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Organisation Name: FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC)
Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Hill

Submission:

See below

Submission Attachments

Email - Angela Toppin - LIVE-#7856756-v1-
Submission_to_the_QRC_re_proposed_redistribution-Hill.pdf

Ref: #7856756

Wednesday, 8 April 2026

Queensland Redistribution Commission
GPO Box 1393
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Via email: QRCSubmissions@ecq.qld.gov.au

Dear Commission

FNQROC Submission – Proposal for the Redistribution of the State’s Electoral Districts

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our thoughts into the proposal for the redistribution of the State’s Electoral Districts.

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) represents the collective interests of councils across one of Queensland’s most geographically vast and economically significant regions.

FNQROC provides this submission in response to the Proposal for the Redistribution of the State’s Electoral Districts (the Proposal).

This FNQROC submission presents a regional position based on communities of interest; future population growth; communication and travel patterns; and existing regional boundaries.

Further, we strongly support and acknowledge each of the more detailed local submissions lodged by our member councils particularly around boundary realignments; this submission seeks to reflect the long-term regional interest and the number of voices in Queensland’s parliament.

1. Legislative Context

We acknowledge that under the *Electoral Act 1992*, the Queensland Redistribution commission (QRC) must periodically review electoral boundaries to ensure electorates contain a similar number of electors and reflect community interests. The current review has been triggered because more than seven and a half years have passed since the previous redistribution in 2017 and Queensland has experienced rapid population growth during those years driven by high net overseas and interstate migration.

In undertaking this process, the QRC is required to consider:

- Communities of interest
- Demographic trends
- Communication and travel patterns
- Physical features, and
- Existing boundaries.

Achieving enrolment equality and fairness, through balancing population (and voter) numbers, is an important consideration. However, other considerations including communities of interest, are, at least, equal importance to ensure that electorates provide coherent representation with aligned communities of interest, reflect established regional identities, and maintain effective parliamentary advocacy for regional Queensland.

2. Overview of the Proposal

FNQROC notes the Proposal released in March 2026 recommends:

- abolishing the electorate of Hill, with its area redistributed across Mulgrave, Hinchinbrook and Flinders; and
- creating two new electorates, Caboolture and Springfield, in Southeast Queensland in response to metropolitan population growth.

FNQROC makes no commentary on the boundary realignments (other than to support our member councils' submissions) but strongly cautions against abolishing a regional voice being the electorate of Hill.

3. Enrolment analysis does not justify changes in Far North Queensland

FNQROC has reviewed the enrolment quota requirements and the broader economic and social linkages between Far North Queensland communities.

Key observations include:

- All northern Queensland electorates connected with Cairns are comfortably within the quotas in 2032 (see table 1 below).
- None of these electorates are more than 5% above or below the quota
- Hill is projected to be almost exactly on the quota by 2032 (-0.41%)

There is no legislative or inherent enrolment-based rationale to abolish Hill. There are adequate current enrolment numbers, and these are predicted to grow. It is not a seat at risk of falling below enrolment numbers; nor going above the quota range in near future years.

Table 1 – Enrolment numbers 2025/2032

BASED ON <u>EXISTING</u> ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR: NORTHERN QUEENSLAND ELECTORATES PLUS COOK AND TRAEGER						
Electorate	Enrolment 22/09/2025 Note 1	Projected Enrolment 30/06/2032 Note 1	2025 Quota 22/09/2025	2032 Quota 30/06/2032	% Above/(Below) Variation to Quota	
					22/09/2025	30/06/2032
					Above or Below 10% variance to quota in red	
<i>NQ and northern large electorates most connected to Cairns</i>						
Mulgrave	40,133	45,921	40,188	44,679	-0.14%	2.78% }
Cairns	39,397	43,229	40,188	44,679	-1.97%	-3.25% }
Barron River	41,999	44,984	40,188	44,679	4.51%	0.68% }
Cook	40,802	43,372	40,188	44,679	1.53%	-2.93% }
Hill	42,144	44,497	40,188	44,679	4.87%	-0.41% }
Total	204,475	222,003				
Average enrolment	40,895	44,401	40,188	44,679	1.76%	-0.62% Regional average aligns with the quota

Figure 1: Analysis of electoral and projected enrolment numbers versus legislated quotas

Source: QRC Proposal for the Redistribution of the State’s Electoral Districts (Appendix 3)

FNQROC appreciates that some councils may have additional local factors informing their views on the Proposal, including the importance of ensuring effective ongoing representation for their communities which includes supporting some proposed boundary amendments.

