis of both suggestions, with Labor's rebuilt to match its published figures because Labor provided no maps.

Where Maranoa and Somerset sit in the institutions that serve them

	Maranoa and the Toowoomba region	Somerset
Regional development	RDA Darling Downs and South West: ten councils including Maranoa, Toowoomba, Western Downs and Goondiwindi	Not included; listed as a neighbouring area
Mayors	Darling Downs and South West Queensland Council of Mayors: the same ten councils	Council of Mayors (SEQ)
Regional plan	Outside ShapingSEQ, apart from Toowoomba's urban extent	One of the 12 councils in ShapingSEQ 2023

	Maranoa and the Toowoomba region	Somerset
Health	Darling Downs Health, with Toowoomba Hospital as its main referral hospital, and South West Health	West Moreton Health, with Ipswich
Rivers	The Condamine, which rises on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range, in the Murray–Darling Basin	The Brisbane River. Wivenhoe Dam, South East Queensland's largest water storage, sits upstream of Fernvale
Main road	Warrego Highway to Toowoomba	Brisbane Valley Highway to the Warrego Highway near Ipswich

Statewide context. Maranoa is the keystone of the inland approach. Moving Kingaroy and Nanango to Flynn lets Flynn grow inland instead of taking Bundaberg. Across the seven regional divisions from Kennedy to Wide Bay, S62 moves 61,673 electors against 186,461 under Labor. Statewide, it moves 390,227 (10.2%) against 435,834 (11.4%).

Draft 1: Maranoa is a Darling Downs and South West division

Approach: community of interest, shown through the institutions that already treat Maranoa and Somerset as different regions. Best if the aim is a calm, evidence-led comment the Committee can check quickly.

Dear Chair,

As the Member for Maranoa, I write to comment on the suggestions lodged for the redistribution of Queensland, in particular the Australian Labor Party's suggestion (S60) that the Somerset Region be transferred to Maranoa.

Maranoa is a Darling Downs and South West Queensland division, and the institutions that serve our region recognise it as one. Maranoa, Toowoomba, Western Downs, Goondiwindi and six other councils make up both Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West and the Darling Downs and South West Queensland Council of Mayors. Those mayors meet to pursue shared priorities: freight routes for agriculture and energy, water security, rural connectivity and disaster recovery. Toowoomba Hospital is the main referral hospital for the Darling Downs.

The Somerset Region belongs to none of these. It is a member of the Council of Mayors (SEQ), one of the 12 councils covered by the South East Queensland regional plan, ShapingSEQ, and its residents are served by West Moreton Health alongside Ipswich. Labor's own description of Somerset's links to the South Burnett relies on the D'Aguilar Highway and a recreational rail trail. Neither reflects how Somerset residents live, work or reach services.

The alternative in S62 restores Maranoa from the rural communities of the Toowoomba Regional Council, such as Pittsworth, Jondaryan, Cambooya, Clifton and Rosalie. These communities share

Maranoa's grain, cattle and cotton economy, are part of the same regional organisations, and already look to Toowoomba for services.

I ask the Committee to reject the transfer of the Somerset Region to Maranoa and to adopt the approach in S62.

Yours sincerely

David Littleproud MP Member for Maranoa

Draft 2: The Range is the line

Approach: physical features, using the Great Dividing Range and the rivers on either side of it. Best if the aim is a simple, memorable argument that ties directly to a statutory factor.

Dear Chair,

As the Member for Maranoa, I write to comment on the Australian Labor Party's suggestion (S60) that the Somerset Region be transferred to Maranoa.

The Great Dividing Range is the most important physical feature in southern Queensland. West of it, the rivers run inland: through the Condamine, Balonne, Maranoa and Warrego into the Murray–Darling Basin, and further west into the Lake Eyre Basin. Those inland rivers shape the farming, water and flood issues that Maranoa's communities share.

The Somerset Region lies on the other side. It is the upper Brisbane River valley, home to Wivenhoe and Somerset dams, which together form the largest water storage for South East Queensland and protect Brisbane and Ipswich from flooding. Labor's own suggestion concedes the point when it describes the D'Aguilar Highway as carrying traffic from Kilcoy "across the Great Dividing Range" to the South Burnett.

Under Labor's suggestion, Maranoa would run from the Northern Territory border, across the Range, and down the Brisbane Valley to Fernvale, less than 40 kilometres from the Brisbane CBD.

The alternative in S62 brings Maranoa back to the inland side of the Range. It moves Kingaroy and the South Burnett, whose rivers run east to the coast, to Flynn. It adds Darling Downs communities such as Pittsworth, Jondaryan, Cambooya and Clifton, where creeks like Oakey, Hodgson and Kings Creek feed the Condamine. It respects the physical feature that defines this region, and keeps the Brisbane Valley with the South East Queensland communities that depend on it.

I ask the Committee to keep Maranoa west of the Range and to adopt the approach in S62.

Yours sincerely

David Littleproud MP Member for Maranoa

Draft 3: One member cannot serve Birdsville and the Brisbane Valley

Approach: the practical reality of representation, drawing on his experience as the local member. Best if the aim is a personal, first-hand comment that only the sitting member can make.

Dear Chair,

As the Member for Maranoa for ten years, I write to comment on the Australian Labor Party's suggestion (S60) that the Somerset Region be transferred to Maranoa.

Maranoa already stretches from the Darling Downs to Birdsville and the Northern Territory border. What makes it workable is that its communities share a common set of concerns: drought and water, agriculture and freight, rural health, telecommunications and the cost of living in the bush. A member can carry those concerns from Dalby to Birdsville because they are, in the end, the same concerns.

