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20 June 2023

File Ref
Your Ref

Electoral Commissioner
Electoral Commission Queensland
GPO Box 1393
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Via Email: LGBoundaries@ecq.qld.gov.au

Dear Commissioner

TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL DIVISION BOUNDARIES

I refer to correspondence of dated 23 May 2023 and provide the following responses.

1. Supporting reasons why Herberton should be moved from Division 2.

The Western Australian Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries notes that “To be effective, council members need to understand the views of the people they represent. Communication needs to flow both ways to be effective. Councillors provide information to the community about the policies and decisions of council, and the community relays its desires, concerns, and opinions to the council through the councillors. To represent both electors and the council effectively, a councillor needs to be a good communicator and keep in touch with the local community.

Councillors can keep in touch with electors in a variety of ways, such as:

- attending meetings of local organisations.
- being available and responding to residents who wish to raise issues or concerns;
- attending events arranged by the local government;
- participating in functions held in the local area;
- communicating with the community regarding council matters via a newsletter, email or website”

It is Council’s contention that in addition to the responsibilities of a councillor set out in the Local Government Act 2009 “attending meetings of local organisations” and “participating in functions held in the local area” are a key part of the role of a councillor. Division 2 contains the towns Ravenshoe and Herberton and the villages of Innot Hot Springs and Mt Garnet. Each of these localities has a school and multiple sporting and not for profit organisations. This means there are more meetings and events for the divisional 2 Councillor to attend than occurs in other divisions. Organisations expect the local councillor to attend meetings and provide the 2-way communication referred to above.

Council does not consider that the current distribution of townships between divisions optimises the opportunity for the community to engage with their divisional Councillor through Councillor attendance at meetings of local organisations. Accordingly, Council considers that it is in the public interest to align boundaries in such a way that the community is afforded the best opportunity to engage with a local Councillor including the opportunity to engage face to face via local community group meetings.

2. **Would council support a significant increase in the size of division 2 to maintain the divisional enrolment within the required quotas?**

Council is aware that removing Herberton from division 2 may lead to an increase in the area of division 2.

3. **Has Council implemented or considered any additional administrative support to assist councillors to manage workloads?**

Council has limited financial resources and provides minimal administrative support to Councillors (1 EP for the Mayor and all Councillors). The workload that council seeks to best manage by moving Herberton from Division 2 is the representative role referred to at point 1. Providing additional administrative resources is not seen as a solution to the issue of community groups and organisations expecting their divisional councillor to attend at meetings to provide and receive feedback.

I apologise for the delay in providing this response. Should you require further information regarding this matter, please contact Tablelands Regional Council on 1300 362 242 or info@trc.qld.gov.au.

Yours faithfully



GARY RINEHART
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER