



New States Policy

The strength of Australia as a nation lies in its constitution, its federal structure, and its democratic institutions. The Australian Constitution provides for the clear separation of powers the Commonwealth and the States and the creation of New States. The Party's primary objective is improvement in the quality of life of all residents of regional Australia/Queensland through greater political representation.

The Regionals shall:

- **Support the creation of viable New States by the separation of regions from existing States or Territories or together with regions of adjoining existing States or Territories.**
- **On attaining the balance of power in any minority State government require the government to provide regions of the state with the opportunity decide by referendum the proposition that they form a New State of the Commonwealth of Australia.**

Introduction

The strength of Australia as a nation lies in its constitution, its federal structure, and its democratic institutions. Chapter VI of the Australian Constitution provides for the creation of New States. In the view of the *Regionals* that the creation of New States is the remedy to redress the disparity in the overwhelming representation of highly populated state capitals.

The Party's primary objective is improvement in the quality of life of all residents of regional Australia through greater political representation. The strength of Australia as a nation lies in its constitution, the Federation, the separation of the Powers of Federal and State governments and its democratic institutions. The creation of New States will add to the fabric of the nation while rebalancing the overwhelming political influence afforded the residents of current our state capitals and their satellite cities with that of the residents in their respective regions.

Diminishing Regional Influence

Over recent decades, with the high levels of immigration and subsequent rapid increase of the population in the various state capitals and their associated satellite cities, the political influence of regional residents has been eroded. Of the 93 seat Legislative Assembly of the Queensland Parliament, only 20, representing some 1.5 million residents are more than 250km from the Brisbane CBD. While of the 93 seat Legislative Assembly of the New South Wales Parliament the more than million residents west of the Great Dividing Range have only 8 seats.

The quality of life of all residents of regional Queensland and Australia will be enhanced by the greater political representation afforded by the separation of territory from their existing state or together with territory of adjoining States or Territories, to form a new State or States of the Australian Federation.

Constitutional Provisions

Chapter VI of the Australian Constitution provides for the formation of New States, and it is the responsibility of the parliaments of the founding States of the Federation to facilitate the intent of the Constitution and initiate the process in accordance of Section 124. Accordingly, the *Regionals* will strive to provide adjoining regions of states and territories, were there is advocacy for the forming of a separate viable new state, with a fully funded referendum to determine if the majority of residents of those regions support the proposition.

Ultimately, the *Regionals* support the proposition that any adjoining regions with sufficient population that would entitle them to at least five seats in the House of Representatives are worthy of at least the same political representation as that afforded the residents of Tasmania:

- a. a Bicameral parliament,
- b. a 25-member Legislative Assembly,
- c. a 15-member Legislative Council,
- d. 5 Federal House of Representatives members and
- e. 12 Federal Senators.

Referendum Process and Historical Precedent

As part of the New State process, Section 123, Chapter VI of the Australian Constitution requires the approval of the majority of the electors of the State voting upon the question. However, only the voters in the adjoining areas of the State, States or Territory identified as part of the New State are asked the question.

The New South Wales, New State Referendum of 29 April 1967 provides the legal precedent whereby only the voters within the boundaries of the proposed New State are eligible to vote on the question. The question asked in the 1967 Referendum was:

Are you in favour of the establishment of a new State in North-East New South Wales described in schedule 1 to the New State Referendum Act, 1966?

The area comprised the electoral districts of Armidale, Barwon, Byron, Cessnock, Clarence, Gloucester, Hamilton, Kahibah, Lake Macquarie, Lismore, Maitland, Newcastle, Oxley, Raleigh, Tamworth, Tenterfield, Upper Hunter, Wallsend, Waratah and the subdivisions of Gunnedah, Merriwa and Spring Ridge in the electoral district of Burrendong and the subdivisions of Barradine and Coonabarabran in the electoral district of Castlereagh.

Referendum restricted to: - 19 Electoral Districts in the prescribed Area; and - 2 Electoral Districts partly in the prescribed Area.

