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Submission Topic: Electorate Names
Electoral District: Cleveland (formerly Oodgeroo); Coolum (formerly Ninderry); Indooroopilly (formerly Maiwar); Nambour (formerly Nicklin)

Submission:

There is a fundamental flaw in the rationale for the naming of electorates in the current proposal. The use of localised geographic names to designate larger areas called electorates may actually be more confusing than less; and does not mitigate the need for good community civics education, particularly at the time of elections. Furthermore, this inadequate rationale for electorate name changes masks passive racist bias particularly in relation to the proposed name changes of Maiwar to Indooroopilly, Ninderry to Coolum, and Oodgeroo to Cleveland.

Submission Attachments

Insidious Racism Exposed in Nominal Practice.pdf

MYHETTY

Insidious Racism Exposed in Nominal Practice

On Proposal for the Redistribution of the [Qld] State's Electoral Districts--March 2026



ANITA MONRO

MAR 11, 2026

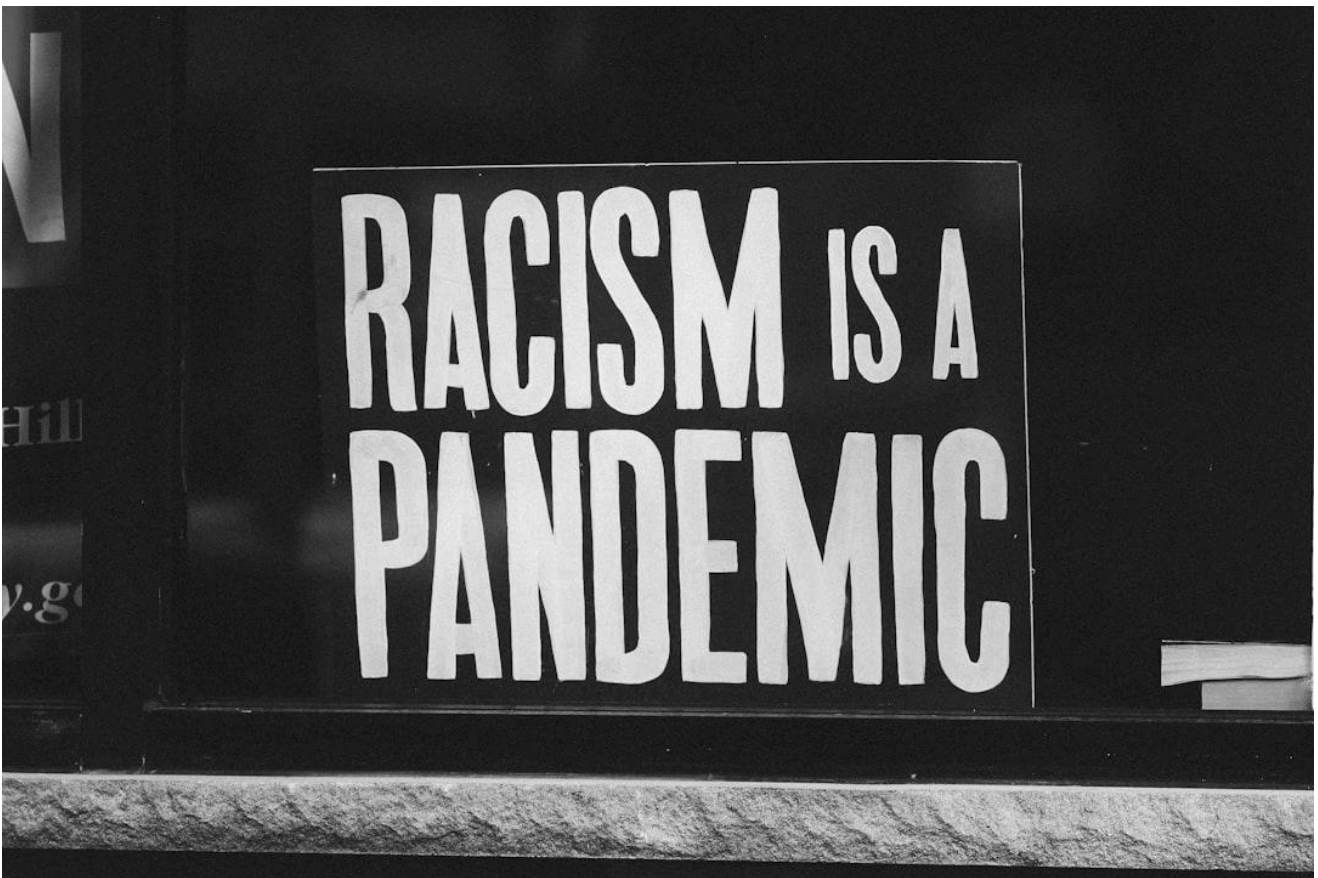
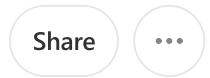


