

Review of Divisional Boundaries

2019 FINAL DETERMINATION
SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Change Commission (Change Commission) is an independent body established under the *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)* (the Act). The Change Commission is responsible for periodically reviewing the internal boundaries of divided councils so that each division has relatively the same number of enrolled voters. This upholds the key democratic principle of ‘one vote, one value’, by ensuring each person’s vote carries the same weight.

The Change Commission has finalised its assessment of the Scenic Rim Regional Council’s divisions. This report outlines the recommended divisional boundaries and sets out the reasons for the Change Commission’s decisions. Maps of the final boundaries are attached at Appendix A.

The Change Commission for this review consists of:

- Mr Pat Vidgen, Electoral Commissioner;
- Mr Wade Lewis, Casual Commissioner; and
- Mr Peter McGraw, Casual Commissioner.

The casual commissioners were appointed by the Governor in Council on 1 November 2018.

Background

On 26 March 2019, the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP referred a divisional boundary review of the Scenic Rim Regional Council (see Appendix B).

In conducting its assessment, the Change Commission was legally required to ensure each division of the Council has a reasonable proportion of enrolled voters, herein referred to as ‘quota’. Community interests, public submissions and easy-to-identify boundaries were also considered.

Table 1 shows the Council’s enrolment quota as at 31 January 2019 and the projected quota for 31 March 2024.

| Table 1 – Current and Projected Enrolment Quota | | |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| | 31 January 2019 | 31 March 2024 |
| Number of divisions | 6 | 6 |
| Enrolment | 29,322 | 32,683 |
| Quota per division | 4,887 | 5,447 |
| Quota (+10%) per division | 5,376 | 5,992 |
| Quota (-10%) per division | 4,398 | 4,902 |

Determining the quota

A quota is determined by dividing the total number of enrolled voters by the number of councillors (other than the mayor), plus or minus 10%. The Change Commission also considers projected enrolment, so the divisions remain in quota for as long as possible.

Current enrolment data has been sourced from Queensland's electoral roll and projected enrolment data from the Queensland Government Statistician's Office of Queensland Treasury. Projections are based on the timing of future local government quadrennial elections.

Enrolment information is based on 'Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1)'. SA1s are geographical units used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the release of census data. According to the ABS most SA1s have a population of between 200 to 800 persons with an average population of approximately 400 people.

Current and projected enrolment data are available for download on the Scenic Rim Regional local government review webpage on the Electoral Commission of Queensland's (ECQ) website.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

The Change Commission may conduct its assessments in any way it deems appropriate, unless the Minister has provided specific directions.

The process for this review is as follows:

1. Inviting suggestions
2. Publication of the Change Commission's proposal
3. Inviting comments on the proposal
4. Publication of the Change Commission's final determination report
5. Final determination report provided to the Minister for Local Government, for implementation by the Governor in Council
6. New boundaries come into effect at the 2020 Local Government Quadrennial Election

Existing Divisions

The Scenic Rim Regional Council has 29,322 voters and is divided into six single-member electoral divisions plus a mayor.

Table 2 shows the current and projected enrolment for the Council's existing divisional boundaries. As at 31 January 2019, Division 2 was out of quota and in 2024, Divisions 2, 3 and 5 are projected to be out of quota.

| Division | Enrolment as at 31/01/2019 | (%) Deviation from Quota | Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024 | (%) Deviation from Quota |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Division 1 | 4,807 | -1.64 | 4,976 | -8.65 |
| Division 2 | 5,513 | 12.81 | 6,330 | 16.21 |
| Division 3 | 5,059 | 3.52 | 6,054 | 11.14 |
| Division 4 | 4,699 | -3.85 | 5,297 | -2.76 |
| Division 5 | 4,456 | -8.82 | 4,857 | -10.83 |
| Division 6 | 4,788 | -2.03 | 5,169 | -5.11 |

Public Suggestions

The Change Commission sought public suggestions to assist in developing its proposal. Advertisements were placed in The Courier-Mail, the Queensland Times and on the ECQ's website and social media.