Source: <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/act-1966-61>

Referendum Question

The arbitrary boundary selected by the NSW government for the proposed New State in north-east NSW, was that, determined more than 30 years prior by the 1933 Nichols Royal Commission. During that interval, our nation had endured the Great Depression, World War II and was reaping the benefits of one of the most rapid periods of modernisation ever experienced. The relevance of determinations of the Nichols Royal Commission had long dissipated.

Any future New State Referendum Questions shall be determined by an independent commission which will take public submissions and have terms of reference that ensures that the boundaries of the proposed New State, has sufficient population and resources to provide the revenue base to ensure it will be a viable State of the Commonwealth.

Funding of the Referendum Yes Case and No Case

NSW government did not provide funding for either the Yes Case or No Case of the 1967 New State Referendum. However, the Labor Party which was ousted in the 1965 State election after 24 years in power, mounted a substantial and well-funded No Case campaign in their heartland of Newcastle and surrounding regions. With the resulting low percentage of Yes Votes in these high population regions the referendum was defeated 193,812 to 169,103 votes.

It is the contention of The *Regionals* that any future New State Referendum Act shall make provision to fund equally, both the Referendum Yes Case and No Case to the amount of no less than \$10,000,000.00.

Population Considerations for New State

In April 2019 during a Future Cairns seminar, Australia's leading demographer, Bernard Salt was drawn into a conversation regarding the creation of a North Queensland State. While he agreed that it was desirable, he expected that it was some time off and a new state would require a population approaching one million residents to be truly viable.

While this is an ideal position, The *Regionals* contend that there needs to be assessment as to what an acceptable minimum population would be. Section 121, Chapter VI of the Australian Constitution makes provision for the Federal Parliament to determine the extent of

representation the new State has in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. However, this cannot simply be some arbitrary determination, as Section 24 provides for the maintenance of the House of Representatives numbers being twice that of the Senate and that the number of House of Representatives a State has, is determined by the number of Population Quotas it fills.

Population Quota

Prior to a Federal Electoral Boundary Review, the Australian Electoral Commission shall determine the Population Quota based on the methodology provided in Section 24 of the Australian Constitution and the provision of the most recent statistics as to the total population of Australia.

One Population Quota is equal to the Total Population of Australia divided by the Total Number of senators from each State ($12 \times 6 = 72$), multiplied by 2 (144).

If at next Federal Electoral Boundary Review the Total Population of Australia is 26 million, then a division by 144 would result in one Population Quota being 180,555. To qualify for five seats in the House of Representatives, a State (with the exception of Tasmania, which was an Original State of the Federation and, as such, is guaranteed five seats under Section 26) a New State would require a population of more than 4.5 Population Quotas, that being 812,000. Should the population fall below 4.5 Population Quotas then the number of seats in the House of Representatives will be reduced to four.

