



Suggestion 14

Kim Fischer and Stephen Bounds

8 pages

SUGGESTED REDISTRIBUTION OF
FEDERAL ELECTORAL DIVISIONS
IN THE ACT

Kim Fischer and Stephen Bounds



23 November 2017

To whom it may concern,

This submission provides suggestions on the most suitable boundaries of Federal Electoral Divisions for the Australian Capital Territory. It has no position on suitable names for each electorate.

Since the adoption of the Y-plan in 1967, the ACT has adopted a distributed development approach which has strongly encouraged the formation of communities of interest in distinct regions. The most notable of these are Gungahlin, Belconnen, Inner North, Inner South, Molonglo Valley, Woden Valley, Weston Creek, and Tuggeranong.

In addition to these regions, there are three other significant Territory communities of interest that should be considered when performing the electorate redistribution:

- Stage 1 light rail catchment zone of suburbs running from Gungahlin to Civic
- “Heritage” Canberra comprising the inner south suburbs of Yarralumla, Deakin, Forrest, Red Hill, and Narrabundah
- “Urbanised” Canberra suburbs that have extensively transitioned to medium-density apartments and townhouses comprising Braddon, Reid, Campbell/Russell, Barton, Kingston, and Griffith.

As per the criteria specified in section 66(3)(b) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, our proposed three seat redistribution respects the identity of all these communities as well as predominantly aligning to the significant geographic features of Barton Highway, Bruce Ridge, Parkes Way, and the Tuggeranong Parkway. Any exceptions to these principles are discussed in the individual electorate descriptions.

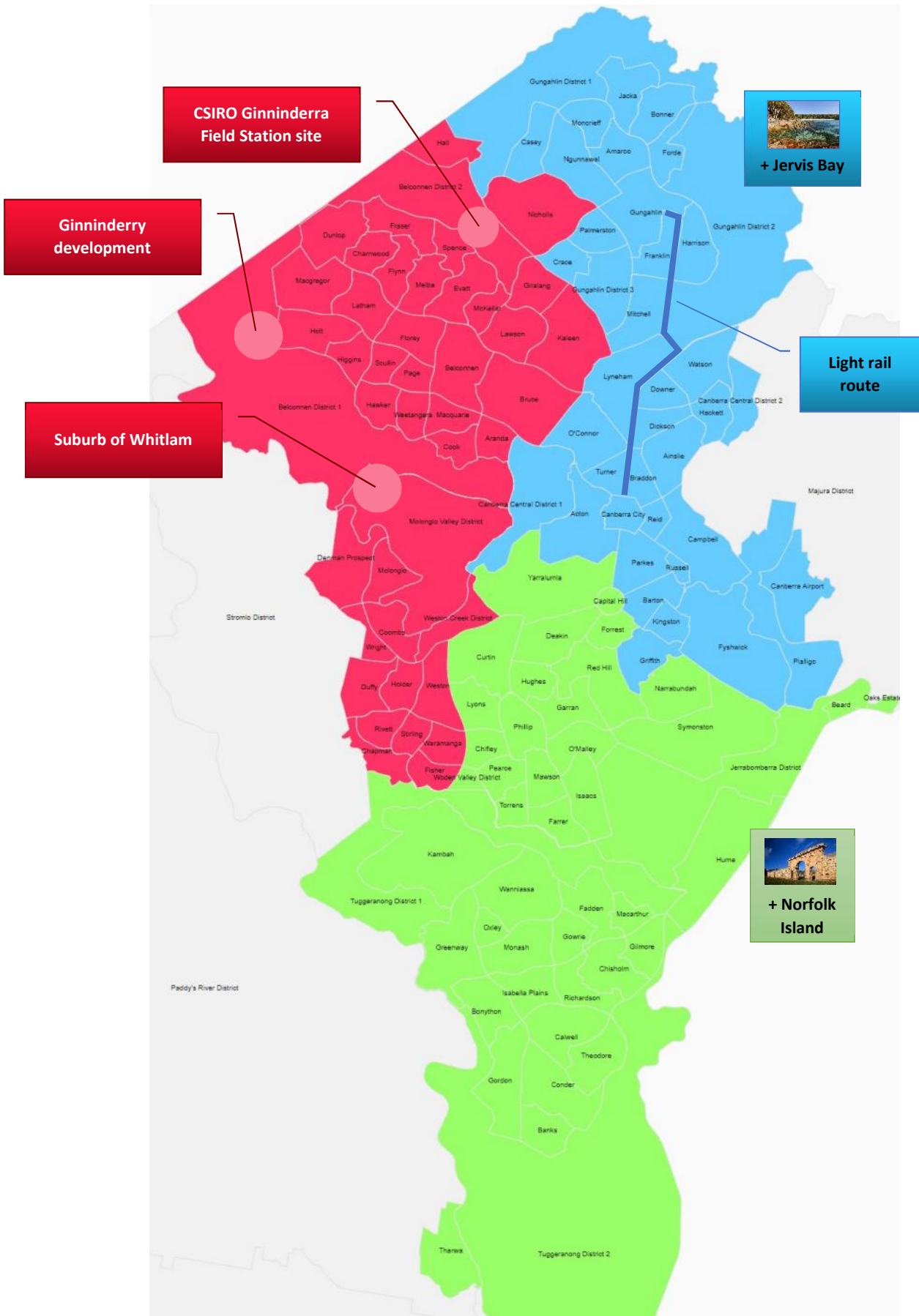
In addition, as required by section 66(3) this redistribution achieves a current and projected population variance well within the allowed parameters. The table below summarises the population of each seat, with the colours listed matching the map on the following page.

