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## **Christmas Island Neighbourhood Centre's Submission to the JSCEM Inquiry on the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Ensuring Fair Representation of the Northern Territory) Bill 2020**

The Christmas Island Neighbourhood Centre is based on Christmas Island which is part of the Lingiari Electorate in the Northern Territory.

We oppose the proposed change from two seats in the NT down to one. Christmas Island has undergone severe social stress over the last decade with continued reliance on it for the handling of national affairs from immigration to COVID 19 quarantine. We are in a declining economy and with tourism stymied because of international and domestic travel restrictions, are facing a poor economic outlook which presents with worsening social metrics to predictably follow.

The CI Neighbourhood Centre is most concerned with declining social metrics as the goals of the association are to promote social cohesion and assist in access to services for the diverse community on island with our resource centre. It is a mundane fact of representation that the less of it you have, the fewer outcomes you can influence for your community. Hence our opposing the halving of our representation.

Should Christmas Island have to vote in a single electorate of 140,000 with a combined Solomon and Lingiari Division, our votes will be swamped. It may come to pass that potential candidates for this new NT seat would not dedicate time to visit Christmas and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as we are so few votes so far away that would necessitate a week to fly to and back from Darwin.

Given the weight and importance of services that Christmas Island has provided to the nation and the fact that we are so reliant on our federal Lingiari member as we have no State level representation as an external non-self governing territory, the Christmas Island Neighbourhood Centre is in support of maintaining two seats in the Northern Territory to ensure the level of representation we have now is continued.

Yours sincerely,



Darren Marsh  
Chairperson, CINC