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The Queensland [Qld] Redistribution Commission [QRC] has released its proposed redistribution of the state's electoral districts [the Proposal]. Population-wise, there are good reasons for a redistribution given the increase of residents in certain growth corridors in the south-east and ongoing decline in rural areas. Others will be able to comment on the equity of the redistribution in terms of populations, political allegiances and state geography. What interests me is the proposed changing of many electorate names, the insidious racism of at least some of those proposed changes and the irrational rationale given for making them. The document proposes the renaming of 19 electorates:

- Bancroft as Deception Bay
- Bonney as Labrador
- Bundamba as Redbank
- Chatsworth as Carindale
- Coomera as Pimpama
- Cooper as Ashgrove
- Jordan as Greenbank
- Macalister as Beenleigh
- **Maiwar as Indooroopilly**
- McConnel as Brisbane Central
- Miller as Annerley
- *Nicklin as Nambour*
- **Ninderry as Coolum**
- **Oodgeroo as Cleveland**
- Scenic Rim as Beaudesert
- Theodore as Oxenford
- Toohey as Eight Mile Plains
- Traeger as Flinders
- Waterford as Marsden (p. 8)

Keep your eyes on the three changes which I have highlighted in particular! However, I'm using the one in italics to show the ridiculous nature of the rationale. It's the electorate in which I live and it gets special mention in the document because it purportedly was the first to depart from historic geographic naming practices.

A Self-Serving Example

According to the Proposal, following separation from New South Wales in 1859 until 1986, Qld electorate names were "geographical places ... many of which ... had earlier been named after 'distinguished persons from the State's past.'" In 1986, that changed when the QRC "named one newly created electorate as Nicklin—after former Queensland Premier Sir Francis Nicklin (1895-1978)," who had served as Premier from

1957 to 1968 (p. 7). Nicklin was leader of the Country-National Party which held government in coalition with the Liberal Party.

Now this is a particularly interesting example to be highlighted by the QRC for four reasons which make it quite self-serving.

Firstly, this example can be understood as an attempt to assuage any criticisms of political bias in the process of re-naming. Qld is currently governed by the Liberal National Party, an heir to Francis Nicklin's coalition. If it is possible to give up the name of Nicklin, in the current political environment, surely no objections can be raised against other naming sacrifices! The example defers claims of political interference in a supposedly independent commission.

Secondly, Francis Nicklin is strongly linked to the biased arrangement of Qld electorates that sustained the power of the Qld National Party over decades:

To safeguard the coalition's position, the government legislated in 1958 for a new system of electoral zones which favoured the conservatives. In return for additional seats in the Brisbane metropolitan area, the Liberals agreed to retain the principle of zonal weighting in favour of rural regions. Nicklin's direct influence on these negotiations cannot be demonstrated, but the arrangements advanced his interests considerably (Australian Dictionary of Biography)

Giving up the name of Nicklin attempts to distance the QRC even further from claims of political bias.

Thirdly, the electorate of Nicklin was named thus because Nicklin was associated with the area covered by the electorate. He owned a pineapple farm in Palmwoods, an area now within the electorate named Nicklin but proposed to be removed from the electorate to be named Nambour. Thus, the name Nicklin might be regarded as no longer relevant to the proposed electorate of Nambour.

Fourthly, the re-naming of Nicklin to Nambour (with major geographic changes) allows for the argument that this change is actually a re-instatement of an indigenous name. In an effort to defend itself against criticism for the removal of indigenous names, the QRC claims that:

It is also noteworthy that the names of 26 of the proposed 93 electorates are of Indigenous language origin—namely:

- Buderim
- Bulimba
- Bundaberg
- Caboolture
- Caloundra
- Capalaba
- Coolum
- Currumbin
- Gympie
- Inala
- Indooroopilly
- Kawana
- Kurwongbah
- Maroochydore
- Moggill
- Mudgeeraba
- Mundingburra
- Murrumba
- Nambour
- Nanango
- Noosa
- Nudgee
- Pimpama
- Toowoomba North
- Toowoomba South
- Warrego (p. 9)

The problem with this claim is that many of these names have been corrupted in some way by colonialist hearings/readings. They were, according to the QRC's own assessment, used for electorates for geographic reasons; and not for their indigenous

connections. Their use stands in strong contrast to the use of the names Maiwar, Ninderry and Oodgeroo which I'll explore below.

