



**THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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Research Director
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

Torres Shire Council would like to make the following submission to the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015.

Council acknowledges the objectives of the Bill which are to:

- 1. Provide for broader representation in the Redistribution Commission by increasing the membership of the Commission from 3 to 5 members. In the interests of transparency, the appointments of all Commissioners, with the exception of the Electoral Commissioner who has already undergone a separate appointment process, be subject to the approval of the leaders of all recognised parties represented in the Legislative Assembly.*
- 2. Implement a recommendation by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission by providing that the independent Redistribution Commission has the ability to determine the number of electoral districts in the Legislative Assembly, subject to a maximum increase of up to 5 additional electoral districts, i.e. the total seats in the assembly would at the commissions discretion be between 89 and 94.*
- 3. Provide that Queenslanders have more equitable access to representation in the Parliament by legislating for the Redistribution Commission to have the capacity, at its discretion, to amend the additional large district number, currently set at 2%, up to 4%.*

Submission:

1. Torres Shire Council is supportive of an increase in the number of electoral districts in the Legislative Assembly.
- 2 & 3 Torres Shire Council supports the proposal to legislate for the Redistribution Commission to have the capacity, at its discretion, to amend the additional large district number, currently set at 2%, up to 4%.

Torres Shire Council is concerned with the continuation large size electorates which certainly have the potential to have under-representation for electors, especially living in remote indigenous communities.

In addition, Torres Shire Council supports Torres Strait Island Regional Council in their stance for "One Boat -Towards Great Governance in Torres Strait" and in conjunction with TSIRC supports the following:

The Torres Strait is currently governed by three (3) tiers of government; the three (3) Local Governments (Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC), Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC), Torres Shire Council (TSC) and the State and Federal Governments.

The Torres Strait Region (comprising the local government electorates of TSIRC, TSC and NPA) comprises in excess of 20 inhabited and 274 uninhabited islands, over 2,447.7 square kilometres, over 24 Local Government Divisions, and represented by 27 Local Government politicians, plus 20 Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) elected Board Members.

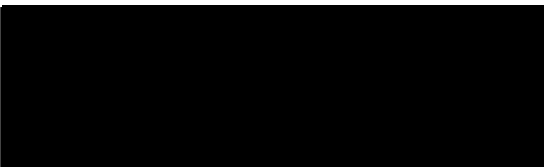
The Torres Strait Region is internally over-represented, but grossly under-represented in State and Federal Parliaments, with the electorates of Cook (State), comprising 29,613 electors (in 2015) over a vast area of 196,805 square kilometres and Leichardt (Federal) comprising 99,402 electors (in 2013) over a vast area of 148,988 square kilometres. The local over-representation greatly undermines consensus in Regional direction. The State and Federal under-representation ensures that when consensus is reached locally, it is not appropriately promoted in the forums where change can be effected for the betterment of the Region (i e. Parliament).

The unique interests of the Torres Strait Region are not adequately served under the current Local, State and/or Federal electoral distributions. Given the vastness and the tyranny of distance within the Cook Electorate, the Torres Region has limited access to its elected member and is effectively unrepresented in most decision-making affecting the Region.

With the primary objective of achieving greater autonomy and adequacy of representation for the Torres Strait Region, Council supports the legislative empowerment of the independent Redistribution Commission proposed under the Bill, and its increased membership, as it is considered that this will maximise the Torres Strait Region's prospects of achieving necessary electoral redistribution, as a vital step towards its 'One Boat' governance aspiration.

Torres Shire Council appreciates the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for the opportunity to receive our submission towards the Electoral (Redistribution Commission) and Another Act Amendment 2015.

Yours faithfully



Napau Pedro Stephen
Mayor
TORRES SHIRE COUNCIL