



AUSTRALIAN
LABOR
PARTY
Tasmania

06 March 2008



Mr Richard Bingham
Chairperson
Legislative Council Electoral Redistribution Tribunal
Reply Paid 300
GPO Box 300
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Bingham,

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY RESPONSE TO THE INITIAL REDISTRIBUTION PROPOSAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) Tasmanian Branch makes the following comments and objections in respect to the above Redistribution Proposal published by the Redistribution Committee on 9 February 2008.

The ALP also advises that it wishes to be heard at the Public Hearing in respect to this issue and our representatives at that hearing will be Mr Doug Parkinson MLC, Member for Wellington and Mr John Dowling, State Secretary.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR REDISTRIBUTION

The only authority for this Redistribution Proposal is Section 10(1) and Section 10(2)(b) of the Act¹, because the requirement for section 10(2)(a) to apply have not been satisfied.

In simple terms the only reason for the proposal is that 9 years has elapsed since the last redistribution. That being the case, a redistribution "is to commence" under the authority of section 10(c) of the Act.

LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION OF THE COMMITTEE IE THE TASK

The Committee is required to formulate an initial redistribution proposal in accordance with Section 13 of the Act, which details two priorities that the Committee must take into account and four other matters that the Committee "must consider" after the two priorities have been taken into account.

¹ Legislative Council Electoral Boundaries Act 1995

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Initial Redistribution Proposal itself notes that the Committee's statutory responsibilities "could wholly" be discharged by an adjustment to the Divisions of Derwent and Elwick.

The proposal states that "only the division of Elwick, at -10.1 % would fail to meet the statutory requirement of being within 10 % of ADE in 2012, 4 ½ years after the current redistribution", and "its immediate neighbour, Derwent is projected to move to + 9.1 %" which is moving close to the statutory variation limit.

The Australian Labor Party notes that from there, the Committee appears to have drawn a long bow towards the position that might apply in 2016. Unless there is some reputable statistical basis for projection to 2016 the Tribunal should reconsider the assumption.

This redistribution proposal applies boundary changes to southern municipalities but does not demonstrate a rationale for how these divisions will expand in the future. The initial proposal impacts on communities of interest and access about the division. These are criteria recognised by the Committee as necessary to have regard to.

For example, while the initial redistribution identifies a slight growth in the southern divisions this should not imply that this will not soon be countered by a greater future growth in the northern suburbs.

The redistribution should endeavour where possible to reduce geographic growth in the three larger rural Divisions; Murchison, Rowallan and Apsley.

There does not appear to have been a demonstrable effort to rectify significant issues in the North West relating to community of interest. For example the Latrobe municipality which has significant social and economic ties with the Mersey Division remains within Rowallan and the City of Burnie continues to be split between Murchison and Montgomery. Similarly parts of the Central Coast, Forth and Turners Beach remain in the Division of Mersey.

DIVISION NAMES

Wellington and Paterson should revert to their original Legislative Council names. See further comment below.

ROWALLAN

The Initial Redistribution states the recommended changes retain the character of the division as a rural division. However, if this is the case Port Sorell as a future growth area should be absorbed into Mersey which may in turn require adjustment to the boundaries of Montgomery and Murchison.

MURCHISON, MONTGOMERY AND MERSEY

The Tribunal should further investigate the incorporation of Latrobe and Port Sorell townships into Mersey and subsequent domino changes to the boundaries of Montgomery and Murchison.

The Tribunal should also investigate the feasibility of moving the Montgomery boundary east to the Blythe River and include in that Division, the Turners Beach and Forth communities.

The hinterland of Burnie whilst being in the Burnie City Council could possibly remain in Montgomery.

The geographical size of Murchison could be reduced by transferring the West Coast Municipal area to Rowallan thus, alleviating some of the potential exceeding of the statutory requirements 10% of ADE, from the inclusion of the Burnie City area into Murchison.

It is recognised this would see an increase to the geographic size of the Division of Rowallan however the Division would maintain a common community of interest that it already has through the Federal Electorate of Lyons.

WELLINGTON

Having taken into account the "first priority"² the Committee should give more weight to the strong community of interest that exists in Lutana and Moonah.

The Brooker Highway is not the great divide that is sometimes assumed; indeed Bowen Road Primary School draws its students from across the suburbs of Moonah and Lutana; as do St Therese's and Moonah Primary.