Electorate	Current	Variance	Projected	Variance
North-west (red)	98042	2%	99503	-0.2%
North-east (blue)	88744	-8%	99903	0.2%
South (green)	101560	6%	99691	0.0%
Average	96115		99699	

Submission Contents

- Map with proposed redistribution of electorates
- Electorate descriptions
 - detailed justification by community of interests, communication and travel, and physical features and area
 - suburbs included in each electorate
- Canberra Times article with detailed rationale for proposed approach
- References

Proposed redistribution of electorates for the ACT



North-west electorate (red)

The proposed **north-west electorate** incorporates the western alignment of Belconnen, Molonglo Valley and Weston Creek. Molonglo Valley will continue rapid development, with the construction of the suburb of Whitlam and the extension of John Gorton Drive in the next 3 years. Whitlam residents are likely to attend Belconnen schools, and generally there will be a significant increase in the overlap in travel patterns as well as education and employment opportunities across these three regions.

The north-west electorate is mostly bounded by the Barton Highway, Bruce Ridge, Tuggeranong Parkway, and Cooleman Ridge Nature Reserve. The most significant deviation from these principles in order to address population quotas is the inclusion of the suburbs of Nicholls and Hall.

Nicholls and Hall are recommended for inclusion due to their more significant historical and social links with Belconnen. In addition, if the proposal to develop the 701ha CSIRO Ginninderra Field Station site between Nicholls and Spence goes ahead, this will affect schooling and shopping options for both suburbs, increasing their ties to Belconnen communities on the other side of the Barton Highway. *(Note: Ginninderra Field Station is distinct from the Ginninderra estate development to the west of Holt.)*

This electorate would contain the regions listed below.

Region	Current Population	Projected Population
ACT - South West	3691	5668
Aranda	1825	1735
Belconnen	4032	4579
Bruce	4306	4539
Chapman	2179	2077
Charnwood	2148	2031
Cook	2194	2074
Duffy	2410	2274
Dunlop	4957	5037
Evatt	3967	3940
Fisher	2238	2113
Florey	3518	3214
Flynn (ACT)	2582	2347
Fraser	1587	1489
Giralang	2491	2458
Gooromon	6	6
Hall	327	314
Hawker	2206	2227
Higgins	2258	2177
Holder	2057	1901
Holt	3443	3298
Kaleen	5557	5467
Latham	2662	2652
Lawson	524	833
Lyons (ACT)	2073	2182
Macgregor (ACT)	4677	4975
Macquarie	1971	2021
McKellar	2120	2039
Melba	2365	2281
Molonglo	19	20
Nicholls	5180	5202
Page	1993	2011
Rivett	2356	2375
Scullin	2114	2125
Spence	1934	1945
Stirling	1533	1497
Waramanga	1938	1845
Weetangera	1941	1880
Weston	2663	2655
Grand Total	98042	99503

North-east electorate (blue)

The proposed **north-east electorate** incorporates Gungahlin, Inner North Canberra, and Civic. It incorporates all communities that can be expected to make frequent use of Canberra's light rail, and the majority of urbanised Canberra suburbs with a higher density of housing, especially apartments.

