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Submission:

I write to object to aspects of the current proposed redistribution of Queensland electoral boundaries on the basis that the proposal, in key areas, appears to undermine community of interest, weakens confidence in the impartiality of the redistribution process, and produces outcomes that give rise to a reasonable apprehension that partisan advantage has been privileged over fair and effective representation.

This submission is not made on behalf of any political party. It is made in defence of representative democracy in Queensland and in support of electoral boundaries that genuinely reflect the communities they are intended to represent.

Queensland has a particular historical reason to be vigilant about electoral redistribution. The state's past experience of malapportionment and politically distorted electoral boundaries, exposed through the Fitzgerald era, demonstrates the danger of allowing redistribution processes to drift away from independence and public confidence. The modern redistribution framework exists precisely because Queensland has already seen the democratic harm that follows when electoral boundaries cease to reflect communities fairly.

For that reason, the Commission must not only act impartially, but must be seen to act impartially. Public confidence in redistribution depends not merely on technical compliance with enrolment requirements, but on the broader integrity of the process and the credibility of the reasoning used to justify major boundary changes.

A central concern in the current redistribution is the role of Electoral Commissioner John Sosso. His appointment attracted public criticism and concern, including from figures associated with the state's reform history, because of his longstanding ties to prior LNP governments and his historical involvement in changes to Queensland's institutional accountability framework. Whether or not any actual bias exists, the issue is that the appointment gives rise to a serious apprehension problem in a process that demands exceptional independence. Where a redistribution produces outcomes closely aligned with a detailed submission from the governing party, that concern is amplified.

That concern becomes sharper when the proposed boundaries appear to track partisan submissions in ways that materially alter the notional political character of seats while weakening existing communities of interest.

The proposed treatment of **Gaven** is one such example. The LNP submission

reportedly identified Gaven as a seat “facing a declining enrolment base” and argued that it should be reshaped accordingly. The resulting proposed redistribution appears to follow that approach very closely, with the practical effect of transforming a narrow Labor-held seat into a notional LNP seat through boundary movement rather than any demonstrated shift in public sentiment. That is precisely the kind of outcome that demands the closest scrutiny. Redistribution is meant to respond to representation and enrolment needs, not to reconstitute electorates in a way that conveniently delivers partisan gain.

The proposed changes affecting Macalister / Beenleigh / Redlands / northern Gold Coast communities are even more troubling from a community-of-interest perspective.

Beenleigh is a Logan-centred community with social, transport, service, and civic links that are longstanding and identifiable. Communities connected through the Beenleigh corridor share schools, rail access, local services, employment patterns, and community institutions. Under the proposed changes, communities such as Carbrook and Mount Cotton are drawn away from the Logan/Beenleigh sphere and linked instead into the Redlands. At the same time, Yatala, Ormeau and Ormeau Hills are drawn into a Beenleigh-based electorate despite their stronger orientation toward the northern Gold Coast and Coomera corridor.

This breaks apart existing communities and combine areas with weaker shared identity, weaker common service patterns, and weaker common representation needs. It risks producing an electorate in which parts of Logan are diluted by Gold Coast-oriented suburbs, while Gold Coast-oriented suburbs are represented by an MP whose electorate is centred elsewhere. That is poor representation for both groups. Labor voters are not the only people disadvantaged by such an arrangement; LNP voters in the transplanted suburbs are also at risk of weaker and less coherent representation. The losers are local communities, regardless of party preference.

This matters because “community of interest” should not be treated as a decorative principle secondary to arithmetic. It goes to the heart of whether an electorate is real, governable, and representative. Where an electorate is stitched together primarily to achieve quota while disregarding the lived civic, geographic, and service relationships of residents, the results fail democracy.

I therefore submit that the Commission should reconsider any proposed boundaries that:

1. divide established communities with shared transport, schooling, health, employment, and civic links;
2. join communities that have weak practical connection merely because they satisfy numerical requirements;
3. too closely reproduce the partisan preferences of the governing party’s submission without a clearly superior non-partisan justification; and
4. create substantial notional political shifts that are better explained by line-drawing than by any coherent representation principle.

At minimum, the Commission should provide fuller and more transparent reasons for any adopted changes that closely mirror party-political submissions, especially where those changes materially alter the notional margin of an electorate. A conclusory statement about enrolment sustainability is not enough where the consequence is the fragmentation of real communities and a major shift in electoral advantage.

In my view, the proposed changes affecting Gaven and the Beenleigh/Macalister corridor should be revisited with primary regard to:

- preserving coherent local communities;
- keeping suburbs with clear Gold Coast orientation linked to Gold Coast-centred electorates;
- keeping Logan/Beenleigh-centred communities linked to electorates focused on Logan;
- avoiding unnecessary cross-regional combinations that weaken representation; and
- restoring public confidence that the redistribution is being conducted independently of partisan advantage.

Queensland cannot afford even the appearance of a return to electorates shaped in a way that privileges political outcomes over genuine representation. The historical lessons here are too serious. Redistribution must be undertaken in a manner that is not only lawful, but demonstrably fair, restrained, and grounded in the real communities of the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Commission reject or substantially amend the proposed boundaries in the affected electorates and publish detailed reasons showing how community of interest, public confidence, and institutional impartiality have been properly protected.