The name "Nambour" is used by a town in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast, within the bounds of the Sunshine Coast Council. According to the [Sunshine Coast Council Heritage website](#), Nambour was previously named "Petrie's Creek" (and that's another interesting Qld colonial name); and then renamed Nambour after the cattle station that occupied the area in the late 19th century. It is probable that the cattle station was named using a variation on an indigenous word, possibly referring to the area generally, but particularly referring to a plant that was prolific there: a red-flowering tea-tree (*callistemon viminalis*) known by the Kubbi Kubbi (Kabi Kabi or Gubbi Gubbi) people as *naamba*.

I realise now that even in the 1970s, my paternal grandmother, Melba Victoria May Wheeldon Monro whose vocation was "Methodist minister's wife" knew that "Nambour" was a corruption of "Naamba." She and her husband, Rev. Samuel George Monro, had been appointed to the Nambour Circuit in the 1950s when that area was one of the Qld Methodist Conference's most prominent locations. Melba always insisted that "Nambour" be pronounced "Naamba," although as a child, I never knew why.

As well as being a corrupted version of an originally indigenous word, Nambour refers to a far more localised geographic area in its colonial corruption.

An Irrational Rationale

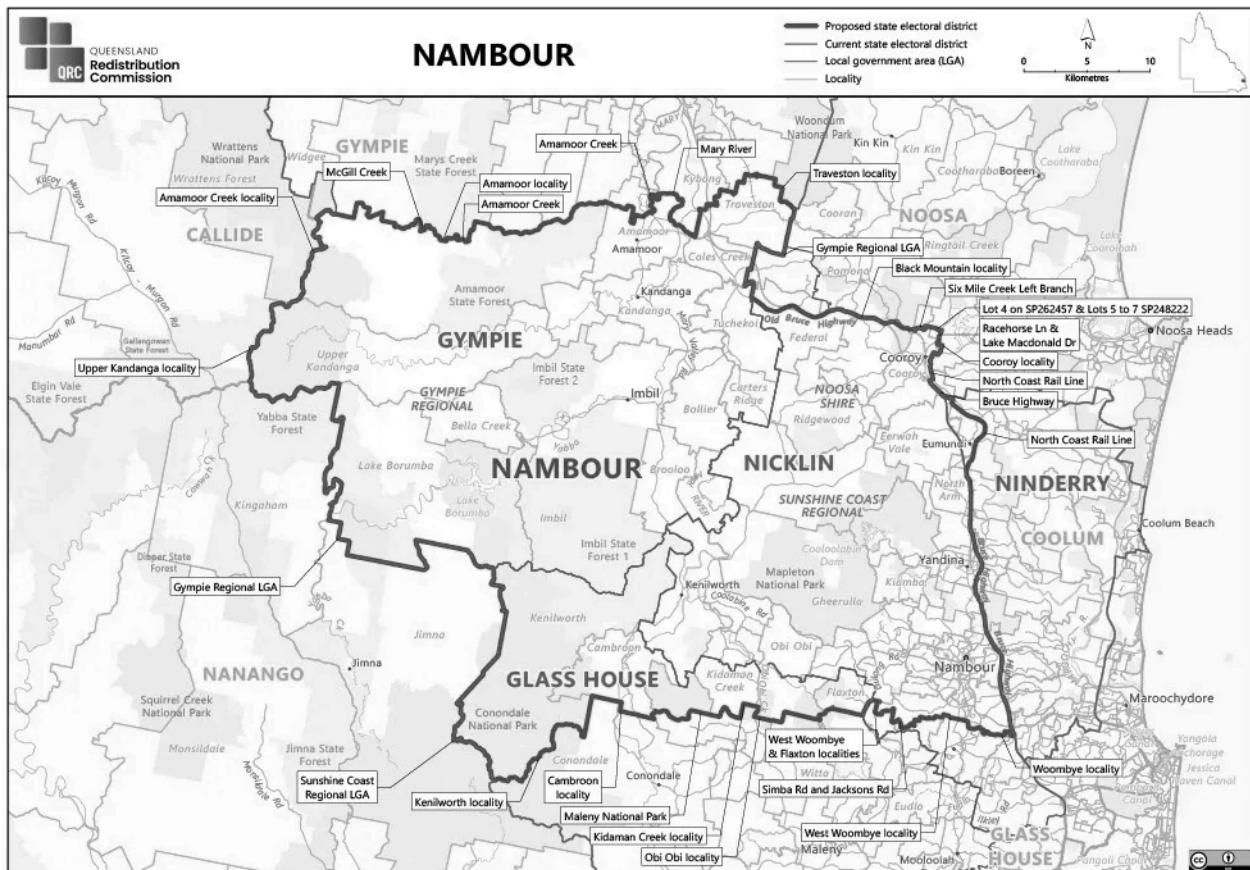
According to the QRC, the "essential requirement" for the naming of electorates is "voter recognition:"

