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Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Burnett; Callide

Submission:

**Objection to the Proposed Redistribution of the Electoral District of
Burnett (Baffle Creek to Callide) from Baffle Creek Boat Club**

Submission Attachments

Burnett_Redistribution_Submission.docx

Objection to the Proposed Redistribution of the Electoral District of Burnett

Submission to the Queensland Redistribution Commission

1. Introduction

This submission objects to the proposed transfer of Agnes Water, Baffle Creek, Lowmead, and Miriam Vale from the electoral district of Burnett into the electoral district of Callide, as set out in the Queensland Redistribution Commission's Proposed Redistribution of the State's Electoral Districts (March 2026).

The proposed change would sever these townships and their surrounding communities from the electorate with which they share a strong and well-established community of interest. This submission, from executive of the Baffle Creek Boat Club, argues that Baffle Creek should remain within the Burnett electorate, and sets out the grounds for that position by reference to the matters the Commission is required to consider under section 46 of the Electoral Act 1992.

2. Electoral District to Which This Submission Relates

This submission relates to the proposed boundaries of:

- the electoral district of Burnett; and
- the electoral district of Callide.

Specifically, this submission proposes that Agnes Water, Baffle Creek, Lowmead, and Miriam Vale should remain within the Burnett electorate rather than being moved into Callide.

3. Community of Interest — Section 46(1)(a)

The Electoral Act requires the Commission to have regard to economic, social, regional or other community of interest factors. Baffle Creek's community of interest lies firmly within Burnett, not Callide.

3.1 Commercial and Economic Connections

Baffle Creek residents conduct their commercial and business activity primarily along the coastal corridor — most significantly with Bundaberg and Gladstone. These are coastal centres with which Baffle Creek has established and natural economic ties through retail, health, professional services, tourism and trade supply chains. These centres sit within or adjacent to the Burnett electorate and the coastal Queensland economy.

The proposed Callide electorate, by contrast, is an inland electorate. Baffle Creek has no meaningful economic connection to the inland communities of that electorate.

There are no shared supply chains, no shared commercial centres, and no established patterns of business or trade linking Baffle Creek to the Callide hinterland. Moving Baffle Creek into Callide would place it in an electorate with which it shares no economic identity.

3.2 Effective Representation Requires Coastal Experience and Networks

Agnes Water and Baffle Creek are coastal communities with coastal regulatory challenges. Local organisations such as the Baffle Creek Boat Club must navigate a complex regulatory environment involving bodies including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. These are agencies whose jurisdiction is inherently coastal — they have little or no relevance to the inland communities that make up the bulk of the proposed Callide electorate.

The current Member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, has demonstrated the value of having a coastal member by actively engaging with the GBRMPA and other relevant State Government Departments on behalf of the Baffle Creek Boat Club to resolve regulatory issues affecting its operation. That kind of advocacy requires familiarity with coastal regulatory frameworks, established relationships with the relevant agencies, and an understanding of the unique environment in which coastal community organisations operate.

A member whose electorate is predominantly inland would be unlikely to have developed those networks or that experience. Transferring Baffle Creek to Callide would not merely change which member represents this community — it would replace a member with demonstrated coastal regulatory capability with one who has no established reason to have it. For community organisations like the Baffle Creek Boat Club, that is a practical and concrete disadvantage, not merely a symbolic one.

3.3 Growth, Prosperity and Future Direction

Agnes Water and Baffle Creek are growing communities. The area has experienced increasing residential development, investment in tourism infrastructure and a rising population. Its trajectory is one of coastal growth, closely aligned with the patterns of development seen along the broader coastal corridor from Bundaberg northward.

Remaining within Burnett — an electorate shaped by the coastal and agricultural communities of this region — will allow the region's growth and development aspirations to be properly represented and advocated for. Absorption into Callide, a larger inland electorate with very different priorities and challenges, would dilute the community's voice and potentially stagnate its development prospects at a critical point in its growth.

4. Ways of Communication and Travel — Section 46(1)(b)

The Electoral Act requires consideration of ways of communication and travel within electoral districts. An elected member must be able to practically and reasonably serve their entire electorate.

The current Member for Burnett regularly travels to Agnes Water, Baffle Creek, Miriam Vale and surrounding communities. This travel, while not trivial, is entirely practicable and is a well-established part of the current member's representative duties. Importantly, it involves a shorter total travel distance than was historically

required of the Member for Callide to traverse that electorate's extensive inland territory.

Baffle Creek is connected to the remainder of Burnett by the coastal road network — a natural corridor of travel and communication. Transfer to Callide, however, would place Baffle Creek at the coastal extremity of an inland-focused electorate with no natural road or transport connection between Baffle Creek and the bulk of that electorate's population centres. This would impair, not improve, representative access for the region's residents.

5. Physical Features and Geographic Coherence — Section 46(1)(c)

Baffle Creek is a coastal community. The Burnett electorate is a coastal electorate, defined in part by the coastline and the communities that face it. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park lies within this electorate and has specific environmental and economic needs that are unique and very different from the Callide electorate.

Callide is fundamentally an inland electorate. Its towns, industries and geography are oriented inland, away from the coast. Attaching Baffle Creek to Callide would create a geographic anomaly — a coastal community awkwardly appended to an inland seat with which it shares no physical character or geographic logic. This is precisely the kind of boundary arrangement that the physical features criterion is designed to avoid.

6. Existing Boundaries — Section 46(1)(d)

Baffle Creek has been part of the Burnett electorate for many years. Existing boundaries represent established community relationships, constituent-member connections and institutional familiarity that should not be disturbed without a compelling reason. No compelling reason has been identified that would justify removing Baffle Creek from Burnett.

The Commission is encouraged to give appropriate weight to continuity of representation, particularly for growing communities like Baffle Creek where stability in electoral arrangements supports long-term planning and advocacy.

7. Demographic Trends — Section 46(1)(e)

The Agnes Water and Baffle Creek communities are experiencing positive demographic growth. Their population is increasing and investment is occurring. This growth is consistent with the broader demographic trajectory of coastal Queensland communities and aligns naturally with the demographic character of Burnett.

Placing a growing coastal community within a larger inland electorate of different character risks suppressing its political relevance at the very time its demographic weight is increasing. Retention within Burnett would allow the region's growing population to contribute meaningfully to an electorate with which it is aligned, rather than being absorbed as an outlier in an electorate dominated by concerns and communities very different from its own.

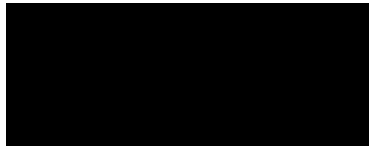
8. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, this submission respectfully requests that the Queensland Redistribution Commission retain Agnes Water, Baffle Creek, Lowmead, and Miriam Vale within the electoral district of Burnett.

The proposed transfer to Callide is inconsistent with the community of interest, travel and communication, physical geography, existing boundary arrangements and demographic trajectory of Baffle Creek. On every relevant consideration under section 46 of the Electoral Act, Baffle Creek belongs in Burnett.

The Commission is thanked for the opportunity to make this submission.

Sincerely



Sunirmalya Symons
Secretary, Baffle Creek Boat Club



5th April 2026