



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Comment on public suggestion 1

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5 pages



This redistribution, while not nearly as complex as those in the larger states, certainly has provided some matters for consideration. There are three main thoughts in regard to this redistribution from the suggestions received: Mr Waddell, Dr Mulcair and I advocate conservative change, moving electors from Palmerston and Litchfield to make up numbers, our suggestions differing only in how far into Palmerston to extend the Division of Lingiari. Dr Mulcair suggests only Johnston, Zucolli and Mitchell, while I add Farrar, and Mr Waddell further adds Gunn.

Mr Gordon and the Country Liberals advocate conservative change moving electors from outer northern Darwin and Litchfield to make up numbers, with Mr Gordon advocating transferring Leanyer and Muirhead and the Country Liberals opting instead for Karama. Finally, the Hon Mr Snowdon on behalf of the ALP advocates a radical change involving significantly redrawing both divisions, and Dr Mulcair considers something similar. I had also momentarily contemplated a sweeping change to the boundary when I discovered that moving electors from Litchfield municipality would, in itself, be insufficient, as I was unhappy with breaking up either the Darwin or Palmerston LGA. In the end, I opted to maintain the status quo and make a far more moderate change.

All options presented have some merit and should be considered. The Palmerston option, in my opinion, makes more sense than Darwin, primarily for the reason of accessibility and lines of communication. The Darwin suburbs of Karamar, Leanyer and Muirhead would be almost as far removed from the rest of the proposed Division of Lingiari as one can get, connected contiguously via uninhabited bushland. The only road connection is via Vandelin Drive and the Stuart Highway, which forms the boundary of the division. Conversely, the eastern suburbs of Palmerston are more directly connected, as they are adjacent with the townships of Howard Springs and Virginia, already located in the Division of Lingiari. I determined that minimal changes could be accommodated, and only transferred the newer growth suburbs. Mr Waddell transfers Gunn, however, Gunn is an older suburb, and more closely related to the established areas of Palmerston. Likewise, Dr Mulcair transfers Johnston, Zucolli and Mitchell but not Farrar. Farrar was split from Gunn during the 80's but was not established as a separate area until 1999. This makes Farrar more similar to Johnston, by which it is directly connected, and Zucolli, than with Gunn, so I believe Farrar should naturally fit with these suburbs.

The more radical approach taken by the Hon Mr Snowdon certainly warrants consideration and, as similarly mentioned by Dr Mulcair, I had put some thought into transferring all of Palmerston into Lingiari, leaving Solomon comprised of Darwin, the Tiwi Islands and across the Top End and Arnhem Land to include Jabiru, Kakadu and

Nhulunbuy. I, however, dismissed this approach before deciding on any boundaries or making elector calculations, as I considered Darwin and the Top End to have considerable differences in community of interest and little direct lines of communication.

I read Mr Snowdon's proposal with interest, and undertook some preliminary population calculation and have attached maps to assist, outlining my suggestion at the end of this comment. Using the Stuart Highway from the South Australian border was surprisingly easy to accommodate, splitting Alice Springs perfectly, and continuing to Barkly LGA (with potentially some minor deviations around Ti Tree and Barrow Creek). At this point, I deviated from the Stuart Highway to the Darwin–Adelaide rail line, enabling Tennant Creek to be completely included in the eastern Division. At the Roper Gulf LGA boundary, or alternatively, at Buchanan Highway, the boundary would realign with the Stuart Highway until the Katherine LGA. All of Katherine LGA would be included in the western Division, then following Victoria Daly LGA, back to the railway and then incorporating all of Coomalie LGA in the western Division. The boundary then realigns again with Stuart Highway, Palmerston LGA and then follows the Stuart Highway to Darwin CBD.

Unfortunately, there are far too many electors in the eastern Division for this to be viable, without either incorporating all of Alice Springs or more of Darwin into the western Division. Combining Alice Springs in the one Division undermines the very purpose Mr Snowdon states for his approach and including more of Darwin would mean that the eastern Division would then either wrap around Fannie Bay and the coast, or only include the northern suburbs, bringing us once again to the same dilemma that Darwin suburbs attach to some other unconnected part of the Territory.

I look forward to seeing the Committee's proposed draft, whichever method they choose, and I would like to take a moment to also thank Mr Gordon, Mr Waddell and Dr Mulcair for their hard work and considered and sound suggestions. Having participated in these and previous redistributions, it is evident that this is certainly a time consuming and thankless task. I can only assume that their families must feel neglected for weeks on end, growing bored of explanations of SA1s and LGAs, as mine certainly does. While I appreciate the work and efforts of the political parties, it is the dedication and work of my fellow individual electoral enthusiasts that I feel deserves special recognition.



Suggested "radical" change boundary





