

Review of Divisional Boundaries

2019 FINAL DETERMINATION
SOUTH BURNETT 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 South Burnett 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 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 South Burnett 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 Council Quota		
	31 January 2019	31 March 2024
Number of divisions	6	6
Enrolment	22,802	23,638
Quota per division	3,800	3,940
Quota (+10%) per division	4,180	4,334
Quota (-10%) per division	3,420	3,546

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 South Burnett 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 Electoral Divisions

The South Burnett Regional Council has 22,802 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 4 was close to the quota with 4,173 voters (9.81%) and had exceeded the quota in the previous month of December 2018.

Division	Enrolment as at 31/01/2019	(%) Deviation from Quota	Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024	(%) Deviation from Quota
Division 1	3,690	-2.9	3,860	-2.02
Division 2	3,754	-1.22	3,925	-0.37
Division 3	3,751	-1.3	3,863	-1.95
Division 4	4,173	9.81	4,308	9.35
Division 5	3,521	-7.35	3,609	-8.39
Division 6	3,913	2.96	4,073	3.38

Public Suggestions

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

Suggestions were invited from 27 April 2019 to 5pm 13 May 2019. No submissions were received during this period. On 25 February 2019, the South Burnett Regional Council recommended minor changes to Divisions 4, 5 and 6, however made no specific boundary suggestions. This submission is available to view at Appendix C.

Proposed Determination

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

The Change Commission's proposal considered both current and projected enrolment data as well as the views expressed by the Council.

The proposal brought enrolment in each division into quota and a concerted effort was made to follow suburb boundaries, uniting entire localities within individual divisions.

Comments on the Proposal

Comments on the proposal were invited from 22 June 2019 to 5pm 8 July 2019. One comment was received and can be viewed at Appendix D.

The submission raised issues that were outside the scope of this review and was unable to be considered. The Change Commission cannot consider reducing the size or de-amalgamating the Council, unless directed by the Minister. As such, no corresponding change to the proposal has been made.

FINAL DETERMINATION

After assessing the material submitted and having considered the requirements of the Act, it is recommended that the proposed boundaries become the final divisions for the South Burnett 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 Electoral Divisions				
Division	Enrolment as at 31/01/2019	(%) Deviation from Quota	Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024	(%) Deviation from Quota
Division 1	3,682	-3.11	3,851	-2.25
Division 2	3,737	-1.67	3,907	-0.83
Division 3	4,046	6.46	4,108	4.27
Division 4	3,896	2.52	4,081	3.59
Division 5	3,720	-2.11	3,819	-3.06
Division 6	3,721	-2.09	3,872	-1.72

RECOMMENDATION

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

The Change Commission's final recommendation is as follows:

- for the purpose of the 2020 Local Government Quadrennial Election, the South Burnett 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.



Pat Vidgen PSM
Electoral Commissioner



Wade Lewis
Casual Commissioner



Peter McGraw
Casual Commissioner

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHANGE COMMISSION

W: www.ecq.qld.gov.au

E: LGCCsubmissions@ecq.qld.gov.au

T: 1300 881 665

P: Local Government Change Commission
GPO Box 1393
BRISBANE QLD 4001