



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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STATE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES REDISTRIBUTION

Mr TURNER (Thuringowa—IND) (7.07 p.m.): The Electoral Commission is presently redistributing the State electoral boundaries. The commission is working to the guidelines set out by the Electoral Act 1992. The Act provides that the redistribution is worked out by dividing the total number of enrolled electors by the 89 electoral districts. This seems very fair and is very neat and tidy on paper, but entirely neglects the human element. The people of Queensland are not numbers on a map but communities with specialised needs.

A prime example is my own electorate of Thuringowa where the commission has proposed taking the northern beaches suburbs of Thuringowa and including them in the electorate of Hinchinbrook, which already covers the area from Ingham to Innisfail. The residents of these suburbs relate to Townsville and Thuringowa for all their shopping, business, schools and services. There would not be one person in the northern beaches area who does not want the boundaries to remain as they are. Thuringowa councillors have been bombarded with calls from residents protesting against the proposed changes. Council voted unanimously to support retaining the existing boundaries.

Proper government involves having an elected member from the community to represent one and be one's voice in Parliament. It must be someone who understands and is part of that community, not someone hundreds of kilometres away with no knowledge of the electorate's needs.

In giving its reasons, the commission said that it accepts that the inclusion of the communities north of Townsville in the Hinchinbrook electorate is not ideal as the community of interest for these areas is southward to Townsville rather than northward to Ingham.

The Queensland Redistribution Commission is probably doing the best it can, working within the guidelines set down by Parliament. However, we are not doing the best for our electors by making the commission work to these guidelines. We are doing our electors a great disservice. The people of Queensland need to be recognised as communities, not numbers on a map. I believe that in the interests of the people of Queensland the legislation should be changed to allow proper representation of community needs. If we allow this redistribution to take place, we are not listening to the people.
