



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
QUEENSLAND

Submission CS26

Dave Nebauer

29 October 2026

To: Queensland Redistribution Committee

Australian Electoral Commission

Re: Comments on the 2026 Federal Redistribution – Division of Dawson – Submissions S60 and S62

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to provide comments on the proposed changes to the federal electoral division of Dawson, particularly those outlined in the Australian Labor Party's submission (S60) and the Liberal National Party's submission (S62).

As a long-term resident of Bowen with extensive involvement in regional business, industry and community organisations, I have a strong appreciation of the economic, geographic and social connections that exist throughout the Dawson electorate.

I recognise that Dawson requires additional electors to meet the redistribution requirements. However, I believe this can be achieved without substantially altering the established character of the electorate or creating unnecessary consequential changes to neighbouring divisions.

1. Preserving Dawson as a North Queensland coastal electorate

Dawson has a distinctive regional identity, connecting communities along the Queensland coast from Mackay through the Whitsundays, Bowen and the Burdekin to the southern suburbs of Townsville.

These communities have longstanding economic and social connections. Agriculture, particularly sugar production, resources, port operations, tourism, transport and regional infrastructure are important shared interests.

The Bruce Highway provides a major transport and economic link through the electorate. Communities along this corridor face many common challenges, including infrastructure investment, flood resilience, regional service delivery, employment opportunities and the cost of living.

I believe these established connections constitute a strong community of interest that should be preserved wherever possible.

2. The proposed transfer of southern Townsville suburbs

I am particularly concerned by the ALP proposal to transfer the southern Townsville suburbs of Annandale, Oonoonba and Wulguru from Dawson into Herbert.

Herbert already meets the applicable enrolment requirements, both at the current assessment date and on the projected figures. There is therefore no compelling numerical requirement to expand Herbert at Dawson's expense.

The Ross River provides an identifiable existing boundary between the divisions, while the southern Townsville communities retain important connections with the wider Burdekin and coastal corridor.

Removing these communities from Dawson would not simply adjust a boundary. It would substantially alter the northern extent of the electorate and trigger further consequential adjustments elsewhere.

In my view, such a change is difficult to justify when a less disruptive alternative is available.

3. A more appropriate approach to Mackay

I acknowledge the objective of bringing more of urban Mackay into Dawson.

The transfer of Ooralea and Bakers Creek from Capricornia into Dawson would achieve that objective in a logical and relatively straightforward manner.

These areas form part of the broader Mackay urban community and share infrastructure, employment, commercial activity and essential services with areas already within Dawson.

By comparison, extending Dawson further south to incorporate Sarina, Walkerston and the Pioneer Valley would introduce a substantially larger geographic change.

These communities have their own established identities and connections with the agricultural and resource-producing hinterland presently represented within Capricornia.

I see no compelling reason to disturb those arrangements when Dawson's enrolment requirements can be met through a smaller adjustment.

4. The inclusion of Collinsville

I also support the inclusion of Collinsville within Dawson, as proposed in submission S62.

Collinsville has strong historical, economic and transport connections with Bowen. Its principal coastal connection is via the Bowen Developmental Road, and the two communities share important interests in mining, agriculture, transport infrastructure and regional services.

As someone familiar with these communities and their economic activities, I consider the connection between Collinsville and Bowen to be a practical and meaningful community of interest.

The proposed inclusion of Collinsville would recognise those relationships and provide an appropriate contribution towards Dawson's required enrolment.

5. Avoiding unnecessary consequential changes

One of my principal concerns with submission S60 is the extent to which its proposed adjustments extend beyond Dawson itself.

Transferring electors from southern Townsville into Herbert creates a further enrolment shortfall in Dawson. Addressing that shortfall then requires a substantial transfer from Capricornia, which in turn necessitates further changes to neighbouring divisions.

This creates a chain of adjustments affecting communities far removed from the original enrolment issue.

While some boundary changes are unavoidable in any redistribution, I believe the Committee should give considerable weight to solutions that achieve the statutory requirements while minimising unnecessary disruption to established communities of interest.

In this respect, the approach outlined in submission S62 offers a more proportionate and geographically coherent solution.

6. My recommendation

I respectfully request that the Redistribution Committee:

1. Retain the southern Townsville suburbs of Annandale, Oonoonba and Wulguru within Dawson.

2. Incorporate Ooralea and Bakers Creek into Dawson to better reflect the boundaries of urban Mackay.

3. Include Collinsville within Dawson, recognising its established connections with Bowen.

4. Avoid unnecessary transfers of Sarina, Walkerston and the Pioneer Valley from Capricornia.

5. Give preference to a redistribution that satisfies enrolment requirements while maintaining established communities of interest and limiting consequential changes across regional Queensland.

Conclusion

Electoral boundaries should do more than achieve numerical equality. Within the statutory requirements, they should also recognise how regional communities function, where people work, the infrastructure they share and the economic and social relationships that connect them.

In my view, submission S62 provides a more balanced and practical solution for Dawson than the alternative proposed in submission S60.

It addresses the electorate's enrolment requirements, strengthens the connection between established communities and avoids a series of unnecessary adjustments affecting other Queensland divisions.

I respectfully encourage the Committee to adopt this approach.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Nebauer

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