

**Mr Bill Stefaniak**  
**Chairman of the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs**  
**ACT Legislative Assembly**



**Gungahlin**  
**Community**  
**Council Inc.**

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Dear Mr Stefaniak,

On behalf of the Gungahlin Community Council (GCC) I would like to provide the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs with the following information related to the enquiry into: "The appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly".

The GCC is aware of the demands placed on Legislative members related to national and local area consultation and consideration of numerous issues. We support the need for a review to establish if the current number of MLAs can be reasonably expected to provide quality representation for the ACT community.

The GCC is of the belief that the current enquiry offers an opportunity to improve community representation and correct electoral boundary deficiencies. Should there be an opportunity to address the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs, in relation to this matter, the GCC would be keen to contribute.

At a meeting of the GCC 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002, the meeting voted that the GCC supports the enquiry to establish the appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly. The GCC strongly supports any changes that would bring about better representation for the ACT community.

The meeting unanimously supported the view that all of Gungahlin should be in one electorate. Further to the previous motion the meeting overwhelmingly supported the view that the most appropriate electorate for Gungahlin (to be included in) was Ginninderra.

*Note: There was general agreement that, at this time of Gungahlin's development, Belconnen is identified as providing Town Centre commercial and educational facilities.*

Although the GCC is not in a position where we can fully comprehend the complexities of changing the number of representatives for each electorate, we can see some benefit in considering changes to the current 5-7-5 arrangement to a 7-5-7 or 7-7-7 configuration.

Should you require more information I can be contacted (H) 6242 9444 (M) 0417272019.

Yours Sincerely

Ian Rucroft  
President, Gungahlin Community Council  
3<sup>rd</sup> April 2002

**Ian Ruecroft – Comments to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs re: “The appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly”.**



For the record: I am here in my capacity as President of the Gungahlin Community Council and I would like to advise that I do not represent any other organisation with comments I make to this committee.

I would suggest that this committee consider the following issues in relation the inquiry into “The appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly”.

That the ACT government does have responsibility for representing the interests of all ACT residents in matters related to functions that (in other states/ Territories) would be administered by a Local Council or State/ Territory Government.

That the current ratio of MLAs to population is considerably lower than other areas of Australia. Although the ACT is unique in many ways, there is no reason why ACT residents should have substandard representation compared to other areas of Australia.

For responsibilities to be attended to there needs to be sufficient resources to administer the tasks and to ensure that accountability is maintained.

For example:

- Local government - Parks, gardens and grass cutting; or Roads, traffic control and planning issues are no less complicated in Canberra than they are in a comparable city like Wollongong (where the local council would be responsible for them).
- State/ Territory government – National issues such as education initiatives, state funding, health issues or road safety require input from the Territory government on a scale that is comparable to other states and Territories.

The demands placed on Ministers and need for the Assembly to have the capacity to provide MLAs for committees such as this, is the issue that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**The Council believes that this committee should not only make recommendations on the “current appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly” but should also identify ratios that trigger future reviews (of the appropriate size of the ACT Legislative Assembly).**

There is also an identified need to use this opportunity to consider changes that may correct issues such as:

- ACT electoral boundaries that split communities (especially Gungahlin).
- ACT electorates that span huge areas.
- Ensuring that electoral distribution ensures fair representation of communities and geographical areas. This may require persons wishing to nominate an electorate to actually live in that electorate.