We are of the view that voter recognition of an electorate's location is essential. Electorate names which do not identify or suggest the location of an electorate are apt to cause unnecessary confusion. That is also the case if an electorate were named after a geographical place but the name lacked voter recognition or is no longer suitable (for example, because of boundary changes or to differentiate it from a local government area).

After due consideration, we propose to (a) resume the longstanding practice of naming electorates after geographical places, and (b) rename electorates which

were named after persons or have geographical place names that lack voter recognition or are no longer suitable. (p. 7).

Let's continue to review the example of Nicklin/Nambour in the light of this rationale.



The town of Nambour used to be the main centre in the region of the Sunshine Coast. It is no longer; and has not been for some time. The Sunshine Coast Council area centres on Maroochy and includes the hinterland highland, although "the Coast" is actually spread out from Caloundra to Noosa. The Coast is largely the electorate of Ninderry, to which I'll return later. Nambour is quite separated now from the Coast by the Bruce Highway. It is more part of the "Sunshine Coast hinterland." Even in the electorate of Nicklin, Nambour is just a population centre in the south-east corner. Having lost a major hospital and its commercial centre to the Coast, Nambour is a vestige of its glory days in the 20th century. Even living "up the hill" in Mapleton, I do not regard Nambour as the major centre to which I relate. Rather like global multilateralism, people in our village operate in complex relationships with multiple centres. To shop for groceries, sometimes we go to Nambour and sometimes to Maleny. To eat out, sometimes we go to Kenilworth, but mostly to Montville and

Maleny. Specialist medical appointments direct us to Buderim, Maroochydore or Brisbane. All this is by way of saying that identifying the electorate that I live in as "Nambour" does not help me to orient myself within it. There is no reason that I would assume that "Nambour" pertains to me.

When the additional geographic areas added to the proposed electorate of Nambour are taken into account, that is even more the case. Amamoor, Imbil and Kandanga have historically related more to Gympie and are now being ripped out of the electorate of Gympie to become part of Nambour. The use of town and suburb names to identify electorates may indeed be argued as complicating voter recognition, not clarifying it.

I currently know that I live in Nicklin, a complex electorate which has certain shared interests as part of the Sunshine Coast hinterland. That name identifies the electorate, not a town, or a past regional centre to which I might relate occasionally. I know that an electorate's boundaries change over time; but essentially focus on a region understood to have shared concerns. I expect that boundaries change to enable equity across the electorate while attempting to maintain connections with regional shared interests. I have no doubt that it is a complex process to consider the equity of electoral distribution. However, the geographic naming of electorates with names already assigned to different entities such as towns or suburbs is not arguable on the basis of reducing confusion. Such a practice will never substitute for community civics education, particularly around the time of elections. Rather, it may be argued that all electorates should have names that cannot be confused with localised geographic ones. So, it could be that, with boundary changes, I might learn that I live in a complex electorate with shared interests around being part of the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast-Gympie region that has been named, say Naamba from the indigenous word for a red-flowering tea-tree (*callistemon viminalis*) used by the Gubbi Gubbi (also Kubbi Kubbi or Kabi Kabi) people on whose land the electorate largely stands.





