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Legislative Council Electoral Redistribution Tribunal  
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To whom it may concern

I would like to register an objection to one of the proposed changes to the Derwent Electorate, being the transferal of the remainder of the LGA - Central Highlands (CH) to the Rowallan Electorate. The current proposal treats the residents of the CH as nothing more than numbers and categorically rejects every other aspect of their existence.

I suggest the statement "The proposal has the advantage of unifying Central Highlands LGA in a single division" as being nothing more than a poor attempt to justify what is a very inadequate investigation into potential changes. Under the current proposal there does not appear to be the same urgency to "unify" the City of Glenorchy electors, such that the residents of Claremont (even though one could throw a stone from one yard to another) are spread across the Elwick and Derwent Electorates.

The changes as currently proposed would have a significant effect on what are predominately southern-based local rural communities. That anyone could propose that the needs of residents in Sheffield, Railton and Port Sorell are similar to those in Wayatinah, Derwent Bridge, Bronte Park and Ouse is nothing short of astonishing.

I accept that the proposal meets the underlying objective of equal quotas (+/- 10%) as defined in the Legislative Council Electoral Boundaries Act 1995. However, if one looks at the projected enrolments in Rowallan for 2012, one is left to wonder why the change needs to be made at all.

I also believe that the proposal fails several of the other, if not all, criteria that the Redistribution Committee "must" consider. Eg the following items:

- the means of communication and travel within the division
- the physical features and area of the division
- existing electoral boundaries
- distinct natural boundaries

#### **Discussion**

The Derwent Valley has been settled since the early 1800's and as a result a number of the families and businesses that exist in the region have now been there for 6, 7 to 8 generations and naturally they have dispersed throughout the region. As a result the needs of people within the communities of Ouse, Hamilton and Bothwell (the three major communities within the

Central Highlands Municipality) are basically similar to those immediately to the South such as New Norfolk and Brighton.

The majority of Government Departments and GBE's recognise the Derwent Valley and the CH municipalities as a distinct region. A quick review of the education department website reveals that the Bothwell and Ouse High Schools form part of the Learning Services South region and as a result are feeder schools to Claremont College and Elizabeth Matric.

Hydro - Tasmania has a Derwent catchment that picks up the majority of the CH - the only exception being the Great Lake, which has been artificially redirected to the North.

Forestry Tasmania - has distinct management plans for Derwent and Mersey.

Residents of CH read the Mercury newspaper and not the Examiner and drink Cascade Beer and not Boags, as do the voters in the current Rowallan District.

Farmers in the CH buy the majority of their farming needs from Roberts and Webster's at Bridgewater not Loones at Westbury.

Ouse, Bothwell and Hamilton are within 90km of Hobart i.e. the majority of the population of CH is located close to the Southern extremities of the CH region.

CH is contained within the Derwent River Catchment

The Great Western Tiers form a very significant natural boundary between the two regions that significantly reduces the interaction between the communities. The only direct linkage from the upper reaches of the Derwent Valley to the North are the Marlborough and Lake Secondary Roads, both of which are gravel and impacted upon by snow and ice during the winter months.

Health needs of the CH communities are met by hospitals located within the Greater Hobart area.

Brighton, Derwent Valley and Central Highland Councils have a resource sharing arrangement.

In the majority of instances any goods and services required are sourced from the greater Hobart area, not Launceston.

Gretna and Ouse field cricket teams in the Derwent Valley Cricket Association. Young aspiring football players play in Southern based school and senior competitions.

### **Discussion of Statistics**

CH component of existing Derwent proposed for change has just over 1000 voters, which is predicted to decrease to just under 1000 by 2012. Total voter growth in Rowallan over the same period is estimate at 1300. This would indicate that by 2012 the existing Rowallan Division would nearly achieve the desired quota without the addition of the CH Voters.

By 2012 - Rowallan is predicted to have the largest enrolment, without any contribution in growth from the CH component and will exceed the average by 2.4%. This fact alone would indicate that there is no logically reason for moving a Southern Based population into a Northern Electorate. I call it a Northern Electorate because of the ratio of electors being approximately 1:20 for electors South of the Western Tier vs North of the Western TIER.

## Conclusion

The majority of residents of CH "Work, Rest and Play" within the Greater Hobart, Derwent Valley and Central Highlands regions and have very little interaction with those North of The Great Western Tiers. Under the proposal the current electors of CH who reside in the Derwent electorate will lose their identity courtesy of the 1:20 ratio of voters.

It is unreasonable to expect that a Northern based elected member will be sensitive to the immediate needs of a predominately Southern based population such as exists within the CH Municipality.

Every decision that is made in Brighton, New Norfolk, Glenorchy and Hobart directly affects the communities of Ouse, Bothwell and Hamilton - the same cannot be said for changes in Deloraine, Longford, Devonport and Launceston.

The proposed modifications (although totally unwarranted given the allowance of +/- 10% between divisions) to the Quotas for Elwick and Derwent can be achieved by modifying the existing boundary between the two regions, such that the new Elwick contains a larger part of Glenorchy City. As a further investigation of "unification options" it would also be worthwhile investigating the option of moving Bothwell into the Derwent Electorate.

One of the most amusing aspects of the current proposals is that given the anticipated voter growth (2007 - 2012) in the new Rowallan electorate (and remembering there is no growth anticipated in the CH component), the next time there is a review the most likely outcome is that CH will need to be removed to prop up the growth deficiencies from ADE within the Apsley (-3.6%) and Derwent (-1.9%) electorates. With a minimal amount of effort by the investigation team, these deficiencies could be overcome now, such that there would be no need for change in 2012.

Change for change sake by ignoring the terms of reference / protocols for making change would appear to be nothing more than a group of bureaucrats trying to justify their own existence.

I would be happy to discuss any aspect of this discussion with whoever, whenever.

Yours sincerely



Ian Booth

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