Labor's suggestion would add a very different community. Fernvale and Lowood are less than 40 kilometres from the Brisbane CBD and more than 1,300 kilometres from Birdsville. The Somerset Region is part of South East Queensland's regional plan, ShapingSEQ, and of the SEQ Council of Mayors. Its issues are those of the South East: planning for growth, commuting to Ipswich and Brisbane, and the operation of Wivenhoe and Somerset dams, the region's largest water storage and the main supply for Brisbane and Ipswich. Under Labor's suggestion, about one in six Maranoa electors would live in that council.

This is not a question of area. It is whether one member can be a strong voice for two regions whose needs often pull in different directions, and whether Somerset residents would be well served as a small eastern corner of an outback division.

The alternative in S62 adds communities around Toowoomba that already share Maranoa's interests and services, and keeps Somerset with Ipswich in Blair. I ask the Committee to adopt that approach.

Yours sincerely

David Littleproud MP Member for Maranoa

Draft 4: Maranoa is the keystone of the inland solution

Approach: the statewide numbers, showing that the S62 approach to Maranoa is what spares the coast from Labor's cascade. Best if the aim is to tie Maranoa to the strongest disruption figures in the party's comments.

Dear Chair,

As the Member for Maranoa, I write to comment on the suggestions lodged for the redistribution of Queensland, and in particular on how the choice made for Maranoa shapes the map across regional Queensland.

Maranoa, Capricornia, Flynn and Dawson all need to gain electors, and there are two broad ways to provide them.

Labor's suggestion (S60) pushes the coastal divisions one step south. Bundaberg moves out of Hinkler, Maryborough moves out of Wide Bay, and Wide Bay is pushed into the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Maranoa is then made up with the Somerset Region, carried across the Great Dividing Range from Ipswich.

The alternative in S62 works inland. Maranoa gains the rural communities around Toowoomba, which share its farming economy and services, and passes Kingaroy and Nanango to Flynn. That allows Flynn to

grow into the South Burnett rather than taking Bundaberg, and leaves Hinkler and Wide Bay largely as they are.

The difference in disruption is stark. Across the seven regional divisions from Kennedy to Wide Bay, S62 moves around 62,000 electors. Labor's suggestion moves around 186,000, three times as many. Statewide, S62 moves about 45,000 fewer electors than Labor's suggestion.

The approach to Maranoa is the keystone of that difference. I ask the Committee to restore Maranoa from the Darling Downs, as S62 proposes, and to reject the transfer of the Somerset Region.

Yours sincerely

David Littleproud MP Member for Maranoa

Draft 5: Somerset belongs to South East Queensland

Approach: argue for Somerset's interests as much as Maranoa's, so the comment cannot be read as a member protecting his own patch. Best if the aim is a generous tone that also invites Somerset voices to back it.

Dear Chair,

As the Member for Maranoa, I write to comment on the Australian Labor Party's suggestion (S60) that the Somerset Region be transferred to Maranoa. I would be proud to represent any community the Committee places in Maranoa. But I do not believe this change would serve the people of Somerset well.

The Somerset Region is part of South East Queensland in every way that matters to its residents. Its council is a member of the Council of Mayors (SEQ), and it is one of the 12 councils covered by the State's regional plan for the South East, ShapingSEQ. Its residents are served by West Moreton Health alongside Ipswich, and the Brisbane Valley Highway carries them south through Fernvale to the Warrego Highway near Ipswich. Wivenhoe Dam, on the Brisbane River upstream of Fernvale, is the main water supply for Brisbane and Ipswich.

These are the issues Somerset residents will bring to their federal member: growth and infrastructure in a fast-changing peri-urban region, water security and flood operations for the South East, and access to jobs and services in Ipswich and Brisbane. They deserve a member whose division is centred on the same region, not one whose attention must also stretch to the Northern Territory border.

The alternative in S62 keeps Somerset with Ipswich in Blair, and restores Maranoa from the rural communities around Toowoomba that already share its interests. It is better for Somerset and better for Maranoa, and I ask the Committee to adopt it.

Yours sincerely

David Littleproud MP Member for Maranoa

Watch-outs

Some arguments that look attractive would backfire. None of the drafts relies on them.

- **Area.** S62 makes Maranoa larger by area than Labor's suggestion does, because it adds Boulia Shire: tens of thousands of square kilometres but only about 240 electors. Argue about distinct communities, not square kilometres. Draft 3 says so directly.
- **Electors moved in Maranoa itself.** Because S62 swaps Kingaroy and Nanango for the Toowoomba fringe, it moves more electors in and out of Maranoa (about 40,500) than Labor's suggestion (about 26,500). Use the statewide and regional figures, as Draft 4 does, not Maranoa's own.
- **Growth.** Somerset's projected growth to 2028 (about 3.3%) is similar to that of the communities S62 adds (about 3.8%), so a "Somerset growth" argument does not hold.
- **Crows Nest.** Unlike Pittsworth, Jondaryan, Cambooya and Clifton, the Crows Nest township drains east towards the Brisbane River. Draft 2 names only the western-fall communities for that reason.
- **Toowoomba's western edge.** S62 moves part of the Toowoomba West area (about 3,300 electors) into Maranoa. Labor may say this pushes Maranoa into Toowoomba's suburbs; the answer is that these are rural-residential areas on the western fringe, served from Toowoomba like the rest of the eastern Darling Downs.
- **Labor's counter-arguments.** Labor relies on the D'Aguilar Highway link from Kilcoy to Yarraman and Nanango, and on Somerset's rural character. Two individual suggestions also back the Somerset move (S38, S53). Drafts 1 and 5 answer the first two; ten other suggestions keep Somerset out of Maranoa.
- **Title.** He stepped down as Nationals leader in March 2026 and remains the Member for Maranoa, so each draft is signed in that capacity (Our News).