The north-east electorate is bounded by Barton Highway (again except for Nicholls and Hall), Bruce Ridge, and Parkes Way.

From a geographical and development perspective, there is some logic in splitting the suburb of Griffith between the north-east and south electorate along Canberra Avenue. However, for simplicity we are recommending that the entirety of Griffith be placed in the north-east electorate.

This electorate would contain the regions listed below.

Region	Current Population	Projected Population
ACT - East	576	560
Acton	729	731
Ainslie	4056	4113
Amaroo	3901	4100
Bonner	3827	4889
Braddon	3834	4104
Campbell	3730	3770
Casey	3598	4679
Civic	2134	2678
Crace	2874	3928
Dickson	1654	1618
Downer	2706	2821
Forde	2664	3291
Franklin	3792	4769
Griffith (ACT)	3634	4047
Gungahlin	3559	3852
Gungahlin - East	18	18
Gungahlin - West	1128	1735
Hackett	2264	2303
Harrison	4542	5752
Jervis Bay	165	165
Kingston - Barton	5371	6433
Lyneham	3856	4156
Mitchell	5	5
Namadgi	35	46
Narrabundah	267	262
Ngunnawal	7230	8309
O'Connor (ACT)	4261	4331
Palmerston	3976	3879
Parkes (ACT)	0	0
Reid	1209	1174
Turner	2992	3196
Watson	4157	4189
Total	88744	99903

South electorate (green)

The proposed south electorate contains the communities of Inner South Canberra, Woden Valley and Tuggeranong. It incorporates all the “heritage” Canberra suburbs of Yarralumla, Deakin, Forrest, Red Hill, and Narrabundah.

There are fewer choices to make in relation to this electorate. The overall geography of the ACT requires that the majority of southern Canberra suburbs be included for coherence.

We would not object to the option of including part of all of Griffith in this electorate, but note that it would lead to the north-east seat being near the lower limit of acceptable projected population.

This electorate would contain the regions listed below.

Region	Current Population	Projected Population
Banks	3618	3502
Bonython	2860	2722
Calwell	4379	4241
Chifley	1773	1664
Chisholm	3938	3793
Conder	3803	3651
Curtin	3939	3910
Deakin	2305	2371
Fadden	2387	2278
Farrer	2539	2355
Forrest	1313	1307
Garran	2353	2457
Gilmore	2043	1962
Gordon (ACT)	5870	5659
Gowrie (ACT)	2357	2352
Greenway	1348	1475
Hughes	2175	2100
Hume	22	26
Isaacs	1954	1857
Isabella Plains	3166	3121
Kambah	11558	11032
Kowen	14	14
Lake Burley Griffin	0	0
Macarthur	1141	1127
Majura	198	217
Mawson	2264	2382
Monash	4257	4192
Mount Taylor	2	2
Narrabundah	4043	4194
Norfolk Island	733	733
O'Malley	767	804
Oxley (ACT)	1311	1230
Pearce	1957	1952
Phillip	1828	2449
Red Hill (ACT)	2284	2230
Richardson	2240	2113
Theodore	2845	2704
Torrens	1636	1540
Tuggeranong	26	26
Wanniassa	5843	5532
Yarralumla	2471	2415
Grand Total	101560	99691

Home / Comment

COMMENT SEPTEMBER 12 2017

SAVE PRINT

ACT's new federal electorates shouldn't mirror past boundaries, because Canberra has changed

