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Name: Shane Knuth MP
Organisation Name: Member for Hill
Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Hill

Submission:

See below

Submission Attachments

Email - Shane Knuth - 7th April 2026 Objection Against the Proposed Redistribution.pdf



SHANE KNUTH MP

Member for Hill

Honour to serve

Objection to the Proposed Redistribution of Queensland Electoral Districts

Proposed Abolishment of the Electoral District of Hill

Submission to:

Queensland Redistribution Commission

From:

Shane Knuth MP, Member for Hill

Introduction

I write to formally object to the Queensland Redistribution Commission's proposed redistribution proposal, which recommends the abolition of the electoral district of Hill and its absorption into the surrounding electorates of Mulgrave, Hinchinbrook and Flinders.

The electorate of Hill has long provided coherent and effective representation for communities across the Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast.

The Commission's proposal would dismantle this electorate and divide these communities between multiple neighbouring districts.

This proposal fails to adequately apply the statutory criteria set out in the Electoral Act 1992 and would significantly weaken representation for North Queensland communities.

The QRC's own discussion paper (page 16) shows that Hill is well within quota, with a positive enrolment variance of +4.78%.

Hill sits within a broader region (Tablelands Regional Council, Mareeba Shire and Cassowary Coast) that continues to experience growth and development.

Abolishing a healthy electorate, reducing representation and causing widespread chaos in numerous electorates is counterproductive to the redistribution process.

The proposed abolishment of Hill is unnecessary, disruptive and contrary to the principles of fair regional representation.

2. Overwhelming Community Opposition

The redistribution process has generated strong public engagement.

The Commission's report confirms that **116 suggestions and 488 comments were received during the consultation process.**

A significant proportion of these submissions opposed the abolishment of the electorate of Hill.

This strong response reflects the deep concern held by communities across the Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast that dismantling their electorate will weaken their voice in Parliament.

Public consultation is a critical part of the redistribution process.

The views expressed by residents, businesses, councils and community organisations must be given meaningful consideration.

The message from North Queensland communities has been very clear.

They do not support the abolition of the electorate of Hill.

3. Opposition from Local Governments

Four (4) key local government bodies representing communities within the electorate have strongly opposed the proposed abolishment:

- Cairns Regional Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council

These councils represent the communities most directly affected by the proposed changes and have expressed concern that the redistribution will fracture established communities of interest.

Local governments play a critical role in regional planning, infrastructure and service delivery.

Their opposition highlights the real-world consequences that the proposed redistribution would have on regional communities.

Ignoring the concerns of these councils undermines confidence in the redistribution process.

4. Reduction in Representation for North Queensland

The proposed redistribution would reduce the number of electorates representing North Queensland communities while increasing the number of seats in South-East Queensland.

Under the Commission's proposal, the electorate of Hill would be absorbed into neighbouring electorates including Mulgrave, Hinchinbrook and Flinders.

This would effectively reduce representation for North Queensland.

Regional communities already face significant challenges due to:

- geographic isolation
- long travel distances
- limited access to services
- infrastructure constraints.

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.

Reducing parliamentary representation for these communities risks further marginalising regional voices in state decision-making.

The redistribution process should aim to maintain strong regional representation rather than diminish it.

5. Failure to Protect Communities of Interest

Section 46(1)(a) of the Electoral Act requires the Commission to consider **economic, social, regional and community-of-interest factors** when determining electoral boundaries.

The electorate of Hill represents a cohesive regional community centred on the Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast that maintain very similar agricultural interests.

These communities share:

- agricultural industries including horticulture, cane farming and cattle production
- tourism industries connected to rainforest and reef tourism
- regional service centres such as Atherton and Innisfail
- shared education, health and transport networks.

Dividing these communities across multiple electorates undermines the principle of preserving communities of interest.

6. Travel, Communication and Geographic Practicality

Section 46(1)(b) of the Electoral Act requires consideration of **ways of communication and travel within electoral districts.**

The proposal to incorporate parts of the Atherton Tablelands into the electorate of Flinders would create an electorate covering an enormous geographic area.

For example, the distance between Atherton and Mount Isa exceeds **1,000 kilometres.**

Expecting a single Member of Parliament to effectively represent communities across such vast distance's places unrealistic demands on electorate offices and undermines effective representation.

Regional electorates are already large by necessity.

Expanding them further risks making them unmanageable.

7. Physical Features and Geographic Identity

Section 46(1)(c) requires consideration of **physical features of electoral districts.**

The Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast form a distinct geographic region defined by:

- the Great Dividing Range
- extensive rainforest and national park systems
- coastal and inland transport corridors.

These geographic features have historically shaped the natural boundaries of the electorate of Hill.

Dividing these regions between several electorates disregards the natural geographic identity of the area.

8. Alignment with Local Government Boundaries

Section 46(2) allows the Commission to consider local government boundaries when determining communities of interest.

Historically, electoral boundaries in North Queensland have largely aligned with local government areas.

The proposed redistribution breaks this alignment and divides communities across multiple electorates.

Maintaining alignment with local government boundaries where possible improves:

- clarity for constituents
- cooperation between state and local representatives
- administrative efficiency.

Departing from these boundaries should only occur where absolutely necessary.

9. Consistency with Previous Redistributive Principles

Previous Queensland redistributions have recognised the unique challenges faced by regional and remote communities.

Regional electorates must be assessed differently from compact metropolitan districts due to:

- large geographic distances
- dispersed populations
- travel and communication constraints.

Queensland legislation already acknowledges this reality through the **additional large district number** applied to electorates exceeding 100,000 km².

The proposed abolition of Hill undermines these principles by removing a regional electorate rather than protecting regional representation.

10. Alternative Boundary Adjustments Exist

The electorate of Hill currently sits within the legislated enrolment quota and projected population range.

The Commission's report confirms that all electorates must remain within **±10% of the state average enrolment of 40,188 electors**.

Hill satisfies this requirement.

The abolishment of the electorate is therefore not necessary to achieve quota compliance.

Alternative boundary adjustments could address enrolment pressures in neighbouring electorates while maintaining the integrity of the Hill electorate.

Possible options include:

- minor boundary adjustments between Hill, Mulgrave and Hinchinbrook
- modest transfers of electors between neighbouring North Queensland districts
- adjustments involving Barron River or other nearby electorates.

These options would allow the Commission to rebalance enrolments while preserving established communities.

Conclusion

The proposed abolition of the electorate of Hill will:

- weaken representation for North Queensland
- divide established regional communities
- create geographically impractical electorates
- ignore the views of local governments and residents
- undermine the principles guiding electoral redistributions.

The Atherton Tablelands and Cassowary Coast are distinct regional communities that deserve strong and coherent representation in the Queensland Parliament.

It appears to me that the electorate of Hill and the cascading effect on numerous electoral boundaries has all been caused by the sole desire to increase representation in the Southeast of the state.

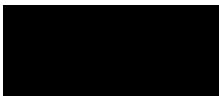
I firmly believe this could have been avoided by simply proposing an increase of an additional seat in the southeast corner.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Queensland Redistribution Commission to reject the proposal to abolish the electorate of Hill and instead retain the electorate with only minor boundary adjustments where necessary.

Redistributions should strengthen democratic representation, not weaken it.

The proposed abolition of the electorate of Hill does the opposite for North Queensland.

Yours sincerely



Shane Knuth MP
Member for Hill