




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Electoral Redistribution

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (2.53 pm): Yesterday I asked the Premier the following question without notice—

In the 2009 redistribution three rural seats were abolished to create additional seats in the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane districts. Will the Premier commit to working with the parliament to ensure that rural and regional electorates are not disadvantaged during the upcoming redistribution?

I asked that question because, when it comes to the next redistribution which is set for early 2016, we do not want to find that more regional seats will be abolished to cram more seats into the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions without anybody having spoken up about it. The Premier is right that the Electoral Commission takes its submissions and verifies the boundaries. That is true, but it is the parliament that sets the criteria.

We have always acknowledged that we have five large rural seats with a weight system: Cook, Gregory and Warrego—which are nearly the size of Victoria—Dalrymple and Mount Isa, which is almost the size of France. We have always acknowledged that. However, after the last distribution, three seats were abolished and now, for example, the electorate of Hinchinbrook stretches from southern Innisfail to the northern beaches of Townsville and the electorate of Mirani stretches from Rockhampton to Mackay and includes the Mackay hinterland. The electorate of Burdekin is centred around Home Hill and Ayr, reaches into Townsville and includes the Bowen and Collinsville areas.

Thirty years ago, we had 89 seats. Now it is 2015 and we still have 89 seats. In 1985 the parliament increased the number of seats from 82 to 89, acknowledging the massive increase in the constituencies. I believe the average electorate now has about 33,000 constituents. Thirty years ago, it was 24,000. Commentators will tell us that Queenslanders do not want more politicians; that is the usual excuse. However, in 1985 they increased the number of members of parliament to balance the massive increase in the number of Queenslanders so that members could properly represent their electorates.

I do not want to see more rural and regional electorates abolished in the next redistribution in Queensland. The parliament needs to look at what happened in 1985 when they increased the number of seats. I am hoping that this parliament can look at that, because we do not want to see more seats abolished and an increase in the number of constituents, which creates an extra burden on members of parliament.