



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Suggestion 10

David Lumsden

3 pages

SUGGESTION FOR THE 2023-24 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION

Dear Commissioners,

As a Fremantle local resident, I would hope that the upcoming redistricting of Western Australia can provide an opportunity to make the electorate of Fremantle more coherent, particularly with regard to providing a more sensible community of interest.

I would argue that the time for pretending that residents of Cockburn and residents of Fremantle perhaps coexist within the same community of interest has passed. Given that Cockburn has become so much larger than Fremantle, in practice, the electorate has become the seat of Cockburn. I accept that Fremantle is a federation seat, but it is not an appropriate moniker to apply to a seat that is so clearly dominated by the interests of residents of another city entirely. Similarly, Cockburn's character has become so distinct that it should be able to express it independently of Fremantle.

I would advocate for Fremantle being maintained, but modified so as to expand east until North Lake Road. This road runs down to a sequence of lakes that provide a natural barrier between what I would consider to be communities whose experience is more aligned with Fremantle than with Cockburn and vice versa. The inclusion of Bicton, Attadale and Melville seems like a no-brainer. Families who live there send their children to school in Fremantle. Residents of these suburbs consider themselves to live in Fremantle. All public transport routes that run through there end up in Fremantle.

Tangney is well over quota. Giving some of its western flank to Fremantle would be the least disruptive way of bringing it to its quota without having to drastically alter its shape.

Additionally, I would suggest that the inclusion of Mosman Park in Fremantle would be sensible due to its similarity in character with North

Fremantle. Excising it from Curtin would also provide scope for allowing Curtin to relieve pressure from electorates to its north and east. In its demographic nature, Mosman Park has much more in common with Fremantle than Treeby and Atwell do. Both Mosman Park and Fremantle have similar environmental concerns, given their proximity to the Swan river, Indian Ocean and each other. They are both old cities with many heritage buildings. Both City Councils spend a lot of time and funds improving utilities-related infrastructure with the constraints of being small cities with a limited base of ratepayers.

Cockburn's population exceeded 30,000 as recently as 1980. It is now close to 120,000. Fremantle, on the other hand, is a historic city and a federation seat. While Cockburn was once administered to by Fremantle City Council, considering it as being within Fremantle's orbit today is a true test of one's imagination. This is compounded by the odd division drawn between Melville and East Fremantle, despite the former being a natural extension of the latter. Melville, Bicton and Attadale are also significantly closer to Fremantle than Jandakot airport or Treeby are. In fact, the shape of Fremantle seems weirdly contrived in order to accommodate Cockburn.

I accept that political concerns cannot influence redistricting processes, but the current unnatural shape to the Fremantle electorate could hardly suit the Australian Labor Party more perfectly. Liberal voters in Bicton, Attadale and Melville, who are effectively Fremantle residents, are compartmentalised into Tangney. This leaves Fremantle as an unusually shaped, safe ALP seat. This does not preserve Fremantle's community of interest. It does the opposite.

Expanding Fremantle eastwards until North Lake Road and northwards into Mosman Park would augment the loss of Cockburn east of the lakes. This would create an opportunity to combine Cockburn and Armadale, and perhaps even Gosnells. These are young cities with a high proportion of mortgagees. They share a distinctively suburban character with each other that is quite separate from Fremantle's alluvial and maritime nature.

Alternatively, Cockburn could be absorbed into Brand together with Kwinana and Rockingham. Cockburn has an industrial quality that naturally lends itself to comparison with Kwinana and Rockingham. They share a trainline. If Brand was to absorb Cockburn, areas like Secret Harbour, Golden Bay and Singleton could be joined with Mandurah in the seat of Canning. Families in these suburbs are more likely to send

their children to school in Mandurah and feel a connection with that city. This outcome would be much more ideal than the current situation where Canning assumes a community of interest between residents of Mandurah and Armadale. Those cities are so far from each other and so demographically distinct from each other, that they ought to have the opportunity to have their interests independently represented.

The most frequently used transport routes in and out from Fremantle go through Bicton and Melville, or Mosman Park. If one lives in Fremantle, there is rarely any need to go to Cockburn, and vice versa. As if to emphasise the point, Cockburn is on an entirely different trainline that runs from Perth to Mandurah, despite there being a Fremantle line. The planners of Perth's public transport infrastructure determined that Fremantle and Cockburn should be accommodated separately, and for good reason. They are separate. They even have a barrier of lakes that have developed as result of Australia's northward tectonic migration. The west coast abrades against the Indian Ocean's tectonic plate and is splitting off as a result. That is to say that, even the most primal forces on Earth have seen fit to separate Fremantle from Cockburn, and are likely to continue regardless of any redistricting.

I admit that the process of redistricting may naturally tend to preserving coastal electorates as much as possible. The suggestions in this submission would constitute the biggest modification to the Fremantle electorate in living memory. These changes would, however, make Fremantle more coherent and sustainable in the long term. Whatever happens in future, any redistricting will squeeze Fremantle against the coast. It will be very difficult to do this while keeping Cockburn in Fremantle. Cockburn will only grow larger and more characteristically distinct in relation to Fremantle. If Cockburn is not split from Fremantle now, it will probably need to be split at the next redistricting. Making these changes now would relieve some of the pressure to make more significant changes further up river.

To close, I appreciate the scale of the task that you face in redistricting our growing state. Thank you for your work.

Regards,

David Lumsden