

Submission ID: O-0703
Date Received: 9/4/26, 2:26 pm
Name: Cr Sara Diana Faraj
Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Maryborough

Submission:

Good afternoon,

Please find my submission against the proposed boundary changes with the ECQ.

Submission Attachments

ECQ Submission Against Proposed Electoral Redistribution.docx



7th April 2026

To whom it may concern,

RE: Submission of Objection against the proposed boundary redistribution to the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ)

Via Email: QRCsubmissions@ecq.qld.gov.au.

I write in my capacity as Deputy Mayor of the Fraser Coast Regional Council, and as an elected representative of a rapidly growing regional community, to formally object to the proposed redistribution of the state electoral boundaries for the electorates of Hervey Bay, and Maryborough. **Please note, this submission is a collation of my own views, and not those of the entire Fraser Coast Regional Council.**

This submission is informed not only by the technical considerations of electoral redistribution, but also by direct engagement with the community, an understanding of local service delivery frameworks, and the practical realities of governance within the Fraser Coast region.

While I acknowledge the statutory requirement to ensure electoral quota compliance, it is my considered view that the current proposal does not appropriately balance this requirement against the Commission's guiding principles. In particular, the proposal fails to adequately account for community of interest, functional integration of services, geographic cohesion, and alignment across levels of government.

Within this submission, you will find numerous arguments against the re distribution, followed by some proposed solutions.

Division of an Established Urban Community

The redistribution proposal effectively replaces established urban Hervey Bay population areas with more rural and semi-rural localities, including Susan River, Nikenbah, and Booral. While this approach may assist in achieving enrolment balance, it does so at the expense of community coherence and alignment with long-term planning frameworks.

Suburbs such as Eli Waters and Urraween are not emerging communities; they are well-established, fully integrated urban areas that have already undergone significant development and are supported by substantial infrastructure, including the Hervey Bay Hospital, established education facilities, retail centres, and connected transport networks. These areas have been strategically planned, serviced, and consolidated over time and now form part of the stable and mature urban core of Hervey Bay.

In contrast, areas such as Nikenbah and Dundowran represent key future growth fronts within the Fraser Coast. These localities are identified through Council's strategic planning frameworks as areas for continued expansion, where population growth will be supported by staged infrastructure delivery, future transport upgrades, and progressive service investment.

The proposed redistribution does not adequately reflect this critical distinction between mature, fully serviced urban communities and emerging growth areas. By removing established urban suburbs from the Hervey Bay electorate and replacing them with areas that are either rural in nature or at earlier stages of development, the proposal disrupts the alignment between existing population centres and planned growth trajectories.

From a strategic planning perspective, electoral boundaries should not only reflect current enrolment numbers but also consider future growth patterns, infrastructure sequencing, and service delivery planning. Retaining established urban communities within the Hervey Bay electorate, while recognising emerging areas as part of a cohesive forward growth corridor, would better support long-term representation, infrastructure coordination, and effective governance across the Fraser Coast region.

Separation of a Key Regional Health Precinct:

Of particular significance is the inclusion of the **Hervey Bay Hospital within the Maryborough electorate**, despite it serving as the primary public health facility for the Hervey Bay community and broader coastal catchment.

The Hervey Bay Hospital is not a peripheral asset; it is a central piece of regional health infrastructure, supporting a large and growing population across the Fraser Coast, particularly within the Hervey Bay urban area. It plays a critical role in delivering acute care, emergency services, and ongoing health support to a community experiencing rapid population growth, alongside an ageing demographic that is placing increasing demand on local health services.

The proposed boundary creates a clear and problematic misalignment between the location of this critical infrastructure, the population it predominantly serves, and the electoral representation responsible for advocating for its funding, expansion, and service delivery. In effect, the community that relies most heavily on this facility would be separated from the Member of Parliament tasked with representing its interests at a state level.

This misalignment is further compounded by the presence of the **St Stephen's Hospital**, located directly opposite the Hervey Bay Hospital. While this private facility would remain within the Hervey Bay electorate, the public hospital would be placed within Maryborough. In practice, these two hospitals operate in close coordination, particularly in a regional context where workforce and resource constraints require a high degree of collaboration between public and private providers.

This integrated service relationship is critical to maintaining continuity of care across the region. Separating the two facilities across different electorates risks introducing unnecessary complexity into what is currently a coordinated health network, potentially complicating advocacy, planning, and engagement with State representatives. It also creates the unintended consequence whereby the public hospitals in both Hervey Bay and Maryborough would fall within the same electorate, effectively requiring a single Member of Parliament to advocate across multiple major regional health facilities with competing demands, thereby diluting focused advocacy and weakening the ability to secure timely and prioritised state investment.