The "second priority" would be better satisfied by continuing the current division boundary along Derwent Park Road and into Springfield Avenue, including the bulk of West Moonah, along with East Moonah and Lutana in the division of Wellington.

This would also satisfy at least 3 of the other "matters" ((a),(b) & (d)) that the Committee must take into account.³

What appears to have again been overlooked by the Committee is the strong community of interest between South and West Hobart which would provide a better alternative proposal.

² Section 13 (2) (a) of the Act.

³ Section 13(3)

By shifting the southern boundary into Sandy Bay and Dynnyme the Committee seems to overlook the reality that there is little community of interest between Battery Point and these areas; except perhaps for some interaction provided by Marieville Esplanade, Albuera Street Primary (a very small school) and the Sandy Bay shops (which actually draws customers from far and wide).

The Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Labor Party formally objects to this proposal and as an alternative submits the southern boundary of Wellington should in the main be based upon the Sandy Bay Rivulet. This alternative is attached and shown as ALP Option 3.

The ALP also proposes a small residential block between Hilborough Road and Huon Road also be included as part of the alternative.

If it is necessary for Wellington to pick up electors from the division of Nelson then the South Hobart suburb is the natural choice considering its former placement in Wellington. It would rejoin the suburbs of Hobart, West Hobart, and North Hobart that currently form part of Wellington.

The division's natural expansion is north into Elwick to assist in the push to take pressure off Derwent.

It is natural for Wellington to retain Moonah and in fact push further north to use Springfield Avenue as its northern Boundary.

The southern boundaries for Wellington changed at the 1994 redistribution when South Hobart was excluded from the division. This caused confusion and anger amongst electors. Elector confusion should be considered and minimised.

The division should return to its original name of Hobart in keeping with the appropriateness of all capital cities having the division named after the city; such as Canberra, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth

DIVISION NAMES

Wellington should be re-named Hobart. Most of this electorate was formerly called Hobart, and it is reasonable to argue that the division containing the CBD of the Capital City should carry the name of that City.

Tasmania is the only State not to have a Parliamentary division named after the Capital City.

No more weight can be given to naming Hobart after Mt Wellington than say Nelson or Elwick.

A similar argument can be mounted for Paterson being re-named Launceston, like the regional cities of Wollongong, Ballarat, Kalgoorlie, Bendigo etc, the city of Launceston should be represented by name in a Parliamentary division.

ROSEVEARS

There is no immediate need to alter boundaries which naturally will expand into Rowallan in the future.

PATERSON

A name reversal back to Launceston is appropriate in this redistribution. Throughout Australia electoral divisions are named after the regional city their area encompasses. For example the cities of Wollongong, Ballarat, Kalgoorlie and Bendigo.

WINDERMERE

The transfer of George Town into Windermere is logical and allows for future expansion in that area.

APSLEY

The population of Apsley will continue to grow. Boundary reductions at the northern and southern edges will allow the member to service electors.

To increase the size of this huge division is unwise especially with likely long term growth in the east coast townships which cannot be accommodated in any other electorate.

The area of Dromedary could be included in Derwent which is significantly a rural division especially if Elwick moves north to include parts of Claremont.

DERWENT

It is the Australian Labor Party's submission that the Tribunal should test alternative scenarios for the southern part of Derwent proposed to be transferred to Elwick.

The Brooker Highway is not a natural divide for division boundaries. Suburbs are split, communities of interest cross this road divide, and families cross this road to attend school, shopping centres, church and local recreational facilities.

The school communities at Abbotsfield Primary, Roseneath Primary and Holy Rosary School are disenfranchised by the initial proposals.

Similarly the Claremont Football and Cricket Club's are equally disenfranchised.

As an alternative the ALP submits that alternative scenarios should be investigated with the northern border of Elwick being based on one of the three following boundaries;

Box Hill Road
Abbotsfield Creek
Abbotsfield Road

What ever of these scenarios first meets the ADE requirements should become the new southern boundary for Derwent.

PEMBROKE AND RUMNEY

These adjustments are supported

ELWICK

The ALP makes the general comment that Elwick needs to move north to take pressure off a growing Derwent as set out in this submission.

Elwick should not be pushed south into Wellington as projected and actual enrolment as published in the Initial Redistribution Proposals does not support any need to interfere with the boundaries of Wellington..

