



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Comment on suggestion 15

WA Labor

6 pages



Redistribution Committee
Australian Electoral Commission
By Email: fedredistribution-wa@aec.gov.au

6 November 2020

Dear Committee,

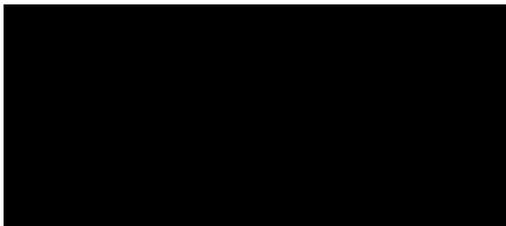
Western Australian Federal Redistribution 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on public suggestions made for the Western Australian Federal Redistribution.

If you require further information or clarification, please contact me using the details below.

We look forward to seeing the draft boundaries.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Picton

State Secretary



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WA LABOR COMMENTS ON PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REDISTRIBUTION

WA Labor is pleased to note the many constructive proposals in the redrawing of boundaries in Western Australia.

Many submissions argue for changes that impact as few voters as possible, a challenging but important principle for undertaking the task of consolidating 16 divisions to 15.

We are pleased also to see a significant number of submissions argue that change should be avoided where divisions meet the legislative requirements, including the Divisions of Brand, Burt, Canning, Forrest, and Fremantle.

WA Labor supports the principle of these proposals which result in the shift of as few voters as possible.

A key question for the Commission to resolve is how to abolish a division whilst maintaining strong communities of interest. WA Labor firmly believes that this cannot be achieved if the Division of Cowan were to be abolished. Important communities of interest exist within the current Division of Cowan which should be maintained.

Almost all submissions emphasise that the current configuration of the District of Pearce is unsustainable. Consequently, this sees the redrawing of boundaries in the northern and eastern suburbs across almost all submissions.

Most submissions, including those by The Nationals WA, the Liberal Party of Australia (Western Australian Division) (**Liberal Party**), Mr McSweeney, Dr Mulcair, Mr Walsh and Mr Waddell, argue for Ellenbrook and Midland to be in the same district, as well as a district that encompasses the northern suburbs in the City of Wanneroo which share strong communities of interest. These proposals align in this respect with WA Labor's submission.

What differs across many submissions is how to resolve adding additional electors to the Division of Tangney, and how to redraw boundaries in the north and east metropolitan area required in order to reduce the number of divisions in this region.

WA Labor proposes that the Commission consider the strong communities of interest in the northern metropolitan suburbs, particularly within the inner north eastern suburbs when redrawing these boundaries.

We also urge the Commission to act upon a principle of minimal change to electorates elsewhere in the State – prioritising change only where necessary to meet the legislative requirements.

Not only would such an approach see no changes to the existing boundaries of the divisions of Brand, Burt, Canning, Forrest and Fremantle but also none of the existing voters of the divisions of Curtin, Durack, O'Connor and Tangney would have to change divisions. As such, voters in nine of the existing sixteen divisions would be unaffected by the redistribution. Clearly, it is also possible for many voters in the remaining seven divisions to not have to change divisions either.

Resolving Pearce

WA Labor maintains that the Division of Pearce is the most significant problem to be resolved. Not only is this Division significantly over quota, but it contains multiple distinct communities with disparate interests, services, and demographics, separated by vast geographic boundaries, and it is surrounded by divisions that are significantly below quota.

Submissions by Mr Waddell, Dr Mulcair, Mr Walsh, the Liberal Party and to a lesser extent Mr McSweeney all make suggestions to this effect.

WA Labor agrees with the point made by Mr Waddell, that –

“Exactly what Pearce’s community of interest is in its current format is hard to pin down. It contains wheatbelt LGA’s in its N and E. It contains localities on the inland urban fringe like Dayton and Brabham. It contains the high-density urban and urbanising Wanneroo Coast. To categorise it as a ‘bitzer’ Division would not be inaccurate.”

WA Labor therefore continues to advocate that the Commission redraw the boundaries of Pearce to redistribute this Division into surrounding electorates where communities of interest are stronger.

Regional and Rural Divisions

Another common theme across submissions is the shift of the outer regional parts of the current Division of Pearce into the Division of Durack. This is supported in submissions by Mr Walsh, Mr Waddell, Dr Mulcair, the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA.

These are proposals that, as outlined in our initial submission, WA Labor supports.

Resolving the quota issues in O’Connor in particular is an important consideration for the Commission, as it could have significant flow-on impacts on other electorates.

The proposals by the Liberal Party, Mr Walsh, Mr Ashley and Dr Mulcair to redraw boundaries in the Divisions of Canning and Forrest, in addition to Pearce and Durack, create significant disruption to neighbouring electorates which do not require change to meet the legislative requirements.

WA Labor’s proposal to include rural areas of the Division of Hasluck into the Division of O’Connor and parts of the rural areas of Division of Pearce into the Division of O’Connor is a preferable option to resolve the quota issues in the divisions of O’Connor and Durack, as it limits unnecessary changes to the Divisions of Forrest, Canning and therefore flow on impacts into Brand – all of which meet legislative requirements. With no compelling communities of interest reasons to justify changes, WA Labor believes these electorates should remain unchanged.

Cowan

The proposal by the Liberal Party asks the Commission to abolish the seat of Cowan. WA Labor strongly opposes this proposal. The suburbs in the Division of Cowan share important demographic similarities and strong communities of interest and should remain in a single division.

In the proposal by the Liberal Party, the southern parts of the City of Wanneroo would be split between three divisions – Perth, Stirling and Moore. This is in contrast to WA Labor’s proposal which keeps those suburbs in one Division, Cowan, a much more favourable outcome for these communities.