Blatant Racism

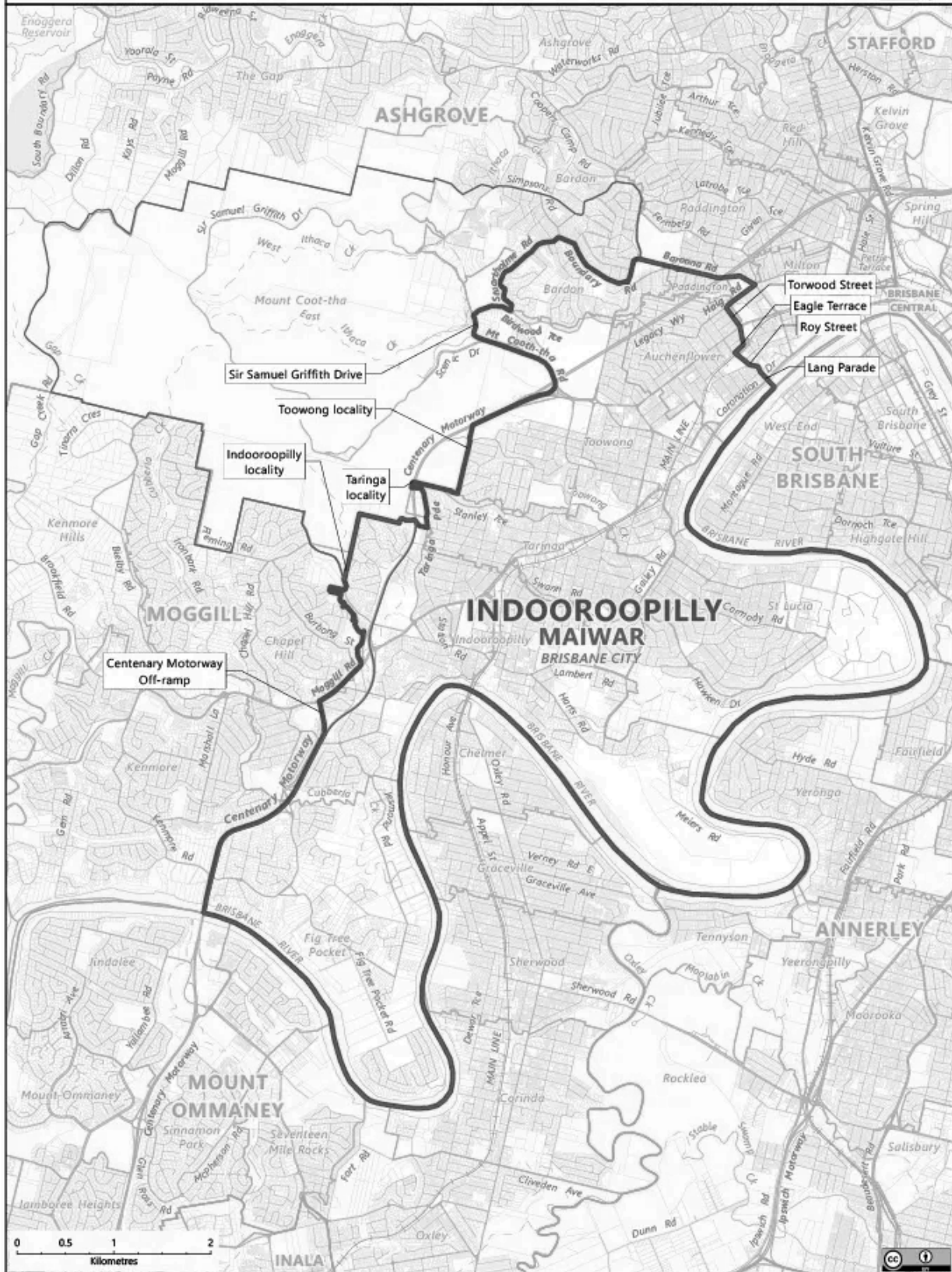
Finally, to attend to the three specific name changes identified above: Maiwar to Indooroopilly; Ninderry to Coolum; and Oodgeroo to Cleveland. All three electorate names emerged with the 2017 electoral redistribution. At that time, the Qld government was formed by the Australian Labor Party. Political interests are always in the background; but one might hope that at least some of those interests at the time

were concerned about the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledges into the process. The Final Determination on the redistribution (effective 29 October 2017) affirms the reasons behind retaining the proposals of Maiwar, Ninderry and Oodgeroo.