Suggestions were invited from 27 April 2019 to 5pm 13 May 2019. Seven submissions were received and are available to view at Appendix C.

The Scenic Rim Regional Council recommended:

- SA1 3130529 (Palen Creek area) be transferred from Division 3 to Division 5;
- SA1 3130525 (Rathdowney area) be transferred from Division 3 to Division 5; and
- SA1 3130519 (Gleneagle area) be transferred from Division 2 to Division 4.

The Change Commission supported the first two changes and transferred Palen Creek and Rathdowney to Division 5 in its proposal, as well as some additional suburbs to increase Division 5's enrolment. The Change Commission did not propose transferring SA1 3130519 as the Mount Lindesay Highway appeared to be a clear boundary in the area.

One submission requested the Tamrookum Creek Road area move to either Division 3 or 4, however as Rathdowney and the surrounding suburbs have moved to the proposed Division 5, this addressed the submitter's accessibility concerns regarding their councillor.

The Change Commission also sought to address suggestions regarding the Tamborine Mountain area. Two suggestions from members of the Tamborine Mountain Progress

Association Inc. (TMPA) requested SA1 3124215 move to Division 1 as it would satisfy the major community of interest and other considerations of the review. The Change Commission agreed with the TMPA reasoning and accepted this proposal. It was unable to accommodate another request to incorporate SA1 3124229 (also part of the Tamborine Mountain suburb) in Division 1. This was not feasible from an enrolment perspective and could not be actioned. The Change Commission proposed altering the boundaries of Division 3 to take this portion of Tamborine Mountain, citing its apparent connectivity by road to the Canungra area.

Two other Tamborine Mountain submissions were unable to be actioned. One submitter wanted the Tamborine Mountain suburb, postcode 4272 area, to be united in Division 1. However, this was not feasible from an enrolment perspective. The second submission requested Tamborine Mountain be included in the Gold Coast City Council. This request was outside the scope of this internal boundary review.

One submission asked for Gleneagle to be united in Division 4 and Kooralbyn in Division 5. The Change Commission was unable to accommodate this request due to the high number of voters in the Gleneagle area. Instead, the proposed boundaries united Kooralbyn within Division 4.

Proposed Determination

The Change Commission published its proposal on 21 June 2019 and the following day public comments were invited. Advertisements inviting comments on the proposal were placed in The Courier Mail, the Queensland Times and on the ECQ's website and social media.

The proposal considered both current and projected enrolment data as well as the views expressed within the public submissions. It brought enrolment in each division into quota while making a concerted effort to follow suburb boundaries, uniting entire localities within individual divisions. Maps of the proposed boundaries are available to view at Appendix D.

Comments on the Proposal

Comments on the proposal were invited from 22 June 2019 to 5pm 8 July 2019. Four comments were received and are available at Appendix E.

Three of the four submissions discussed the Tamborine Mountain area and more specifically objected to the proposed inclusion of parts of this locality within Division 3. The submitters noted their concerns that this change would result in electors being forgotten if grouped with Canungra and that Division 3 issues are different from Division 1 issues.

The other submission came from the Scenic Rim Regional Council. The Council stated the proposed boundaries were different from their suggestion and raised the following concerns:

- community connectivity, particularly that Aratula is split between Divisions 5 and 6;
- the number and degree of change causing potential community confusion; and
- the need for ECQ to clearly communicate changes to the affected communities.

As the Change Commission had implemented two out of three of the Council's suggested changes in its proposal, it sought further advice regarding their comment. Information

regarding Aratula and justifications for the proposed transfer of SA1 3130519 were requested. The Council provided its response on 30 July 2019, however noted that it does not recommend further changes beyond the proposal, and that these changes should be considered for future reviews.

