

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

7 July 2020

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission into the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Ensuring Fair Representation of the Northern Territory) Bill 2020* (the Bill). From the outset, this is a simple amendment to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Act) which would ensure that the Northern Territory (NT) has no less than two members in the House of Representatives. This Bill has come about in response to the upcoming redistribution which may result in the loss of the second seat in the NT.


I support this Bill in principle, given that it would be a great challenge for a single member to represent the whole of the NT. If this was to occur, that member would need to spend a large amount of their time travelling, placing pressures not only on their personal lives but also their ability to effectively serve the interests of their almost 250,000 constituents. Given its geographical size and the inability for a single member to serve all Northern Territorians, there should be at least two members of the House of Representatives from the NT.

However, under this Bill, two members would be guaranteed for the NT, but the ACT would retain the guarantee of a single member. Although the NT is geographically significantly larger than the ACT, the population of the ACT is far greater than the NT. There is no reason why a guarantee of at least two, or possibly three, members should be given to the ACT. Therefore, I propose amending subsection 48(2B) of the Act to read as “at least **two members** of the House of Representatives shall be chosen in the Australian Capital Territory and in the Northern Territory at a general election.”

While I do not envisage that the population in the ACT would ever fall to a level where there would only be the need for a single member, the above amendment that I propose would ensure both of our mainland territories have equal representation. Just because the NT is geographically larger does not mean that it should potentially have more members in the House of Representatives.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to make a submission, and I hope that the Committee considers my proposed amendment. Notwithstanding this, I look forward to the successful passage of the Bill.

Yours Faithfully,



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