Maiwar

INDOOROOPILLY

-  Proposed state electoral district
-  Current state electoral district
-  Local government area (LGA)
-  Locality







Maiwar is located in Brisbane's inner west. It covers a range of suburbs including Indooroopilly, Fig Tree Pocket, Taringa, Toowong, Auchenflower, Paddington and St Lucia where the main campus of The University of Queensland is located. The electorate has very high educational attainment. It is currently held by Michael Berkman for the Australian Greens. The 2017 Final Determination states:

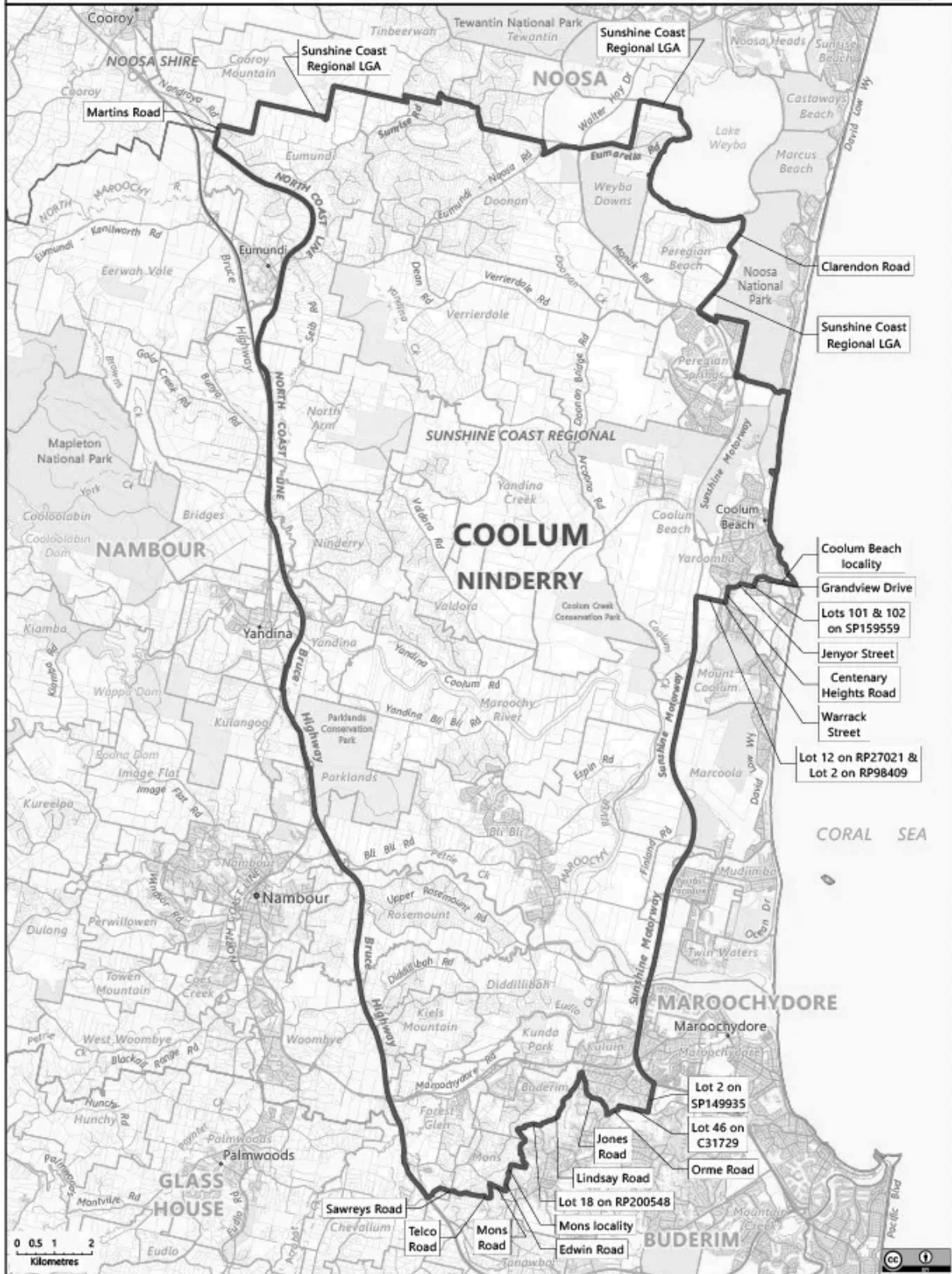
The name Maiwar (pronounced: May-wah), is a word used by some Aboriginal people to refer to the Brisbane River. The name was chosen due the historical significance of the river to indigenous Australians and it's [sic] prominence as the southern boundary of this electorate.