More broadly, this separation introduces a practical disconnect that is likely to have real consequences for governance and service delivery. It risks fragmenting advocacy for health funding and infrastructure investment, complicating coordination between multiple State Members, and reducing clarity for residents seeking assistance or raising concerns. In a regional setting, where access to healthcare is both essential and often limited, the ability to advocate in a unified and coordinated manner is critical.

Further, the Fraser Coast is projected to continue experiencing strong population growth (growth that exceeds current and future State Government forecasts), with increasing demand for expanded health

services, infrastructure upgrades, and workforce support. The Hervey Bay Hospital will remain central to meeting these needs, and its future planning, investment, and expansion will require clear and consistent advocacy at a state level.

Maintaining alignment between major service infrastructure and the communities it serves is therefore fundamental to effective electoral boundary design. The proposed arrangement, in separating the Hervey Bay Hospital from its primary service population, and from its closely integrated private counterpart does not achieve this alignment and instead introduces avoidable complexity into an area of critical public importance.

Substitution of Urban Communities with Rural Hinterland and Growth Planning:

The redistribution proposal also does not adequately reflect the strategic growth planning currently underway within the Fraser Coast. Through Council-led investigations into future growth fronts, areas such as **Nikenbah and Dundowran** have been identified as key locations for significant residential expansion. These areas are not merely peripheral or rural in character; they represent the next phase of Hervey Bay's urban growth, with projections indicating that up to **50,000 additional residents** may be accommodated across these growth corridors over time.

This level of projected population growth has important implications for electoral boundary design. It demonstrates that Hervey Bay is not a static community, but one that is continuing to expand in a coordinated and planned manner. As these areas develop, they will become increasingly integrated into the Hervey Bay urban footprint, supported by new infrastructure, services, and transport connections.

In this context, the current proposal to remove established urban communities from the Hervey Bay electorate, while incorporating emerging growth areas in a fragmented manner, does not align with the region's long-term development trajectory. A more appropriate approach would recognise that the Fraser Coast is evolving toward a structure where **Hervey Bay will ultimately support multiple urban-focused electorates**, while Maryborough continues to represent a distinct regional and hinterland community.

Planning for electoral boundaries should therefore consider not only present enrolment requirements but also projected population growth and the logical future configuration of communities. Aligning boundaries with these growth fronts would better support long-term representation, infrastructure planning, and effective governance across the region. Importantly, such an approach would also reduce the need for repeated and disruptive boundary adjustments in future redistributions, providing greater stability for communities, elected representatives, and service planning frameworks.

Fragmentation of Representation at the Local Government Level

The proposed redistribution will result in significant and impractical fragmentation at the local government level across the Fraser Coast, most notably within **Division 1** of the Fraser Coast Regional Council.

Under the proposed boundaries, Division 1 will be represented across multiple state electorates, resulting in up to five different State Members of Parliament having partial responsibility for a single local government division. This level of fragmentation is highly irregular and represents a clear departure from the principles of effective, coordinated representation.

Importantly, Division 1 is not an isolated case. The proposed boundary changes establish a broader pattern of fragmentation across the local government area, with multiple divisions likely to be split across two or more state electorates. This is particularly evident in areas along the Hervey Bay–Maryborough interface and

surrounding growth corridors, where boundaries intersect in a manner that does not reflect established community structures or administrative cohesion.

The cumulative effect of this approach is that the Fraser Coast Regional Council would be required to engage with an increased number of State Members, often representing overlapping or partial communities within the same division. This introduces unnecessary complexity into what should be clear and consistent governance relationships.

From a practical perspective, this fragmentation dilutes clear lines of accountability and complicates coordination between Council and State representatives. It increases the likelihood of inconsistent or competing advocacy positions and reduces clarity for residents seeking support or raising concerns. Where different parts of the same community are represented by different Members, it becomes more difficult to progress unified priorities and deliver cohesive outcomes.

This issue is particularly pronounced in a growing regional area such as the Fraser Coast, where coordinated planning, infrastructure delivery, and investment attraction rely heavily on strong and aligned intergovernmental relationships. The proposed boundaries do not support this coordination and instead introduce a level of fragmentation that is likely to hinder effective engagement.

