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Electoral District: Hill

Submission:

See below

Submission Attachments

Email - Lawrence Booth - Objection to Queensland State Government's Proposed Electoral Redistribution.pdf

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To: [QRC Submissions](#)
Subject: Objection to Queensland State Government's Proposed Electoral Redistribution
Date: Saturday, 28 March 2026 11:57:44 AM
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To Whom it May Concern

I am writing to express my strong objections to the Queensland State Government's Proposed Electoral Redistribution.

As a resident of the Cairns region, I strongly support the position of Cairns Regional Council on the matter.

In particular, I support the Council's view that the proposed Redistribution will provide more voting power to the southeast of the State. The proposed abolition of the seat of Hill and realignment of other electorates will have the effect of lowering the number of regional representatives in State Parliament.

The Council's report makes the point that "Far North Queensland already faces challenges in ensuring the priorities of the region are heard within a Parliament that is increasingly dominated by southeast Queensland representation. The proposed redistribution risks worsening this imbalance."

I would go further to say that the current representational imbalance not only causes challenges for the priorities of the region being heard, but, more importantly in the here and now those priorities are not being sufficiently funded to the social and economic detriment of those regional communities.

I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to live and work in local government in the Cape York region of the State over an extended period of time.

That experience taught me the importance of story-telling through numbers to drive change, specifically using numbers published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). I will share below a couple of relevant stories which serve to emphasise the impacts of the **current** electoral disparities - literally on the lives of Queenslanders - which potentially will be **worsened by the proposed redistribution**.

The first story relates to set of numbers that were extracted from the ABS website using the 2021 National Census, the last Census to be conducted in Australia. ABS uses data from the Census to develop a measurement tool called the "Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas" (SEIFA). The indexes summarise a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area and ranks areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic disadvantage.

In 2023, the ABS published the following list of the **10 most disadvantaged LGAs** in Australia. It shows that **6 of Australia's most disadvantaged LGAs are in remote and very remote Queensland** and will be further disadvantaged by the proposed electoral redistribution.

Australia's Top Ten Most Disadvantaged Communities in 2023

Rank	LGA	Population	State/ Territory
1.	Woorabinda	1,019	Qld
2.	Cherbourg	1,194	Qld
3.	Belyuen	149	NT
4.	West Daly	2,973	Qld
5.	Yarrabah	2,505	Qld
6.	Kowanyama	1,079	Qld
7.	Wujal Wujal	276	Qld
8.	East Arnhem	8,778	NT
9.	Doomadgee	1,387	Qld
10.	Central Desert	3,591	NT

Socio-economic disadvantage is defined by a lack of access to material and social resources and a reduced ability to participate in society. Key indicators of socio-economic disadvantage are outlined below, with the information sourced from the ABS and the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare:

Economic & Financial Indicators

Financial disadvantage is primarily characterised by restricted access to economic resources.

- **Low Income:** High proportion of households with low levels of annualised income.
- **High Unemployment:** High rates of joblessness or families with children where no parent is employed.
- **Housing Stress:** High prevalence of low rental numbers or overcrowding, where dwellings require one or more extra bedrooms.
- **Asset Deficiency:** Limited home ownership and a lack of motor vehicles per household.

Education & Occupation Characteristics

Lower socio-economic status is strongly linked to reduced educational attainment and occupational standing.

- **Low Educational Attainment:** Many residents with no qualifications or whose highest level of schooling is Year 11 or lower.
- **Unskilled Labour:** A high percentage of the workforce employed as labourers, machinery operators, or drivers.

- **Limited Development:** Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often have narrower vocabularies and slower academic achievement due to fewer resources at home and in local schools.

Health & Social Outcomes

Disadvantage often follows a "social gradient," where lower socio-economic conditions correlate with poorer health outcomes.

- **Higher Health Risks:** Increased rates of daily smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.
- **Chronic Conditions:** Significantly higher likelihood of diabetes, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- **Social Isolation:** Limited access to transport and medical services, which can lead to social exclusion.
- **Family Structure:** Higher percentages of one-parent families and separated or divorced individuals in disadvantaged areas. Higher prevalence of domestic and family violence.

