



Redistribution Committee  
Elections ACT  
Submission via online portal

3 December 2014

Dear Redistribution Committee Members,

I make this submission on behalf of the ACT Branch of the Australian Labor Party as the Secretary and Registered Officer.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the redistribution of electoral boundaries for the ACT. This is an historic moment for our Territory; the 2016 election will see the Legislative Assembly grow to 25 members and the number of electorates will increase from three to five.

This of course means a greater workload for the Electoral Commission and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the professionalism and conduct of Elections ACT in running our electoral system. The ACT has greatly benefited from the innovations that have been implemented by Elections ACT and our small democracy is all the better for it.

The Expert Reference Group review into the size of the Legislative Assembly presented a useful opportunity for the community to discuss the nature of democratic representation in the ACT and its findings and subsequent legislative changes inform our submission.

This submission will make a series of recommendations for the consideration of the Redistribution Committee regarding the placement of boundaries for the new electorates. This submission relies on the population projections released by the Redistribution Committee and the guidelines for submissions.

This submission will also make recommendations on appropriate names for the new electorates.

I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the redistribution process.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Byrne", enclosed in a large, loopy oval.

Matthew Byrne  
Secretary, ACT Labor

### **Boundaries for new electorates**

As we outlined in our submission to the Expert Reference Group's Review into the size of the ACT Legislative Assembly:

"The concept of "community of interest" is widely applied in democratic processes and an important consideration in electorate-based democracy. In the ACT "community of interest" arguments are most prevalent during regular electorate redistributions, the next one due in 2014. The current debate regarding Assembly size is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish a community-of-interest framework that can have a lasting positive impact on our representative democracy.

Canberra's suburban structure can be defined within a framework of 5-7 local townships with reasonably clear economic, social and regional interests as well as transport and physical features. These local communities would be the best basis for local electorates in a larger ACT Assembly.

The ACT's local communities are based on the "town centres" developed by the former National Capital Development Commission (NCDC): North and South Canberra is the original 'Burley Griffin' Canberra or what would be called inner city in other cities. Of the new towns Woden was first in the 1960s, followed by Belconnen and Weston Creek in the 1970s, then Tuggeranong in the late 1970s to 1980s. Gungahlin is the most recent dating from the 1990s."

ACT Labor has a clear position that, as far as reasonably possible, the five new electorates should be centred on the five most prominent town centres of the ACT: Tuggeranong, Woden Valley, Canberra City, Belconnen and Gungahlin.

It is our belief that the town centres of the ACT have developed distinct identities in the years since self-government and these deserve to be reflected in the redistribution. The growth in these town centres has affected how Canberrans live, work and play and we argue that they provide the Redistribution Committee with the most logical basis from which to draw new boundaries.

As you will see in the map we have submitted using the Mapping Tool we have recommended that the five electorates be formed as follows:

#### **'North'**

A 'North' electorate, centred on Gungahlin town centre, would take in the suburbs that make up the Gungahlin town centre area of the ACT namely:

Amaroo	Crace	Forde
Franklin	Harrison	Palmerston
Ngunnawal	Nicholls	Casey
Moncrieff	Jacka	Bonner
Hall	Gungahlin	Mitchell

These suburbs alone do not incorporate the current or projected populations that are required for the creation of a new electorate.

To bring a Gungahlin centred electorate up to the requisite population we take the view that a group of suburbs that have a similar community of interest with each other should be moved over. On that basis we recommend that a group of suburbs from the Belconnen area should be included in the new 'North' electorate.

These suburbs are:

Kaleen	Lawson	Giralang
Mackellar	Evatt	

The Belconnen area is too large to incorporate all of the suburbs that are associated with that town centre within one electorate. By moving a group of Belconnen suburbs together over into a Gungahlin centred electorate would ensure appropriate democratic representation for residents and maintains the integrity of electorates based on town centres.

There are also parallels with the current electorate of Ginninderra that we have taken into account when incorporating the abovementioned suburbs into the new 'North' electorate. The current electorate of Ginninderra is made up of suburbs that are primarily from the Belconnen area but also incorporate suburbs from the Gungahlin area.

By moving these Belconnen suburbs into a Gungahlin focussed electorate we believe that a similar level of representation would be afforded to residents as is the case for the residents of Gungahlin suburbs in the current electorate of Ginninderra.

### **Ginninderra:**

The current electorate of Ginninderra incorporates suburbs from the Belconnen and Gungahlin town centre areas. As discussed above, we believe that a small number of Belconnen suburbs will need to move into a Gungahlin centred electorate in order to comply with the guidelines set out by the Redistribution Committee.

