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Name: Kerry Shine
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Electoral District: Toowoomba North; Toowoomba South
Related Submissions: S-110, S-117

Submission:

22 September 2025

Judge Gregory Koppenol
Chairperson
Queensland Redistribution Commission

Dear Chairperson,

Comments on Suggestions - Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South

As a long-term resident of Toowoomba since 1976, former State Member for Toowoomba North, and current Toowoomba Regional Councillor since 2020, I offer the following comments to assist the Commission in its consideration of submissions regarding the 2025 redistribution of the Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South electorates.

I endorse submission S117 by Mr Mark Yore, which proposes renaming the Toowoomba North electorate to "Highfields" to reflect its rapidly growing population and emerging identity as a key regional hub. I further recommend renaming the Toowoomba South electorate to "Toowoomba" and adjusting the boundaries of both electorates to align with current and projected residential development trends.

Rationale for Renaming and Boundary Adjustments

Highfields is experiencing significant and accelerating population growth, driven by its appeal as a family-friendly commuter suburb with expanding residential development. The estimated residential population stands at 11,645 as of June 2024, reflecting a 2.32% increase from June 2023, outpacing Toowoomba's overall growth rate of 1.41% in the same period.

Historical trends underscore this momentum which have seen annual growth rates rise steadily from 1.04% in 2018 to 1.18% in 2019, 1.30% in 2020, 1.55% in 2021, 3.70% in 2022, and 3.25% in 2023.

This acceleration is expected to continue, fueled by major infrastructure investments including the Queensland Government's \$20.1 million commitment to the Central Highfields Activation Project through the Residential Activation Fund, which supports new housing, commercial precincts, and transport links to enhance liveability and attract families.

Projections indicate sustained expansion, with approximately 4,684 people expected to be added between now and 2041, positioning Highfields to reach around 14,000 residents by 2032 and underscoring its role as the primary growth corridor north of Toowoomba.

These trends highlight the need to reorient electoral boundaries to capture Highfields' distinct community and economic trajectory.

To reflect this shift and ensure logical electoral boundaries, I propose the following adjustments:

- Reorient Toowoomba North as "Highfields" shifting the southern boundary of the electorate from James Street to North Street; and
- Rename Toowoomba South to "Toowoomba" and shift the southern boundary of the electorate along the full length of Stenner Street, transferring electors in low-growth, peri-urban areas to the Condamine electorate. This would place the Toowoomba CBD entirely within the renamed Toowoomba electorate, ensuring a cohesive representation of the city's economic and cultural core.

Enrolment Impacts

The proposed changes are calibrated to maintain enrolment balances within the statutory requirements.

Alignment with Statutory Criteria

These proposed changes align with the Commission's obligations under section 46 of the Electoral Act 1992 (Qld), particularly:

Electoral Enrolments

As detailed above, the proposed changes are calibrated to maintain enrolment balances within the statutory requirements.

Community of Interest

Centring the Highfields electorate around its growth hub fosters a unified community identity, while placing the Toowoomba CBD within a single electorate strengthens its representation as a cohesive economic and social unit.

Geographical Features and Infrastructure

The proposed boundaries follow major roads (North Street and Stenner Street), providing clear and logical demarcations that align with existing transport and community patterns.

Population Growth Trends

Highfields' projected growth justifies its designation as a distinct electorate, while low-growth areas south of Stenner Street are better suited to the peri-urban and rural-focused Condamine electorate.

Precedent in Queensland

This approach mirrors redistribution practices in other provincial cities across Queensland, where electorates are structured around key growth corridors and central business districts. It is uncommon and arguably inefficient for an electorate to divide its CBD, as is currently the case with Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South.

The Liberal National Party (LNP) submission S110 reinforces these precedents through its emphasis on community-focused boundaries that will endure through to the 2032 projection and prioritise genuine communities of interest tied to shared services, economic activities, and infrastructure connectors like major roads.

In regional Queensland, the LNP proposes adjustments to align peri-urban areas with rural electorates, while advocating for targeted changes in growth areas. These principles support reorienting Toowoomba North around Highfields' exceptional growth in greenfield developments and consolidating the Toowoomba CBD to avoid fragmentation.

Furthermore, the LNP's strong advocacy for electorate names reflecting prominent geographic features provides a direct precedent for renaming Toowoomba North to "Highfields" and Toowoomba South to "Toowoomba".

Dividing a CBD across two electorates, as currently occurs in Toowoomba, is uncommon and can dilute effective representation. Consolidating the Toowoomba CBD within a single electorate enhances administrative efficiency and community cohesion.

I respectfully urge the Commission to adopt the proposed renaming of Toowoomba North to "Highfields" and Toowoomba South to "Toowoomba," alongside the suggested boundary adjustments. These changes will better reflect growth realities, support community interests, and ensure equitable representation for Toowoomba's residents, with enrolments projected to remain balanced through 2032.

Thank you for considering these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Shine