Effective representation is strengthened where electoral boundaries align, as far as practicable, with local government divisions and recognised community structures. The proposed redistribution moves away from this principle and instead creates a framework that is less coherent, less efficient, and more difficult to navigate for both Council and the community.

Impact on State Funding and Infrastructure Advocacy:

This fragmentation has particularly significant consequences for state funding advocacy and infrastructure delivery across the Fraser Coast.

Effective engagement with the State Government is fundamentally reliant on clear lines of representation, consistent advocacy, and strong, coordinated relationships between levels of government. These elements are especially important in regional areas, where communities must compete for limited state resources and where well-articulated, unified cases are often required to secure investment.

Under the proposed redistribution, the introduction of multiple State Members representing different portions of the same community undermines this clarity. Where responsibility for a single local government division is shared across several electorates, it becomes inherently more difficult to establish and maintain unified funding priorities. Council is instead required to engage with multiple offices to progress the same set of local issues, increasing administrative burden and reducing the efficiency of advocacy efforts.

This fragmentation also weakens the ability to present cohesive and compelling business cases for major infrastructure projects. Large-scale investments, whether in health, transport, or community infrastructure typically rely on coordinated support from elected representatives who can advocate consistently and with a shared understanding of regional priorities. Where advocacy is divided across multiple Members, there is a heightened risk of misalignment, duplication, or competing priorities, which can ultimately diminish the strength of the region's case for funding.

In addition, the ability to coordinate long-term investment strategies is compromised. Infrastructure planning within the Fraser Coast is increasingly forward-looking, particularly in response to population growth and

emerging development areas. Delivering these outcomes requires stable and aligned relationships with State Government representatives. Fragmented representation introduces uncertainty into these processes and makes it more difficult to sustain momentum on key projects over time.

The practical consequence of this is a reduced capacity for the Fraser Coast to effectively secure funding for critical infrastructure, including health services, transport networks, community facilities, and growth-related development. At a time when regional communities must advocate strongly to compete for limited state investment, clarity, cohesion, and consistency in representation are not simply beneficial, they are essential.

Misalignment with Local and Federal Boundaries:

The proposed redistribution also exacerbates existing misalignment between state, local, and federal electoral boundaries, which is already a well-recognised challenge within the Fraser Coast region.

Currently, inconsistencies between these layers of government create complexity for both governance and community understanding. Rather than improving this situation, the proposed boundaries introduce an additional layer of fragmentation, further disconnecting electoral representation across levels of government. This represents a missed opportunity to strengthen alignment in a way that supports more effective and coordinated outcomes for the region.

From a governance perspective, alignment between electoral boundaries plays an important role in facilitating effective intergovernmental collaboration. When local, state, and federal representatives are broadly aligned to the same communities, it enables clearer communication, stronger partnerships, and more coordinated advocacy on shared priorities. The proposed redistribution moves away from this principle, making it more difficult to maintain consistent engagement across all levels of government.

This misalignment also has practical implications for strategic planning and infrastructure delivery. Major projects, particularly in regional areas often rely on collaboration between local, state, and federal stakeholders. Where electoral boundaries are fragmented, it can lead to duplication of effort, gaps in accountability, and delays in progressing critical infrastructure. A lack of alignment can also make it more difficult to develop and deliver integrated, long-term planning outcomes that respond effectively to population growth and community need.

In addition, fragmented boundaries reduce clarity for the community. Residents may find themselves represented by different elected officials at each level of government, with boundaries that do not logically align. This can create confusion about who to approach for assistance, weaken community engagement, and reduce confidence in the accessibility and effectiveness of representation.

Improved alignment between electoral boundaries, where practicable, supports more efficient governance, clearer advocacy pathways, and stronger outcomes for communities. It allows for a more coordinated approach to planning, funding, and service delivery, particularly in growing regional areas such as the Fraser Coast.

The current proposal moves in the opposite direction, introducing further fragmentation across already complex boundary arrangements. In doing so, it increases administrative complexity, weakens coordination, and reduces the overall effectiveness of representation across the region.

Recommendation: Alternative Boundary Approach:

In recognition of the need to achieve electoral quota requirements, I respectfully submit that a more appropriate and balanced approach would be to retain the integrity of the existing Hervey Bay urban footprint while identifying alternative areas for adjustment that better reflect established communities of interest and functional regional alignment.