With this movement taken into the account, we recommend that Ginninderra be redrawn to now consist of the following suburbs:

Belconnen	Bruce	Aranda	Cook
Macquarie	Hawker	Weetangera	Page
Scullin	Florey	Melba	Spence
Holt	Charnwood	Dunlop	Higgins
Latham	Flynn	Macgregor	Fraser

### **'West':**

In following with our recommendation that the five new electorates be based upon the five most prominent town centres of the ACT, we recommend that an electorate situated in the west of Canberra and centred on the Woden Valley and Weston Creek town centres be formed.

We envisage that such an electorate would incorporate the new Molonglo valley green fields developments as well as the suburbs that form the Woden Valley and Weston Creek areas.

As you will see below, we note that an electorate that is based on the current boundaries of Brindabella is too large to fit within the guidelines set out by the Redistribution Committee. We therefore recommend that the Woden Valley suburbs of Chifley, Pearce, Farrer and Torrens and the Tuggeranong suburb of Kambah be incorporated into the new 'West' electorate.

As the largest suburb in the ACT and the northernmost suburb in the Tuggeranong area, we believe that Kambah is best suited to move into the new 'West' electorate because of its community of

interest and its size. We also take the view that, as the population in the Molonglo Valley grows, Kambah should return back into Brindabella.

Weston	Coree	Stromlo District	Molonglo Valley
Denman Prospect	Molonglo	Wright	Coombs
Duffy	Holder	Curtin	Hughes
Lyons	Phillip	Garran	Rivett
Sterling	Waramanga	Chifley	O'Malley
Fisher	Pearce	Mawson	Isaacs
Torrens	Farrer	Woden Valley District	Weston Creek District
Kambah			

### Brindabella:

The current electorate of Brindabella incorporates suburbs from the Tuggeranong and Woden Valley town centre areas. As discussed above, we believe that the Woden Valley suburbs of Chifley, Pearce, Farrer and Torrens and the Tuggeranong suburb of Kambah need to be incorporated into the new 'West' electorate in order to comply with the guidelines set out by the Redistribution Committee and to align with our recommendation that the new electorates be centred on the five most prominent town centres.

With these movements taken into the account, we recommend that Brindabella be redrawn to now consist of the following suburbs:

Greenway	Oxley	Wanniassa	Fadden
Macarthur	Monash	Gowrie	Bonython
Isabella Plains	Richardson	Chisholm	Gilmore
Gordon	Calwell	Theodore	Conder
Banks	Tharwa	Paddy's River District	Hume

### Molonglo:

The final electorate that we recommend be formed should be based on the Canberra City town centre and incorporate the old 'Burley Griffin Canberra' suburbs of the inner north and south of Canberra as well as the eastern light industrial and rural areas of Fyshwick, Symonston, Pialligo, Oaks Estate, Jerrabomberra District and the Airport.

The inner north and south of Canberra are demographically similar to each other whilst presenting enough difference to the rest of the ACT to be considered a distinct part of the ACT deserving of its own democratic representation.

Canberra City	Reid	Dickson	Downer	Watson
Hackett	Acton	Turner	Braddon	O'Connor
Lyneham	Ainslie	Campbell	Majura District	Canberra Airport
Fyshwick	Pialligo	Symonston	Beard	Oaks Estate
Jerrabomberra District	Narrabundah	Red Hill	Griffith	Yarralumla
Kingston	Barton	Manuka	Deakin	Forrest
Capital Hill	Parkes	Russell		

You will have noticed that we have used the names 'North' and 'West' to represent the new electorates centred on Gungahlin and Woden Valley. These do not constitute our recommendations for the names of the new electorates. Our recommendations for the naming of electorates are outlined below.

### **Names for new electorates**

ACT Labor takes the view that consistency in the naming of electorates is helpful for ensuring that voters are aware of their electorate and are able to find some affinity with the name. We note that the names of the current electorates are Aboriginal words that describe distinctive natural features within the boundaries of the three electorates.

In terms of simplicity and consistency, we recommend that the names 'Brindabella', 'Ginninderra' and 'Molonglo' be retained and used to name the electorates centred on Tuggeranong (Brindabella), Belconnen (Ginninderra) and Canberra City (Molonglo).

Regarding names for the new electorates centred on Gungahlin and Woden Valley, ACT Labor is currently seeking the advice of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. We recommend that the Redistribution Committee seek the input of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council when determining names for the new electorates.

### **Conclusion**

This submission forms the basis from which we wish to engage the community-wide conversation about the nature of the boundaries and names for the new electorates for the ACT Legislative Assembly.

We believe that the electorates that we have presented provide for proper community representation, acknowledge the growing distinctive identities of the districts of the ACT and allow for flexibility in the face of future population growth.

We also believe that a majority of ACT residents want to belong to electorates that predominantly consist of suburbs close to where they live, work and play. We think that boundaries that reflect closely those that we have recommended in this submission will align with this point of view whilst allowing for strong representation in the Legislative Assembly.

We look forward to the submissions from the community as well as from other political parties and we look forward to seeing the recommendations of the Redistribution Committee.