From a health perspective, socio-economic disadvantage manifests itself in the life expectancy of people. Consider these ABS numbers:

- Life expectancy at birth - Indigenous Australian males in Australia = 71.9 years
- Life expectancy at birth - Non-Indigenous Australian males in Australia = 80.6 years
- Life expectancy at birth - Indigenous males in Remote and Very Remote Australia = 67.3 years

Similar disparities exist with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous females in Australia.

Environmental Factors

The physical environment of disadvantaged areas often contains fewer public resources and higher risks.

- **Built Environment:** Fewer parks, open spaces, and reliable daycare or after-school programs.
- **Hazard Exposure:** Increased exposure to noise, air pollution, and poor-quality housing.
- **Community Safety:** Potentially higher rates of crime, waste, or vacant homes in the community.

The second story relates to an initiative of the Queensland State Government, which

discriminates against communities with the highest levels of socio-economic need in Queensland. Here is the background context.

In one of my roles in Cape York, I was responsible, inter alia, for economic development at a director level. The role was focused on implementing initiatives to improve the social and economic living conditions for residents, including, amongst other initiatives, tourism development. Increasing tourist visitation is an important way in which socio-economic disadvantage can be reduced in communities by reducing unemployment, increasing household income and home ownership in the longer term, skilling the workforce, and ultimately improving health and social outcomes.

Data supplied by Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) showed that tourist visitor numbers to our region were growing steadily and were characterised by a change in demographics. The data showed an increase in the number of younger families travelling to the Cape York region. These travellers had higher levels of environmental consciousness and were keen to be able to travel responsibly. Strategically, we sought to capitalise on this trend to drive further tourism growth and ultimately reduce the reliance on external funding.

We had become aware of the Queensland Government's Electric Super Highway project, which according to the Queensland Government's website, "connects electric vehicles across our state". The following map (the latest version sourced from the Queensland Government's Publication Portal) shows to extent of the Highway, which **excludes** an area of approximately one quarter of the state (most of Far North Queensland):

Queensland Electric Super Highway



Always plan your trip accordingly. Please take into account circumstances such as road, weather and vehicle operating capabilities which will impact your vehicles driving range.

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At the time, we formally reached out to the relevant State Government Agency in an attempt to secure a commitment to extend the highway into the Cape York region. We were advised in due course that this would not occur, but that the relevant Council (with limited or no discretionary funding available) was at liberty to self-fund an EV-charging station project.

Here is a list of the rural, remote and Aboriginal LGAs which currently miss out on the benefits of this state-wide initiative:

- Aurukun Aboriginal Shire Council
- Burke Shire
- Carpentaria Shire Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Weipa Town Authority
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

In closing, I would refer the reader to this quote made in 1974 by Gough Whitlam, the Prime Minister of Australia at the time: "It remains true ... that more and more the standard of life of the Australian citizen depends not so much on how much (s/he) earns but where (s/he) lives."

It is worth recalling that the Whitlam government initiated a major shift towards **regional equalisation** in Australia, aiming to reduce inequalities between regions, local government areas, and communities, rather than just between states. This policy aimed to ensure that the quality of life, services, and infrastructure depended less on where a person lived and more on equitable national standards.

More than 50 years later, there is still significant inequality in regional Queensland.

These challenges are not unique to Australia. According to the Guardian newspaper, the recently elected Mayor of New York has announced plans which include the introduction of universal childcare, a rent freeze and city-owned grocery stores, and changes to immigration and policing. Commenting on the Mayor's plans, the former Dutch government advisor and environmentalist, Alexander Verbeek, said the Mayor "promised things that Europeans take for granted, but Americans are told are impossible."

Verbeek added, "Normal. That's the word," he said. In Holland, "... taking care of one another through public programs isn't radical socialism. It's Tuesday."

I trust that the decision-makers in Parliament will take the time to properly consider these comments, the real-world implications of the proposed Electoral Redistribution and will vote with their consciences accordingly.

Sincerely

Lawrence Booth

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E: [REDACTED]