Central to this approach is the retention of **Eli Waters and Urraween, including the Hervey Bay Hospital**, within the Hervey Bay electorate. These areas form part of a cohesive and well-established urban community, supported by integrated infrastructure, service networks, and strong social and economic connections. Maintaining their inclusion within the Hervey Bay electorate would preserve the logical and functional boundaries of the region's primary coastal population centre and ensure that representation remains aligned with how residents live and access services.

This approach would also avoid the unnecessary division of established communities. Electoral boundaries should, wherever possible, reflect genuine communities of interest rather than impose artificial separations. Retaining the Hervey Bay urban core as a unified electorate supports this principle and reinforces the effectiveness of representation.

To address enrolment requirements, consideration should instead be given to extending the **Maryborough electorate further south**, toward areas that demonstrate stronger regional, geographic, and functional alignment with Maryborough. Such an approach would enable population balancing without disrupting the cohesion of the Hervey Bay community or fragmenting key infrastructure and service networks.

Importantly, this alternative approach better reflects the **long-term growth trajectory of the Fraser Coast**. Hervey Bay is experiencing sustained and significant population growth, driven by both internal expansion and migration to the region. Council-led planning identifies substantial future growth across areas such as Nikenbah and Dundowran, with projections indicating that tens of thousands of additional residents will be accommodated within the Hervey Bay urban footprint over time.

This level of growth has clear implications for future electoral representation. It is reasonable to anticipate that, in time, the Hervey Bay community will support **multiple urban-focused electorates**, reflecting its scale, density, and service demands. In this context, the current proposal, which fragments the existing urban area does not align with the logical long-term configuration of the region.

A boundary approach that preserves the integrity of the Hervey Bay urban footprint now would not only better reflect existing communities but would also provide a more stable and adaptable framework for future redistributions. It would reduce the likelihood of repeated and disruptive boundary adjustments and support a more orderly transition as the region grows, including the potential future establishment of **two Hervey Bay-based electorates alongside a distinct Maryborough electorate**.

Adopting this approach would deliver several important benefits. It would maintain community cohesion, strengthen alignment between infrastructure and representation, and reduce fragmentation within local government divisions. It would also improve overall electoral coherence across the Fraser Coast and support clearer, more effective advocacy at a state level.

In contrast to the current proposal, this approach provides a more strategic, forward-looking, and sustainable solution, one that better balances enrolment requirements with the qualitative principles that underpin effective electoral boundary design.

Conclusion:

The proposed redistribution, in its current form, gives rise to several significant concerns that extend beyond numerical enrolment considerations and into the practical realities of governance, service delivery, and community representation across the Fraser Coast.

Most notably, it results in the division of a cohesive and well-established urban community within Hervey Bay, introducing artificial boundaries that do not reflect how residents live, interact, or access essential services. It separates critical infrastructure particularly the Hervey Bay Hospital from the primary population it serves, creating a misalignment that has direct implications for advocacy, funding, and coordinated service delivery. The proposal also blends fundamentally different communities, combining urban coastal populations with rural and semi-rural hinterland areas that have distinct characteristics, needs, and growth trajectories. In doing so, it weakens the clarity and effectiveness of representation for both. This is further compounded by the significant fragmentation of representation at the local government level, where single divisions are split across multiple electorates, undermining coordination, accountability, and effective engagement between Council and State representatives.

In addition, the redistribution increases misalignment across state, local, and federal boundaries, adding further complexity to an already challenging governance landscape. Rather than improving coherence, the proposal introduces additional layers of fragmentation that are likely to hinder collaboration, strategic planning, and community understanding of representation.

Taken together, these outcomes are inconsistent with the principles that underpin effective electoral boundary design, particularly those relating to community of interest, geographic cohesion, and the efficient delivery of services and governance.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Commission reconsider the proposed boundaries and adopt an approach that better preserves the integrity of established communities, strengthens alignment across levels of government, and reflects the functional realities and future growth of the Fraser Coast region.

Closing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Given the complexity and uniqueness of the Fraser Coast region, I would also extend a respectful invitation to the Commission to visit the region as part of its deliberations. Observing the relationship between Hervey Bay and Maryborough firsthand, including the distribution of communities, infrastructure, and growth areas, would provide valuable context that cannot be fully captured through maps and data alone. I welcome further engagement with the Commission throughout this process and would be pleased to provide additional local insight, planning context, or on-the-ground perspective where it may assist in informing a well-balanced outcome.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone at:

[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Sara Diana Faraj
Deputy Mayor
Councillor Division 9
Fraser Coast Regional Council