NELSON

Nelson needs to retain the Sandy Bay area proposed for Wellington.

HUON

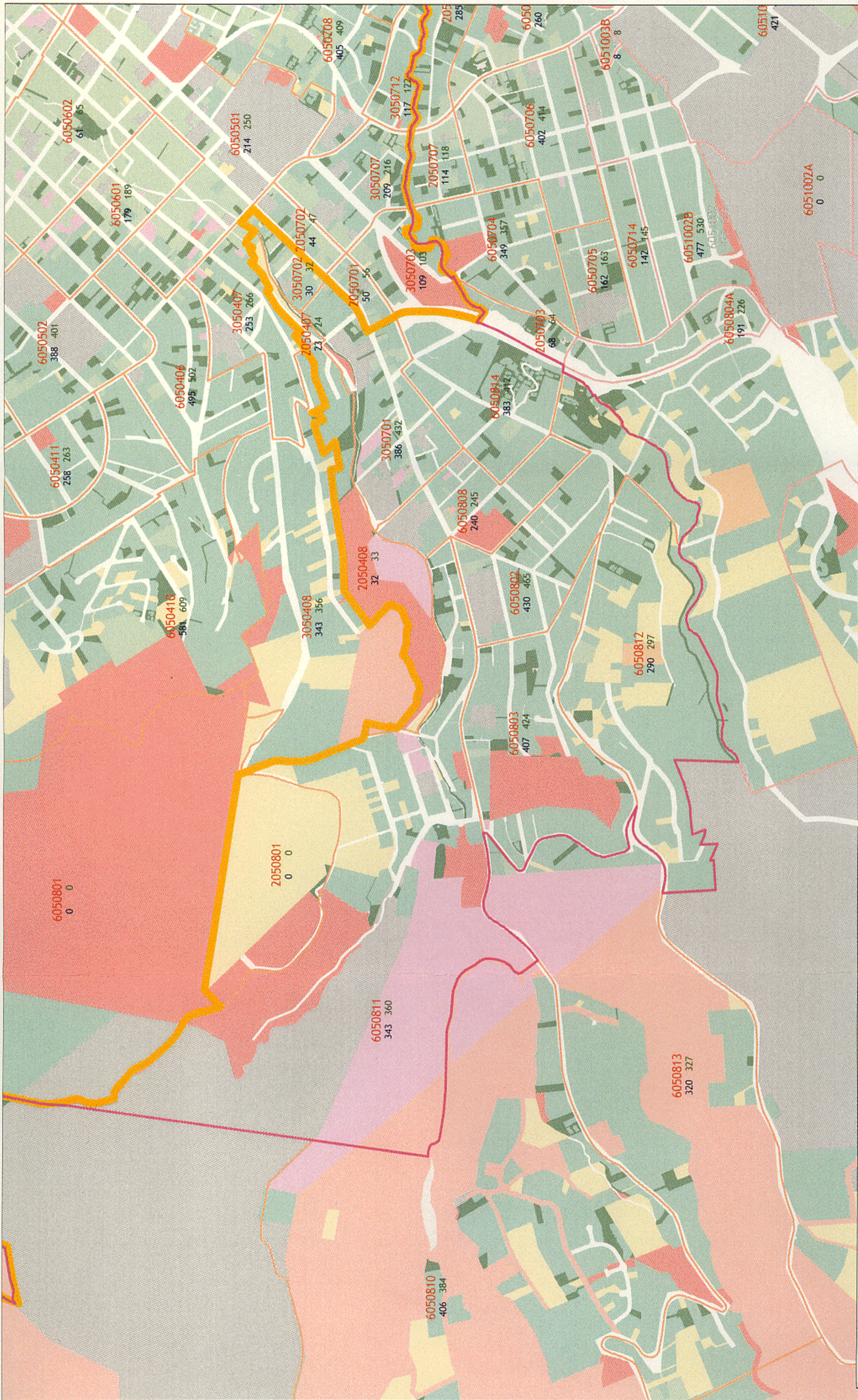
Further growth in the southern divisions may be hampered by access and traffic limitations of the Southern Outlet.

The Australian Labor Party trusts the Tribunal will give this submission and objection its fullest consideration and looks forward to further advice on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



John Dowling
STATE SECRETARY



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