The Change Commission determined to implement both changes recommended by Council and has discussed its reasoning in the section below. Regarding the other remarks, the Change Commission notes that it is required by law to conduct these reviews and determines boundaries with the intent that they endure beyond one election cycle. In doing so, the aim is to reduce the need for regular reviews and thereby limit disruption to voters and councils. The ECQ will liaise with the Council closer to the 2020 Local Government Election regarding its communication activities and plans.

Changes to the Proposal

After considering the information provided in the public submissions, the Change Commission has made some modifications to its proposed boundaries.

Maps of the proposed boundaries are attached at Appendix D and can be compared with the final division maps at Appendix A. The changes are also discussed below:

Divisions 1, 2 and 3

As noted in the proposal, there are too many electors within Tamborine Mountain for the suburb to be completely united within Division 1. However, considering the public feedback received, the Change Commission reversed some of the boundary changes in this area, so that the parts of Tamborine Mountain that are outside Division 1, are located in Division 2.

To accommodate this change, the boundaries of Divisions 2 and 3 has been modified to:

- follow the existing Beaudesert Nerang Road boundary in the Tabragalba and Biddaddaba area; and
- unite the Benobble locality and the remaining portions of Tamborine Mountain situated outside Division 1 within Division 2.

Division 2 and 4

The Change Commission reconsidered the Council's suggestion to transfer SA1 3130519 to Division 4 after receiving further information from Council which revealed the community within this SA1 mostly associates with Division 4. As a result, the Change Commission has supported the boundary modification.

Divisions 3, 4 and 5

To accommodate the changes to Divisions 1, 2 and 3, the Change Commission has returned the shared boundary between Divisions 3 and 4 to follow the Mount Lindesay Highway.

In the south the final boundaries have united the suburb of Tamrookum within Division 5. At present this locality is divided between Divisions 3 and 5, and the proposal had united it within Division 4.

Divisions 4, 5 and 6

The other main change between the proposed and final boundaries is between Divisions 5 and 6. The Council provided advice that the suburb of Aratula is currently split between these divisions. The Change Commission had maintained the existing boundary in this area, however is of the view that Aratula should be united. In doing so, this alleviates the connectivity concerns identified by the Council. While noting the Council's recommendation to address this matter at a future review, as it was possible to rectify the issue now, it seemed logical to do so.

One other modification has been made to unite the suburb of Allandale within Division 5. The proposed boundaries had placed it within Division 6, however this change enables both the Allandale and Aratula suburbs to be wholly contained within Divisions 5 and 6 respectively.

FINAL DETERMINATION

After assessing the material submitted and having considered the requirements of the Act, it is recommended that the proposed boundaries, with the aforementioned changes, become the final divisions for the Scenic Rim Regional Council.

It is noted that the implementation of this recommendation is expected to result in the following divisional enrolment:

| Table 3 – Summary of Enrolment for the Final Divisions | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Division | Enrolment as at 31/01/2019 | (%) Deviation from Quota | Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024 | (%) Deviation from Quota |
| Division 1 | 5,130 | 4.97 | 5,305 | -2.61 |
| Division 2 | 4,899 | 0.25 | 5,538 | 1.67 |
| Division 3 | 4,599 | -5.89 | 5,617 | 3.12 |
| Division 4 | 4,967 | 1.64 | 5,704 | 4.71 |
| Division 5 | 4,777 | -2.25 | 5,151 | -5.44 |
| Division 6 | 4,950 | 1.29 | 5,368 | -1.45 |

RECOMMENDATION

The Change Commission has provided its assessment to the Minister for Local Government and recommends the Governor in Council implement its final boundaries.

The Change Commission's final recommendation is as follows:

- for the purpose of the 2020 Local Government Quadrennial Election, the Scenic Rim Regional Council be redivided into six divisions as shown in the maps contained in Appendix A.

In accordance with the Act, the Change Commission has published a notice of results in the Government Gazette, a newspaper circulating in the local government area and on the ECQ website.



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