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Member for Mulka, NT Legislative Assembly



Redistribution Committee
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Northern Territory Electoral Boundaries Redistribution

Response to second proposed redistribution of the Northern Territory into electoral divisions.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in response to the second proposed redistribution of electoral boundaries. I note that there are significant changes proposed to the boundaries of the Mulka and Arnhem electorates.

I acknowledge the Electoral Commission's consideration of my previous comments regarding maintaining the homogeneity of the Yolŋu Matha language bloc. I further understand that there are serious considerations in regards to the number of electors currently on the roll, and the perceived possibility of these numbers continuing to grow prior to the 2024 election, and therefore such redistribution is necessary.

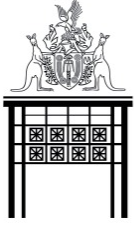
I would like to make two brief notes on the redistribution.

Firstly, I would like to raise the impact the changes will have on people living in homeland towns such as Garthalala, Gurrumurru, Buymar, Rurrangula, Bukudal, Gan Gan, Wandawuy, Birany Birany, Dhurputji, Baniyala, Barraratjpi and Djarrakpi. Effectively, this redistribution will split the Gove Peninsula into two electorates despite these communities being reliant on services provided by Nhulunbuy. With the proposed changes, constituents of the listed homeland towns, will now have to travel up to ten hours to Katherine to their local Member's office, rather than an hour and half to Nhulunbuy. It also creates confusion when the Homeland Service Provider, Laynhapuy Aboriginal Corporation, and East Arnhem Regional Council are both based in the Mulka electorate (within a short drive to the Mulka Electorate Office), and the people and homelands they service will be based in another electorate, splitting the capacity of the service providers to properly engage with a local Member. This will also create further confusion about 'balanda' politics for many constituents who are regularly moving between their homeland town homes and the service hub of Nhulunbuy which is in the Mulka Electorate.

Secondly, it has been recently brought to my attention that there are a number of errors on the electoral roll. I have only spent a short period looking at part of the roll and in that time I identified several duplicates and people who have passed away. I will provide these details to the AEC for correction.

The inclusion of duplicates and deceased people in a small section of the roll leads me to believe that this may exist throughout the roll and once rectified may result in a decrease in the number of

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electors. It is a significant concern that these errors have not been identified prior to this redistribution.

It is inevitable that errors like this continue to be made when 'enrol to vote' drives are being conducted by people who do not speak the language or have pre-existing knowledge of community members and constituents. There is often confusion with surnames in Yolŋu culture, and people will use different names for different contexts. Additionally, there are many issues with ID, and often people will have multiple forms of identification that have differing name or dates of birth. I would like to note the importance of ensuring AEC and NTEC staff who are enrolling new voters need to have the cultural and language knowledge to ensure that they are not already enrolled in order to avoid the creation of duplicates in the future.

I would urge you to consider addressing the issue of multiple enrolments and the impact of these changes prior to confirming this redistribution.

Yours Sincerely,

Yingiya Mark Guyula MLA

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