4. Impact on regional representation

The communities of Far North Queensland already faces structural challenges in ensuring our voices and priorities are heard within a Parliament increasingly dominated by the demographics of Southeast Queensland (SEQ).

In this regard, the Proposal would:

- reduce the number of dedicated parliamentary seats in Far North Queensland;
- fragment established communities of interest across the Atherton-Mareeba Tablelands and Cairns Regional Council;
- weaken alignment between electoral boundaries and existing social, economic, and service catchments; and
- created greater imbalance by increasing the representation of SEQ, where two additional electorates are being created.

While metropolitan growth must be accommodated, the outcome is a net loss of regional representation, diminishing the ability of northern communities to influence policy decisions that materially affect them.

While we recognise that individual councils may weigh these impacts differently based on their local priorities, FNQROC’s regional assessment highlights the broader implications for Far North Queensland as a whole.

5. The balance of parliamentary representation is shifting

Population distribution continues to concentrate in SEQ:

- 1979: SEQ housed ~47% of Queensland’s population

- 2025: ~67%
- 2046 (projected): ~82%

As SEQ's population increases, so does its share of parliamentary seats. Without safeguards, regional electorates risk being diluted or absorbed, potentially restraining and limiting parliamentary focus on the unique challenges or northern communities, including infrastructure delivery across large distances, disaster reliance, service access, housing pressures, and supply chain vulnerabilities.

Maintaining strong regional representation is essential to ensure that governing decisions reflect the needs of the whole State, not only the population dense southeast corner. Removing the seat of Hill may solve a numbers problem but it will diminish regional representation for FNQROC communities.

It is recommended that the methodology should be reviewed to ensure regional representation is maintained; perhaps the State could also consider increasing the number of seats.

6. Need to maintain communities of interest

Feedback from member councils' highlights:

- an established and longstanding regional identity in Far North Queensland;
- strong ties with and between Cairns and other FNQROC communities for employment, health education, transport and service delivery;
- a lack of alignment of communities of interest and common ground with communities in the existing seat of Traeger.

The proposed changes cut across these well-established connections and create misalignment between community identity and electoral boundaries contrary to the QRC's guiding principles.

Feedback from member councils, including differing views on how best to preserve local identity and representation, has reinforced the need to ensure that any redistribution supports long-standing community linkages.

7. Opportunity to review methodology

Given Queensland's increasing population concentration in SEQ, FNQROC suggests it may be timely to review the broader methodology underpinning electoral boundaries to ensure the voices of communities across Queensland's vast regions remain genuinely represented.

It will become increasingly difficult for regions to ensure adequate community representation and political influence if the number of regional electorates are reduced and an increasing majority of Members and their staff are SEQ based.

We appreciate the diversity of viewpoints across FNQROC's membership, and this submission seeks to reflect the region's collective long-term interests while acknowledging individual councils' local considerations.

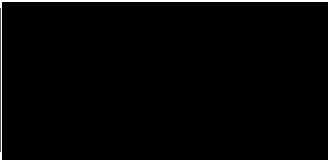
Recommendations

While acknowledging and supporting the detailed submissions of our member councils regarding proposed boundary realignments, particularly where these reflect communities of interest, communication and travel patterns, and local service connections; FNQROC recommends that the Queensland Redistribution Commission:

1. Retain the electorate voice of Hill, and
2. Review the methodology surrounding electoral boundaries to ensure regions outside SEQ have fair and equitable parliamentary representation into the future, particularly as population concentration in SEQ is supported by infrastructure and accelerates as a result.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the proposed changes. Should you have any queries regarding our submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Cr Angela Toppin AM
CHAIR