



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 November 2015

**ELECTRICAL (IMPROVING REPRESENTATION) AND ANOTHER ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL**

**Introduction**

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.32 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Electoral Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill [[1636](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [[1637](#)].

The Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 proposes to change the number of electoral districts for the state by increasing the number of members of the Legislative Assembly from 89 to 93 to improve representation; improve the establishment of the Electoral Commission of Queensland by way of the bipartisan support of a parliamentary committee; and improve redistribution of electoral districts by the appointment of a non-judicial appointee with qualifications and experience in applied demography.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The private member's bill that is being presented by the member for Mount Isa appears to be substantially the same as the private member's bill that has been dealt with by the House this session. I seek your guidance on that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I propose to let the member for Mount Isa continue with the first reading stage of the bill. I will then consider the proposal, as I am not aware of the bill, and then I will make a determination.

**Mr KATTER:** The bill importantly ensures that Queenslanders will have more equitable and improved access to representation. It takes into consideration the dispersal of the population throughout the state and the number of members of the Legislative Assembly increasing in South-East Queensland. There is evidence that population density is continuing to increase in South-East Queensland and that certain areas in rural and remote Queensland are experiencing declining populations. I table a research paper relevant to the bill titled 'Population and electors'.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Parliamentary Library Research Brief, dated 30 July 2015, regarding population and electors [[1638](#)].

The two issues of density and distance, among other things, highlight the distinct difference between the challenges encountered by members providing representation in rural and regional electoral districts and those encountered by members providing representation in South-East Queensland. For example, my electoral district of Mount Isa covers 570,502 square kilometres, over 30 per cent of the entire state of Queensland. Ensuring equitable access to representation in expansive rural electoral districts as well as regional electoral districts in Queensland should not be undervalued. It is equally important as ensuring equitable access to representation for those residing in more densely populated South-East Queensland. Giving people the real ability to bring their grievances and concerns

to the attention of a local member as well as providing people with a voice in the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly is vital to delivering good government in Queensland.

Unless this bill is passed, the next redistribution due in 2016 will most likely result in more rural and regional seats being lost to South-East Queensland. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a legitimate need to provide for representation in South-East Queensland due to the increasing population, we must also maintain and improve representation in rural and regional electoral districts. Rural and regional electoral districts really are where the engine room of Queensland's economy is situated. On this point, the bill is also about ensuring the Queensland parliament does not become South-East Queensland centric.

Major issues like the rural debt, the impacts of fly-in fly-out workforces on small towns and the need to improve essential services like health in remote locations must not be put at risk of going unnoticed by the Legislative Assembly. I encourage all members, especially those in South-East Queensland, to think seriously about their role in maintaining and improving representation across the state which is needed to ensure good government for all Queenslanders.

### **First Reading**

**Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.35 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee**

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

### **Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date**



**Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.37 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That under the provisions of standing order 136, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill by 30 November 2015; and
2. That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended to ensure that all remaining stages of the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill be completed by 5 pm on 3 December 2015.