

Submission ID: CS-0123
Date Received: 13/9/25, 8:04 am
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Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Hinchinbrook
Related Submissions: Boundary realignment

Submission:

There are a number of reasons why transferring the Queensland seat of Hinchinbrook further north into North Queensland is a bad idea. The three key reasons relate to effective representation, community and political consequences.

For now, Hinchinbrook takes in a mixed patch including Townsville to Tully including such places as Ingham and Cardwell and some areas around Townsville's northern beaches area. This means that the boundaries deliver a middle-of-the-road voter community in which the city and regional seat – being tailored for both urban and country interests come with differing demand on their respective MP's.

Another option, moving the seat even further north, would break Hinchinbrook's links to Townsville – North Queensland's biggest regional centre and its political capital. Redistributions that reduce the number of regional seats like Hinchinbrook in favour of increasing seats in Brisbane shift political power and influence away from regional Queensland. This reduces regional representation and the ability of elected members to effectively advocate on behalf of their diverse communities, further weakening accountability mechanisms. When the power base in Brisbane increases, regional MPs voices are weakened.

The proposed realignment includes incorporating areas like Mission Beach, Innisfail, parts of the Tablelands, and Palm Island into Hinchinbrook. This creates a larger, less coherent electorate with diverse communities that have different interests and logistical challenges, compromising effective local representation. The LNP's submission in particular mentions Palm Island should be part of Hinchinbrook as 'Ferry Service from Lucinda'. In reality, ferry services are based in Townsville which puts into doubt the truth of anything the LNP has recommended.

These changes reduce the number of regional seats in favour of increasing seats in Brisbane and the south-east corner. This shift will dilute North Queensland's voice in state parliament, leading to fewer resources and political influence for regional communities.

These proposals as politically motivated risks favouring major parties whose policies align more with inner-city voters rather than regional Queenslanders. This will undermine fair representation of regional issues and exacerbate the existing urban-rural divide.

The abolition of neighboring seats such as Hill and merging large areas into new mega-seats covering vast distances, would make it difficult for MPs to effectively service their electorates.

In summary, realigning Hinchinbrook northwards risks disconnecting the electorate from its regional hub of Townsville, weakening political accountability, reducing regional representation, complicating effective service delivery, and enhancing the political dominance of the south-east corner at the

expense of North Queensland communities.