

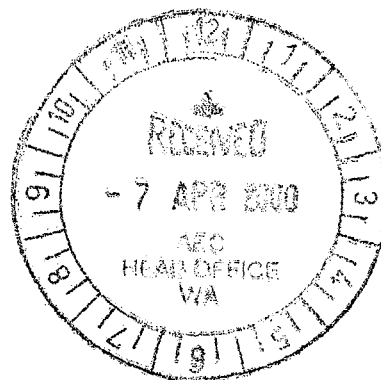
LIBERAL PARTY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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6 April 2000

Redistribution Committee for Western Australia
28 Thorogood Street
BURSWOOD WA 6100



Dear Sirs

Please find attached our comments on the redistribution submissions on Federal electoral boundaries in Western Australia.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Wells".

Peter Wells
STATE DIRECTOR

PW1990.ltr:vm

Attached:



COMMENT ON PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The only other comprehensive submission for the redistribution of the State is comprised of the suggestions of the Australian Labor Party. We note that the ALP has not provided any argument as to why it recommends certain changes. Nor have the suggestions included maps or enrolment numbers.

It is appreciated that there is a degree of common ground between the submissions of the two major political parties. Both submissions respect the natural boundaries created by the Swan and Canning Rivers and accordingly do not propose significant changes to the Divisions of Curtin, Perth, Swan, Tangney and Fremantle. Both Parties suggest that only the southern boundary of Brand be altered, and both suggest that the Division of Moore be based within the City of Joondalup.

However by suggesting the creation of a new Division linking the Peel and Great Southern regions, the ALP submission displaces large numbers of rural electors and attaches far flung agricultural communities to fast growing urban areas. There would no longer be a Western Australian Division that is as markedly dominated by agriculture, like the current Division of O'Connor. The Divisions of Forrest and Pearce would have their rural components lessened. Rural and regional electors in short would be treated in a somewhat cavalier manner.

In effect this submission would see O'Connor and the new Division return to the configurations of the Divisions of Canning and Moore as they existed from their inauguration in 1949 until 1980. Over that time the original rural character of these Divisions was increasingly diluted by urbanisation.

The suggested Division of Holman seems to have been drawn with the purpose of reducing the rural component of the Division of Forrest. Not only the City of Albany (the separate Town and Shire of Albany no longer exist) but also the Shires of Denmark, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Boyup Brook with a portion of Manjimup would be removed from Forrest so that Collie as well as Harvey can be added to it.

Collie has been outside the Division of Forrest for a decade. The Shires of Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes and Manjimup have on the other hand been part of the Division of Forrest for the entire history of this Division. They are indisputably part of the South West and have little community of interest with the Great Southern shires to the north and east. Their links run to Bunbury rather than to Albany.

The inclusion of Collie in the Division of Forrest would provide a significant electoral advantage to the ALP in that Division. At the last election in 1998 after the distribution of preferences, the Australian Labor Party received over 71% of the votes cast in the Shire of Collie. The understandable eagerness of the ALP to include Collie within Forrest has produced some grotesque side effects.

Foremost of these is the creation of a new Division largely outside the metropolitan area, when it is the metropolitan area that happens to contain the major growth areas in the State. The community of interest between Mandurah and Ravensthorpe in the proposed new Division is highly questionable.

Even less justifiable is the proposed inclusion of the northern section of the City of Wanneroo and a portion of the City of Joondalup in a Division of O'Connor that would stretch from Kalbarri to Kinross. The Wanneroo suburbs have been included in O'Connor, it would seem, because the ALP could not think of anywhere else to put them.

It is far more logical to include these coastal suburbs in a Division like Pearce that has since its creation combined inner rural and fringe suburban areas, as opposed to an otherwise solidly rural Division like O'Connor. During the 1980's also the then Division of Moore combined the far northern coastal suburbs with the Swan Valley and the outer suburbs of the Escarpment.

The Liberal Party opposes the suggestion that the Shires of Northampton, Chapman Valley and Mullewa be removed from the Division of Kalgoorlie. We have shown that there is no need to tamper with this boundary, as Kalgoorlie remains within quota on its existing boundaries. In any future redistribution it is almost certain that these Shires would once more be placed in Kalgoorlie. The ALP is suggesting that these electors be displaced for no better reason than the fact that their removal is seen as likely to assist the ALP in capturing the Division of Kalgoorlie at the next election.

The mail out to electors of Kalgoorlie cited in the original submission has now been completed, with 3800 items of mail returned out of the 49,500 posted. At a conservative estimate these mail items would represent 7500 electors. While it is not claimed that they have all left the Division, we suggest that as many as half may have done so, particularly among non-indigenous electors. We reiterate that enrolment in Kalgoorlie will remain within the permissible limits if the current boundary is maintained, and might well fall below the lower limit if the ALP suggestion were to be adopted.