The Importance of Qualifying for Five Seats in the House of Representatives

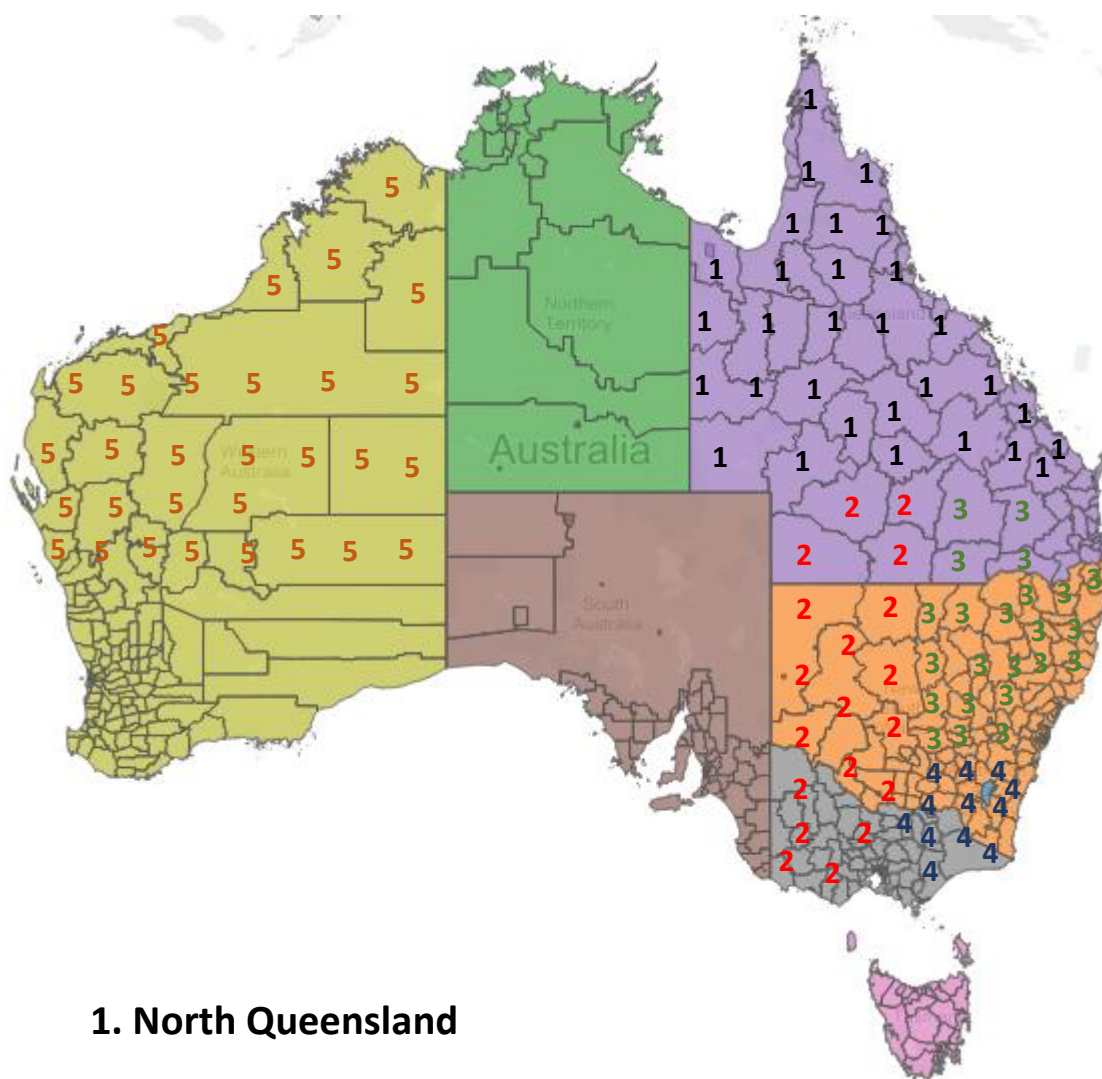
While the extent of a New State's representation in the House of Representatives will be determined by the number of Population Quotas it fills, the Federal Parliament will determine the extent of its representation in the Senate.

When legislating self-government for its Territories of the Northern Territory (1978) and the Australian Capital Territory (1988), the Federal Parliament determined the initial extent of each of their representation to be two seats in the House of Representatives and two Senate seats. With the population growth of the Australian Capital Territory the Electoral Boundary Review prior to the 2019, increased its representation in the House of Representatives to three seats.

Without having sufficient population to qualify for at least five seats in the House of Representatives it would be reasonable to expect that the Federal Parliament will provide minimal Senate representation.

Map of Proposed Regions Suitable as New States follows;

Regions Suitable as New States



1. North Queensland

2. Darling/Riverina/Murray

3. New England

4. Eden/Monaro/Alpine

5. North West Australia

Considerations for Creating Viable New States

- a. Adjoining regions forming a New State should have a population approaching 1,000,000 or could reasonably be expected to attain that population within 10 years of securing statehood;
- b. No New State border shall divide an existing community;
- c. A New State shall have sufficient natural resources and arable land to provide for sustainable primary industries;
- d. A New State shall be able to generate sufficient State Revenues to meet the obligations for delivery of services and infrastructure for its residents. Revenue assessment should be based on the comparisons of annual state generated revenue of Tasmania and South Australia.

Notes:

- a. Annual state generated revenue excludes Commonwealth GST Redistribution and Grants
- b. South Australian Generated Revenue to State Treasury for FY 2019/20: \$7.6B
- c. Tasmanian Generated Revenue to State Treasury for FY 2019/20: \$2.6B