The southern boundary has not moved in the proposed changes. The name "Indooroopilly" while almost certainly derived from indigenous words from the Yugara/Jagera-Turrbal language groups (nyindur, meaning leeches and, pilli, meaning gully) is a corrupted version and now refers to a particular localised geographic suburb. Given the irrational rationale of using localised geographic names for electorates, there is no reason for the proposed name change of Maiwar to Indooroopilly except prejudice against the original reason for the use of the name.

Ninderry

COOLUM

-  Proposed state electoral district
-  Current state electoral district
-  Local government area (LGA)
-  Locality



- Clarendon Road
- Sunshine Coast Regional LGA
- Coolum Beach locality
- Grandview Drive
- Lots 101 & 102 on SP159559
- Jenyor Street
- Centenary Heights Road
- Warrack Street
- Lot 12 on RP27021 & Lot 2 on RP98409

- Lot 2 on SP149935
- Lot 46 on C31729
- Orme Road

- Jones Road
- Lindsay Road
- Lot 18 on RP200548
- Mons locality
- Edwin Road

0 0.5 1 2
Kilometres



The electorate of Ninderry is also in the Sunshine Coast region and on the land of the Gubbi Gubbi. It includes the districts of Mons, Forest Glen, Kunda Park, Diddilibah, Coolum Beach, Peregian Springs, Doonan, Maroochy River, Yandina Creek, Eumundi, North Arm and Ninderry. It is difficult to understand what may be going on with this proposed name change. If the available public accounts are correct, Ninderry is a significant warrior in the stories of the Gubbi Gubbi as is Coolum. Maroochy is a young woman caught up in a dispute between these two warriors with Ninderry being understood as the injuring party and Coolum as the injured one. Effectively, Maroochy is a victim-survivor of domestic abuse. Coolum and Maroochy are by far the more prominent names in the area. However, Maroochydore (the most prominent related name) is located outside the electorate. The justification given for the change of name from Ninderry to Coolum is that Coolum is a more prominent geographic identifier in the region.





The 2017 Final Determination justifies the naming thus:

