

**From:** Bob Beadman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 July 2020 3:04 PM  
**To:** Committee, EM (REPS)  
**Subject:** Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Dear Secretary

I wish to make a submission to your inquiry on the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Ensuring Fair Representation of the Northern Territory) Bill 2020.

Quite clearly, determining fair representation on the basis of a mathematical formula alone, would be a travesty. The underlying presumption in such a cold, clinical, approach must be that all people are equal and are evenly scattered around an electorate within one climate zone.

Such an approach pays no heed to the diversity of the Northern Territory. Our Indigenous population mix for a start is unlike any other State – over 30% compared to the next highest jurisdiction with about 4%. Further, 70% of our Indigenous population live in very remote areas, whereas in the States the Indigenous population is predominantly urban. And we also have an ethnic mix quite unlike any other electorate, and that is before we look to our offshore islands.

Geographically, our lands extend from the harshest, driest deserts to the tropical, monsoonal coasts. 1.348 million square kilometres of thinly populated, harsh lands. To expect one Member of the House of Representatives to adequately consult with, and represent widely different peoples over such an immense area is self-evidently ridiculous. It would add insult to the injury inflicted a few short years ago when the Government cut the Resources on the Australian Electoral Commission in the Northern Territory from seventeen to three.

As well as ensuring that the current level of representation for the Northern Territory is preserved, the Committee could usefully interest itself in two further matters:

- Seeking amplification to the criteria which determines the number of members, to pick up many of the factors mentioned above which add to the complexity
- Opening up a debate about the stark imbalance in tiny Tasmania having twelve Senators, and the vast Northern Territory only two.

Thank you.

Bob Beadman  
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