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, - Redistribution ACT - Submission on the proposed ACT redistribution

Personal details

First name:
Surname:
Email: [REDACTED]

Submission on the proposed ACT redistribution details

Category: Boundaries

Details: ACT redistribution - Norfolk Island

I would like to make the following observations regarding Norfolk Island and the proposal for relocation from Bean to Canberra electorates.

As an external territory, Norfolk Island is in an unusual position with little direct connection to the ACT, and state responsibilities shared between NSW and Queensland. With a small, remote population the issues faced will be very different to those faced by most people in the ACT and requires time and effort to understand, appreciate and act upon.

With that context, I would assume that the parliamentary office for Bean has developed an understanding of some of the issues and a relationship with Norfolk Islanders. If the federal electorate were switched to Canberra I could envisage much of that know how and existing relationships would be lost, and have to be re-established and rebuilt to the detriment of the electors on Norfolk Island.

The only specific justification provided for a switch in electorates is the transport connection to Canberra airport. This connection seems tenuous at best - there are no direct flights to Norfolk Island from Canberra. In fact one major challenge is that flights to Norfolk Island depart from the International terminals at Sydney or Brisbane with all the additional controls for international departures. The logic of the location of an airport with no direct links being provided as justification as to why a remote territory should change electorates appears to be flawed.

I would ask the redistribution committee revisit their recommendation to move Norfolk Island from Bean to Canberra, and consider the benefits of retaining any residual knowledge of Norfolk Island and its electors by keeping it within the Bean electorate.

For the record, I am not a Norfolk Islander and have no commercial, financial and familial connections to Norfolk Island.