Again, there is a certain selectivity in the suggested removal from the Division of Pearce of all but three rural Shires. The ALP in 1998 polled nearly half the preferred vote cast in Northam (Town and Shire) and Toodyay but was less well favoured in the other rural Shires that are proposed to be transferred to O'Connor. It is anomalous that Northam should remain outside O'Connor when Kinross has at the same time been placed within it.

We note that the ALP submission foreshadows that the seats of Holman, O'Connor and Kalgoorlie will have enrolments below average in March 2004. Holman will only be 300 above the maximum permissible lower limit. This has contributed to correspondingly high projected enrolments for other Divisions, notably Moore that is only 31 electors below the maximum permitted enrolment.

The Division of Swan also has a markedly low projected enrolment, caused by the suggested transfer of South Guildford and Hazelmere to the Division of Perth. Conversely the Division of Brand has a projected enrolment above average because the suburb of Coodanup is proposed to be retained in Brand rather than transferred to the undersized new Division. It would appear that either the political complexion of Coodanup has influenced this suggestion, or simply that insufficient attention has been paid to the necessary details of a submission.

The Liberal Party does not disagree in principle with the Australian Labor Party in its suggestion that the suburbs of Attadale and Melville be transferred from Fremantle to Tangney. Indeed this was proposed by the Liberal Party in our suggestions for the 1996 redistribution. We have made our alternative proposal for adjusting the boundary between Fremantle and Tangney only because the then Redistribution Committee did not accept our original suggestion.

On the other hand we disagree with the ALP proposal that, by following the local government boundary between the Cities of Canning and Gosnells as the boundary between the Divisions Canning and Tangney, would have the effect of splitting the locality of Canning Vale between the two Divisions. Residents in that part of Canning Vale contained within the City of Gosnells are currently arguing that they should be transferred to the City of Canning. This particular local government boundary does not reflect accepted community of interest.

It is acknowledged that the ALP and the Liberal Party disagree as to the use of Wanneroo Road as a possible general boundary between the Divisions of Stirling and Cowan. At the same time, there is general agreement that the Division of Moore should essentially be comprised of localities within the City of Joondalup. The high projected enrolments of Moore and Cowan however point to the overall clumsiness of the ALP submission.

Enrolment and Projections deduced from ALP submission

	Current	Projected
Brand	74528	88665
Canning	78958	89655
Cowan	79184	89540
Curtin	83625	86137
Forrest	75988	86780
Fremantle	78079	86479
Holman	75926	84636
Kalgoorlie	79332	86236
Moore	79336	90428
O'Connor	73747	84955
Pearce	78885	88594
Perth	78659	88594
Stirling	85417	88160
Swan	78144	84955
Tangney	84250	89186
	1184058	1311002

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In regard to the submission from the Shire of Collie, the point must again be made that an alleged community of interest between Collie and Bunbury must be weighed against the certain community of interest that already exists between Bunbury and other Shires already within the Division of Forrest. These Shires would need to be displaced into an unrelated Division if Collie were to be added to Forrest. Such

community of interest ought not be ruptured in order to satisfy the desire of the Collie Shire Council to cease being part of the Division of O'Connor.

On page 3 of their submission, the Collie Shire Council makes the observation that the Division of O'Connor is "distant, different in its makeup *and quite frankly of no interest electorally* to the inhabitants of the Collie Shire" (emphasis added). The fact that people in Collie may feel that their votes do not have impact in a particular Division is no reason for a change to be made, and seriously weakens purported arguments of community of interest.

As it happens, the proposal of the Liberal Party that the Shire of Collie be part of an expanded Division of Canning would ensure that the electors of Collie would be removed from O'Connor and could not be taken for granted by either side of politics. What is relevant is that Collie shares a community of interest with other Shires fringing the Escarpment and would once again be in a Division similar to the Division of Brand as constituted in 1990-96.

Hon David Smith takes a broader view and appears to be proposing that in effect greater Bunbury and its surrounds be removed from Forrest. He acknowledges that the Shires of Bridgetown-Greenbushes and Manjimup have a greater affiliation to Bunbury than to Albany. However, if the lower South West were to be separated from Bunbury it would really be a case of removing the heartland of the Division of Forrest and creating two new seats.

Mr Smith is wrong in stating that Lord Forrest had "little or no connection" with the Great South when in fact he represented all of it in Federal Parliament, along with the South West, in 1901-18.

Name of the new Division

The Liberal Party acknowledges that the proposals by Mr Stringall, Mr Hebbard and the Australian Labor Party for the commemoration of Dr Coombs, Daisy Bates and in particular May Holman have merit. The suggestion of the name of Mahon however ought not to be taken seriously.

However we believe that priority should be given to the name Hasluck, wherever the new seat is eventually situated.

- The name commemorates both a man and a woman who have made significant contributions to public and cultural life;
- Sir Paul Hasluck is the only Western Australian to have served as Governor General.
- Much of his contribution to public life was made within the Commonwealth Parliament itself – in common with John Curtin, Dorothy Tangney, John Forrest and George Pearce.