

23 February 2017

Ms Michelle Davy
Executive Officer
Legislative Council Electoral Redistribution Tribunal
PO Box 307
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Dear Ms Davy

2016-17 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES REDISTRIBUTION

This is a personal submission commenting on the Initial Redistribution Proposal as published by the Committee on 28 January 2017.

PROPOSED NEW ELECTORATE NAME OF MCINTYRE

At the outset, I commend the Committee for proposing that a Legislative Council electorate should be named in honour of the Hon. Margaret Edgeworth McIntyre, OBE. Mrs McIntyre was, as the Committee knows, the first woman to be a member of either House of the Parliament of Tasmania and had given significant community service before her election to the Legislative Council. It was a tragedy that, not long after her election, her life was ended in an air accident. Only one electorate in Tasmania is named in honour of a woman, and that one only in part: the electorate of Lyons which was created in 1984 and named for *both* the late Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. Joseph Lyons, CH, and the Hon. Dame Enid Lyons, AD, GBE.

PROPOSED NEW ELECTORATE NAME OF PROSSER

May I sound a word of caution about this proposed new name? While there are certainly a number of geographical features with the name 'Prosser' in the South-East, there are equally a number of features elsewhere in Tasmania with that name: Prosser's Forest near Ravenswood, Prosser's Road at Nunamara, and the Prossers Forest State Reserve, north-east of Launceston. There may be others.

If a new South-East electorate is to be created, a name more readily identifiable with the area, such as 'Freycinet', may be more apposite. A good first principle when choosing a new official name for something is: will it cause confusion? An example

where that question was not asked is the naming of Windermere Primary School at Claremont, some 200 kilometres from the town (and electorate) of Windermere.

THE DATA USED FOR DETERMINING THE BOUNDARIES GENERALLY

While appreciating that there is a legislative imperative that has compelled this redistribution, I am concerned at the historical nature of the data that has been available to the Committee to project enrolments and therefore make assessments about the ‘tolerance’ applicable to Legislative Council electorates. It would seem that the data used is dated 30 June 2015. At first blush, it appears to the reader that the data is only some eighteen months old. However, Appendix III of the Initial Redistribution Proposal seems to say that the ‘30 June 2015’ data was actually based on *preliminary* projections of Tasmania’s estimated resident population gathered by the ABS and published in 2012, updated by some projection formula.

So, at best, the verified basis for the enrolment formulae applied by the Committee is at least five years old. This is not meant as a criticism of the Committee, because it can only work with the figures available to it to comply with the timelines in the legislation, but my concern is that such old data might have the effect of fatally undermining the statistical assumptions in this exercise, and therefore the suggested boundary changes.

This point is especially important when the initial proposal affects every one of the current 15 Legislative Council boundaries.

Within the constraints of the task given to the Tribunal, I would urge that serious consideration be given to whether data that is at least five years old today (and will be at least 6 years old when this distribution first takes effect) is a reliable statistical basis on which to fulfil the task. If the Tribunal shares this concern about accurate data, it could make appropriate submissions to the authorities and the Parliament.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ABOUT INITIAL PROPOSAL – COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

Without derogating from the above concern, I make some limited comments about the Initial Redistribution Proposal.

In my view, the Committee (and the Tribunal) should not set about their task by simply applying an arithmetic formula but should take into account certain expectations of the community that are consistent with public confidence in an electoral redistribution.

Public confidence in the integrity of our electoral system not only expects generally equal numbers of electors in electorates but also that the boundaries take account of geographic features and communities of interest, such as major centres and transport

links. To undertake a redistribution based only on the maths is, I submit, clearly not what the Parliament intended by the very reason that it included in the Act extensive provisions allowing for public objections and comments at the stages of the process.

Hadspen

The proposal to place the township of Hadspen in the proposed division of McIntyre ignores the community of interest that Hadspen has with Launceston. Effectively, Hadspen is now a suburb of Launceston as acknowledged with the House of Representatives and House of Assembly boundary adjustments which identified the South Esk River as a natural and desirable electoral boundary. To place Hadspen in the same electorate as Emita but a different electorate from Prospect Vale seems perverse.

Perth

Following the same logic, placing Perth and Devon Hills in the division of Launceston does not seem entirely consistent with the principle of community of interest when the closely adjacent towns of Longford and Evandale are proposed to be in a different electorate.

I wish the Committee and the Tribunal well in its challenging task, but close by again reiterating my concern at the age of the population data being used in this process.

Yours sincerely,

(Don Morris)