



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL  
TERRITORY**

# Submission OB8

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FedRedistribution - ACT](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on proposed redistribution  
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Attached is a comment/objection to the proposed redistribution. Could this be acknowledged?

Regards

Martin Gordon

The Electoral Commission

Australian Capital Territory Redistribution

## **Proposed Redistribution of Australian Capital Territory Electoral Divisions March 2026**

I wish to make comments on the redistribution proposal of 13 March 2026.

I am a private citizen making a representation as an individual. I have made many submissions over the years in federal, state and territory environments, at the initial through to the final stages of redistributions. I had not made earlier submissions on this occasion with respect to the ACT.

I am a resident of the ACT.

### **The Report**

I note the explanations of the commissioners in articulating their proposals. An overarching comment relates to the extensive changes proposed for what really only required minor tweaks. In this respect it is similar to the recent Tasmanian proposals which involved changes far in excess of what was necessary.

All the proposals meet the primary criteria of numerical compliance and but I believe they

fall short on the secondary criteria of:

- Community of interests within the proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests
- Means of communication and travel within the proposed electorate
- Physical features and areas in the proposed electorate (i.e. prominent geographic features)
- The existing boundaries for that electorate

#### Other contributors

I noted minimalist proposals from both the Liberal Party and Dr Mark Mulcair. A variety of constructive options with both boundaries and elector numbers. Darren McSweeney also offered up a constructive option.

#### Commentary

The weight of opinion of contributors seemed to favour minor change to Bean, minor or no change to Fenner with most adjustments (if any) impacting Canberra.

The solutions proposed by the commissioners seem complex and excessive.

#### Bean

The concern a town centre (or a town) might be split seems to have had huge resonance with Woden but not with Gungahlin or Belconnen, where extensive changes were proposed to be made, and towns broken up with no regard to uniting them.

With Bean it is sufficient to move most of one suburb (Phillip which is north of Hindmarsh Drive) to Canberra, along with Norfolk Island (which is currently arbitrarily allocated to Bean) to Canberra and Bean would have 109503 current electors and 117176 projected ones. Well within tolerance. The commissioners have however made one decision to unite Woden but it requires massive compensatory transfers of electors to accommodate it.

I suggest the use of the boundary of Hindmarsh Drive is a clear, lengthy boundary and then following the Tuggeranong Parkway and William Hovell Drive which are similarly long, clear boundaries. Using road reserves that are in most places about 100 metres wide strikes me as a far more obvious boundary to electors and defining in terms of communities. This means Molonglo, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong and half of Woden are in one Division, namely Bean. To do otherwise is simply a mistake, that then requires many adjustments and disruptions that are really unnecessary.

#### Canberra and Fenner

With the proposed Division of Canberra the commissioners have followed the idea of a small number of proponents to place Molonglo in Canberra. As with the decision to place all of Woden in one Division (in Bean) this means a cascading impact of changes to

accommodate. The absolute minimum of changes I suggest is needed for the entire ACT would be 3253 current electors and 5179 projected electors from Bean north of Hindmarsh Drive to be placed in Canberra. Then all three Divisions are compliant with numerical requirements and meet the secondary requirements. A point the Liberal Party noted and from other submissions inferred.

Some submitters proposed including both Norfolk Island and Jervis Bay in the Division of Canberra. I find this idea attractive as it means there is no arbitrary split of territories to a particular Division and the association of the name Canberra is intuitively informative for a resident of these territories as to whom would be their Federal Representative.

I noted that the airport been in the Canberra Division was referred to. I would point out for the long-suffering residents of Norfolk Island there is no direct flight to Canberra, it involves at least transiting through Sydney. I am not sure if many Island residents have met their Federal Representative in person as due to the wonders of modern technology it is possible to at least see them virtually via Zoom, a vastly cheaper and more convenient option.

The current boundaries of Fenner with Canberra could be left unchanged (except for the transfer of the Jervis Bay territory to Canberra), and both Divisions would be numerically compliant. Such an outcome would be quite reasonable, complying with numerical and other criteria.

The proposals of the Commissioners for modifying the Canberra/Fenner boundary are inelegant. The Commissioners almost apologise for such an untidy boundary proposal. In the previous redistribution I had proposed a more rectangular split of Belconnen along Ginninderra Drive and William Hovell Drive. Numerically due to population growth this option is no longer viable, but it was closer to a sensible, clear and obvious boundary than what the commissioners propose now.

I looked at the map and wondered if anyone had even driven along the proposed boundary, snaking through backroads and byways to check it out on the ground. You could cheat and use Google Earth, but it would be obvious the proposed boundary makes no sense and is driven by earlier faulty decisions with Bean and transfers which cascade into bigger messes.

When I first looked at the map I wondered why Fenner has this flattened appearance. The transfer of part of the Gungahlin District to Canberra was folly. If you look at the area along the Barton Highway there is this huge 'dead-zone' with no (or near zero) population which dissects Fenner into two halves. The effort to equalise the population between the Divisions is faulty. In time the little used CSIRO site may be developed but it is a long way off.

[An option for Canberra Fenner](#)

I would leave the existing boundary for Fenner largely in place. This follows the Gungahlin District boundary, Gundaroo Drive, and then follow Ginninderra Drive westerly and then south along Coulter Drive to William Hovell Drive. This unites all of Gungahlin in one Division and the change of shifting the suburb of Belconnen to Canberra avoids an awkward dogleg of a boundary through the middle of the most built up parts of Belconnen. Its quite close to the ABS building in Belconnen and well worth a look.

In return I would transfer Hawker and Weetangera to Fenner. Overall this would work numerically with and both Divisions would have respectively 104622/110860 (Fenner) and 107754/116488 (Canberra). Fenner on projected electors is only 37 electors above lower tolerance, but it is within tolerance and has significant growth potential beyond 2030.

#### In summary

My total transfers number 13694, or 4.25% of electors. The minimalist version (of Phillip north of Hindmarsh Drive) is 1.01%. The commissioners propose 9.87%.

I argue my proposals which involve smaller transfers produce clearer boundaries. The inclusion of all Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island electors in the Canberra Division is more convenient for electors and is optional to the extent that it is not strictly necessary.

The number of split districts in my proposal is the same as the commissioners. I propose to leave Woden split, albeit with a much clearer boundary of Hindmarsh Drive, and not split Gungahlin which I consider entirely unnecessary. A boundary like Hindmarsh Drive is very clear, unlike some the commissioners propose. My alternative boundary in Belconnen is much clearer, following a series of major roads creating a clear to explain boundary.

Having come from interstate many years back I am struck about claimed differences and often so-called communities of interest in Canberra. In fact all three federal divisions are in the top twenty federal divisions for socio-economic status. The ACT is a high income city with high education attainment, healthy statistics etc. I have referred to previous proposals I have made and note Canberra is comparatively uniform, and major road, river, town boundaries are as relevant as boundaries, the overstated claims of differences are rather absurd.

I wish the commissioners well in their deliberations.

Martin Gordon

15 March 2026