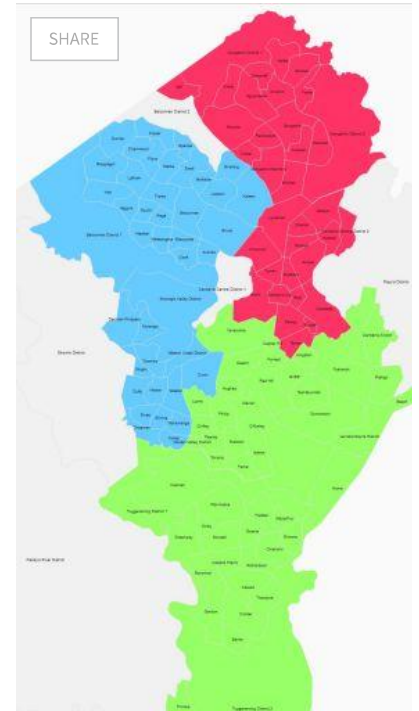
The last time the ACT had three federal electorates, a "sandwich" approach was used to draw the boundaries. The seat of Fraser was placed north of the seat of Canberra, with the seat of Namadgi below.

While ABC election analyst Antony Green is predicting a similar arrangement this time around, this would ignore the natural geographic features used to form the seats, and social developments in Canberra over the past 25 years.

Electoral boundaries are drawn taking size and community factors into consideration. The Australian Electoral Commission must consider physical features, where people live and work, and how they travel. It's not just a matter of getting out a pen and a ruler.

In 1994, Gungahlin had just a handful of suburbs and the Molonglo Valley didn't exist. Belconnen was almost entirely made up of standalone housing. The electorates were divided by Bruce Ridge to the north and mostly by Farrer Ridge and Isaacs Ridge to the south.

Until recently, the lack of shopping options in Gungahlin made its residents frequent visitors to Belconnen. It made sense to consider Belconnen and Gungahlin as socially connected.



The "Y" model, which better fits Canberra society. Photo: supplied

But as the vitality of the Gungahlin town centre has increased, its ties to Belconnen have weakened. When light rail comes online in early 2019, the effect will be transformational. Gungahlin, Dickson and Civic will develop stronger residential, recreational and employment links as light rail becomes a convenient travel option. The apartment-dwellers along Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue will have far more in common than the families living in established suburban houses in Belconnen.

At the same time, when the John Gorton Drive dual carriageway linking the Molonglo Valley to Belconnen is completed along with the suburb of Whitlam, Belconnen and the Molonglo Valley will become more connected. There will be a significant increase in traffic between the two town centres as people take advantage of better shopping options and seek to avoid peak-hour traffic by working in Belconnen. The fact that children living in the upcoming suburb of Whitlam may use Weetangera School and Belconnen High as their local schools will further strengthen these ties.

The "Y model" of seats is a better fit geographically as well. Barton Highway and Bruce Ridge would partition the ACT to the north; Cooleman Ridge and the Tuggeranong Parkway will become the boundaries to the south. A "sandwich" approach would require awkwardly cutting out parts of Belconnen or Gungahlin to make the numbers add up.

Having electorates that represent, as far as possible, cohesive communities of interest is important for a well-functioning democracy. In this exciting new time for the ACT, we shouldn't complacently assume that past arrangements will be the best for the future.

Kim Fischer is a Canberra writer. She ran as a Labor candidate for Ginninderra at the 2016 ACT election.

References

Fischer, K (2017). ACT's new federal electorates shouldn't mirror past boundaries, because Canberra has changed, Canberra Times, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/acts-new-federal-electorates-shouldnt-mirror-past-boundaries-because-canberra-has-changed-20170911-gyeuhz.html>

Fischer, K (2017). Belconnen and Gungahlin may soon get their own federal parliamentarian, Canberra Times, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/belconnen-and-gungahlin-may-soon-get-their-own-federal-parliamentarian-20170622-gww44h.html>

Fischer, K (2017). National Capital Authority needs to rethink its purpose, Canberra Times, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/national-capital-authority-needs-to-rethink-its-purpose-20170222-guih01.html>

Fischer, K (2016). Fairer Federal representation for the ACT, The RiotACT, <https://the-riotact.com/fairer-federal-representation-for-the-act/180992>

Fischer, K and Bounds, S (2004). "The 10% system". Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election and Matters Related Thereto, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=em/elect04/subs/sub055.pdf