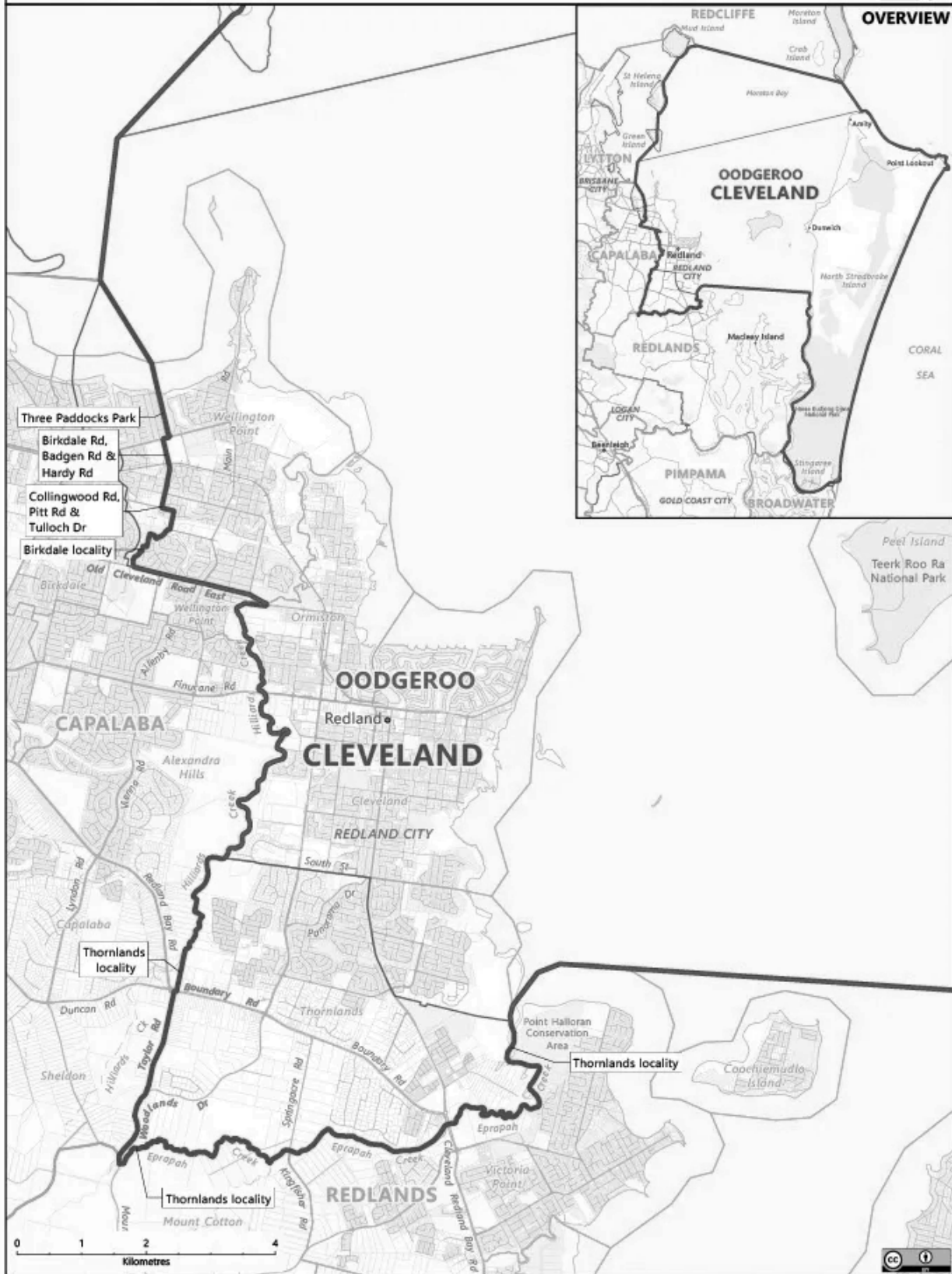
The district is named after Mount Ninderry, a prominent 304-metre mountain in this electorate. Ninderry is said to be an Aboriginal expression denoting scrub leeches, but is also the name of a legendary Aboriginal warrior who is said to have been turned into the mountain.

Given the irrational rationale of using recognisable localised geographic names for electorates, the problematic story of Ninderry, and the unsuitability of Maroochy given further factors for confusion, it would seem that further consultation with local indigenous people might have yielded a better alternative. Again, one wonders whether it was only the original justification of the 2017 Final Determination that prompted the name change rather than any other factor.

Oodgeroo

CLEVELAND

-  Proposed state electoral district
-  Current state electoral district
-  Local government area (LGA)
-  Locality



Oodgeroo is named after one of Australia's most celebrated poets: Oodgeroo Noonuccal. It includes the suburbs of Thornlands, Cleveland, Ormiston and Wellington Point, and North Stradbroke Island. The 2017 Final Determination explained the naming thus:

The Commission received a number of objections to the decision to rename the electorate of Cleveland in honour of Oodgeroo Noonuccal. It also received many comments supportive of the change. North Stradbroke Island (Minjerrabah) which is entirely contained within the electorate was in many ways, Oodgeroo's spiritual home. Her contributions as an educator, poet and activist make her worthy of recognition. The commissioners have therefore retained the name Oodgeroo for this electorate.

In the current Proposal, Minjerrabah is still wholly contained within the electorate. Given the irrational rationale of using localised geographic names for electorates, there is no reason for the proposed name change of Oodgeroo to Cleveland except prejudice against the original reason for the use of the name. Such prejudice is even more blatant since the celebrity of the name cannot be disputed. Most Australian schoolchildren will encounter Oodgeroo's work in the course of their schooling.

Conclusion and Appeal

The proposed loss of the names of Maiwar, Ninderry and Oodgeroo is a reflection of passive, racist bias. The rationale for the use of localised geographic names for broader electorates is a furphy. Particularly, in relation to the electorates of Maiwar and Oodgeroo, the name changes are unwarranted.

Objections and comments can be made to the QRC:

- Online: ecq.qld.gov.au/QRCconsultation
- Email: QRCsubmissions@ecq.qld.gov.au
- Post: Queensland Redistribution Commission, GPO Box 1393, Brisbane, QLD, 4001 (Proposal p. 117)

[Submission guidelines](#)



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