The suburbs of Girrawheen, Marangaroo, Koondoola and Alexander Heights are some of the most demographically diverse suburbs in Western Australia and share a strong community of interest. WA Labor’s proposal not only seeks to keep these communities together in one division, but also seeks to re-unite them with the suburbs of Balga and Mirrabooka to the Division of Cowan, as all of these suburbs share a strong community of interest and

demographic similarities. To unnecessarily split the suburbs to the south east of Cowan across multiple electorates would split important communities apart and dilute the representation of these communities.

By way of example, to split the suburbs of Alexander Heights and Marangaroo from the suburbs of Koondoola and Girrawheen, into three different electorates would be of significant detriment to those communities. Residents in these suburbs access services, shops and entertainment along both Mirrabooka Avenue and The Avenue, and many residents from these suburbs shop at Alexander Heights Shopping Centre. Girrawheen Senior High School's local intake area is across these suburbs, as is the intake for local early learning centres. Beach Road in Malaga also serves as a hub for these north eastern suburbs, and as such keeping Malaga in the same district is also important.

In addition to splitting suburbs with strong links, the proposal by the Liberal Party combines north eastern inland suburbs such as Madeley, Darch, Landsdale and Marangaroo with coastal suburbs like Mullaloo and Hillarys. These are distinct communities with no shared communities of interest. They share none of the same services, school intake areas, or shopping centres. They are also markedly different demographically. Suburbs on the coast have higher average income and higher average age demographics than the eastern suburbs.

The submission by the Edmund Rice Centre WA reinforces the above as well as the reasoning in WA Labor's initial submission. This important organisation provides crucial services across the Division of Cowan, and their recommendation to unite the suburbs of Balga and Mirrabooka with the suburbs of Girrawheen and Koondoola into the Division of Cowan reflects the unique needs of these communities.

In addition to the strong community of interest arguments for maintaining the Division of Cowan, WA Labor also believes that recognising the late Edith Cowan and maintaining the Division named in her honour should be a consideration.

Perth

WA Labor is of the view that the existing boundary between the Divisions of Perth and Cowan are strong and should remain unchanged. They appropriately differentiate the different communities of inner-Perth metropolitan suburbs and the outer eastern metropolitan suburbs.

WA Labor opposes the proposal by the Liberals to split the City of Vincent across the Divisions of Perth and Curtin.

The Division of Perth covering the entire of the City of Vincent was a positive move by the Commission in unifying this community. While not possible in all circumstances, this allows the State and Federal electorates of Perth to also cover this locality.

The suburbs of North Perth, Leederville and Mount Hawthorn are connected as a single community by their common infrastructure of Beatty Park, Leederville Oval and school catchments such as North Perth Primary crossing Charles Street. While the most prominent and natural boundary of the Division of Perth is the Swan River, it is appropriate that it be divided from the Division of Curtin at the Central Business District through the built boundary of the Mitchell Freeway and Joondalup train line. Further, this recognises the history of the previous boundaries of the City of Perth which spanned the Perth and Curtin electorates.

Burt

Notably, no submission proposes the abolition of the Division of Burt.

The Liberal Party submission also proposes to move the suburb of Canning Vale from the Division of Burt into the Division of Tangney. WA Labor opposes this proposal.

The Canning Vale industrial area is located between suburbs in the existing Division of Tangney and the residential area of Canning Vale. This means there is no community of interest amongst residents in Leeming, Willetton, Parkwood and residents in Canning Vale. They share no shared schools, shopping centres or services. Canning Vale shares a much stronger community of interest with suburbs in the Division of Burt, as these suburbs share schools, shopping centres and bus routes, and once the extended Thornlie train line is complete, will share train stations.

Canning Vale is also a suburb within the City Gosnells, as is Langford, which while the only part of Burt (and the City of Gosnells) north of Roe Highway, shares the transport of the Thornlie train station with Thornlie etc. and school catchment zones with Thornlie. Therefore, Langford should not move into Swan or Tangney (which is also consistent with most submissions).

WA Labor notes the submission by the City of Armadale, which also provides a compelling argument for the boundaries in the Division of Burt to remain unchanged.

As outlined in our initial submission and above, WA Labor maintains that where changes are not necessary to a Division to meet legislative requirements, changes should be avoided, and therefore there should be no changes to the existing boundaries of the Division of Burt.

Tangney

Several submissions, including those by Mr Walsh and Mr Waddell, in addition to the WA Labor submission, propose an alternative to resolving the quota issues in the Division of Tangney. These propose the Division of Tangney be expanded to include the South Perth LGA.

WA Labor maintains that this is a more suitable way to resolve the low population in the Division of Tangney and unites suburbs with shared communities of interest.

This also provides for the shift of Kenwick, Maddington, Beckenham, Forrestfield, Maida Vale and Hazelmere into the Division of Swan which, as outlined in our initial submission, share communities of interest with their neighbouring suburbs in the Division of Swan. In this regard, it is notable that the preponderance of submissions envisage that these suburbs will have to move out of their existing Division of Hasluck in any event.

Conclusion

WA Labor asks the Commission to consider drawing of boundaries in such a way that resolves growth in population in the Division of Pearce while also resolving divisions that are under quota in the north and east of metropolitan Perth.

We reiterate the important communities of interest that exist in the Division of Cowan and emphasise that to separate these communities would be of great disadvantage to them.

WA Labor proposes that divisions within the permissible elector quota should be changed only where necessary to resolve issues in neighbouring division. We support minimal

change to as many electors in Western Australia as possible and urge the Commission to leave Divisions unchanged where they meet the legislative requirements.