

# Review of Divisional Boundaries

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**2019 FINAL DETERMINATION**  
ISAAC 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 Isaac 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;
- Ms Jennifer Lang, Casual Commissioner; and
- Mr Wade Lewis, Casual Commissioner.

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

## Background

On 3 April 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 Isaac 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 identified through public submissions were also considered.

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

<b>Table 1 – Current and Projected Enrolment Quota</b>		
	<b>31 January 2019</b>	<b>31 March 2024</b>
<b>Number of divisions</b>	8	8
<b>Enrolment</b>	11,326	11,373
<b>Average enrolment per division</b>	1,416	1,422
<b>Average enrolment (+10%) per division</b>	1,557	1,564
<b>Average enrolment (-10%) per division</b>	1,274	1,280

### **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 Isaac 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 was:

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 Isaac Regional Council has 11,326 voters and is divided into eight 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, Divisions 1 and 6 were out of quota and Division 7 was close to the quota. In 2024, Divisions 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 are projected to be out of quota.

<b>Table 2 – Summary of Enrolment for the Existing Divisions</b>				
<b>Division</b>	<b>Enrolment as at 31/01/2019</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>	<b>Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>
Division 1	1,228	<b>-13.26</b>	1,247	<b>-12.28</b>
Division 2	1,355	-4.29	1,254	<b>-11.79</b>
Division 3	1,502	6.09	1,639	<b>15.29</b>
Division 4	1,509	6.59	1,537	8.12
Division 5	1,459	3.05	1,499	5.44
Division 6	1,590	<b>12.31</b>	1,660	<b>16.77</b>
Division 7	1,288	-9.02	1,241	<b>-12.71</b>
Division 8	1,395	-1.47	1,296	-8.84

## Public Suggestions

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

Suggestions were invited from 27 April 2019 to 5pm 13 May 2019. Two submissions were received and are available to view on the ECQ website or at Appendix C.

The Isaac Regional Council recommended changes to Divisions 1 and 6 in its review of enrolment on 13 February 2019. The Change Commission modelled this suggestion, however found the change did not completely satisfy the enrolment quota and so proposed additional changes to contract the boundaries of Division 6 to the urban centre of Clermont.

The other submitter expressed dissatisfaction with the current divisions, suggesting the area return to the boundaries that existed prior to the local government amalgamations. This submission was outside the scope of this review and was unable to be considered.

### 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, the Mackay Daily Mercury and on the ECQ's website and social media.

The Change Commission's proposal considered both current and projected enrolment data as well as the views expressed in the public submissions. A concerted effort was made to follow suburb boundaries, so that entire localities were united within individual divisions.

### Comments on the Proposal

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

The Council provided two preferred options for consideration which the Change Commission modelled, and which are discussed below.

The Council requested the Change Commission consider realigning the proposed boundaries to meet the quota for the 2020 election rather than factoring in the projected 2024 enrolment data. The primary justification provided by Council was the region's volatile and unpredictable resource industry and particularly the increase of non-resident workers and the subsequent unknown impact on resident numbers. They also noted their concern regarding the proposed transfer of Moranbah electors from Division 5 to Division 7, stating that Division 7 is a Middlemount based division, whereas the proposal would have this councillor also representing the Moranbah constituency along with a number of other councillors.

Council's Option A requested the existing boundary alignments be retained except for Divisions 1 and 6, where the proposed boundaries should be implemented. The outcome of Option A is provided in Table 3 and resulted in Division 4 failing to meet the legislated quota.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Enrolment as at 31/01/2019</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>	<b>Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>
Division 1	1,483	4.75	1,515	6.57
Division 2	1,355	-4.29	1,254	<b>-11.79</b>
Division 3	1,407	-0.62	1,521	6.99
Division 4	1,604	<b>13.3</b>	1,655	<b>16.42</b>
Division 5	1,459	3.05	1,499	5.44
Division 6	1,335	-5.7	1,392	-2.08
Division 7	1,288	-9.02	1,241	<b>-12.71</b>
Division 8	1,395	-1.47	1,296	-8.84

Council's Option B requested the proposed realignments for Divisions 1, 2, 6 and 8 be implemented, while the existing boundaries for Divisions 3, 4, 5 and 7 remain. The outcome of Option B is shown in Table 4 and resulted in Division 7 being out of quota.

<b>Table 4 – Council's Option B – Enrolment Summary</b>				
<b>Division</b>	<b>Enrolment as at 31/01/2019</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>	<b>Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>
Division 1	1,296	-8.46	1,333	-6.23
Division 2	1,431	1.08	1,326	-6.73
Division 3	1,502	6.09	1,639	<b>15.29</b>
Division 4	1,509	6.59	1,537	8.12
Division 5	1,459	3.05	1,499	5.44
Division 6	1,335	-5.7	1,392	-2.08
Division 7	1,270	<b>-10.29</b>	1,224	<b>-13.9</b>
Division 8	1,524	7.65	1,423	0.1

As neither of Council's proposed options meet the enrolment requirements of the Act, the Change Commission has determined to progress the boundaries as proposed. Regarding the concerns raised about Division 7 and the Moranbah constituency, the Change Commission notes that while the change unites a larger portion of the Moranbah township within Division 7, the existing boundaries of this Division already contain part of this urban area. The Change Commission also notes that if growth continues to be centralised in townships like Moranbah, it is highly likely that future boundary reviews will have to continue making similar adjustments.

While appreciating the unpredictable nature of growth in the region, particularly with non-resident populations, the Act sets a legally binding divisional quota based on enrolled voter numbers. The Change Commission therefore must create boundaries that adhere to this enrolment quota.

It is important to note that if the Council and community wish to retain divisions in the future, it is highly likely that larger more rural based divisions will have to increasingly take in parts of more populated townships like Moranbah to meet the quota. Therefore, the Change Commission recommends the community consider whether retaining divisions is considered desirable and, if so, how the divisional boundaries can be drawn to accommodate both the legislated enrolment requirements and the interests of the community.

## 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 Isaac Regional Council.

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

<b>Table 5 – Summary of Enrolment for the Final Divisions</b>				
<b>Division</b>	<b>Enrolment as at 31/01/2019</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>	<b>Projected Enrolment as at 31/03/2024</b>	<b>(%) Deviation from Average Enrolment</b>
Division 1	1,296	-8.46	1,333	-6.23
Division 2	1,431	1.08	1,326	-6.73
Division 3	1,365	-3.58	1,475	3.75
Division 4	1,452	2.56	1,490	4.81
Division 5	1,448	2.28	1,492	4.95
Division 6	1,335	-5.7	1,392	-2.08
Division 7	1,475	4.19	1,442	1.43
Division 8	1,524	7.65	1,423	0.1

## 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 Isaac Regional Council be redivided into eight 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



**Jennifer Lang**  
Casual Commissioner



**Wade Lewis**  
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# LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHANGE COMMISSION

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