

COMMENTS ON SUGGESTIONS: WA REDISTRIBUTION 2011

GENERAL COMMENTS:

It is clear that the majority of submissions (especially those from the major parties) have opted for a Minimal/Incremental Change approach, citing the need to minimise voter disruption after the large redistribution of 2007. While the submissions demonstrate that it is possible to create 59 seats within tolerance using this approach, this largely comes at the expense of logical boundaries and communities of interest.

In my original Submission, I stated:

Under the “Minimal Change” and “Incremental Change” models, the Districts in Perth would all need to be set toward to top of quota, and those of rural WA towards the bottom. This could result in the Committee having to accept undesirable boundaries purely to keep the Districts from going outside tolerance, and this obviously should be avoided”

The submissions from both major parties seem to support this statement.

While I appreciate the argument that changes should be kept to a minimum after the major re-draw of 2007, the alternatives proposed by the major parties are even worse in terms of community of interest. In order to retain 17 seats in rural WA, they forced to split shires and suburbs, make awkward additions and deletions, and draw boundaries in Perth along minor back streets and CCD boundaries. The ALP even admit in their submission that their approach “forces” them to follow obscure and messy CCD boundaries. In particular, the proposed boundaries in Northern Metropolitan are very poor, and clearly are governed purely by trying to balance the numbers in rapidly growing Mindarie and Wanneroo.

For example, both major parties are forced to make an awkward split of the Mindarie area, including detaching part of Mindarie itself from the District of that name. The fairly self-contained suburbs immediately surrounding Mindarie have enough electors for a District, and Ocean Reef has a strong northern boundary, so it is far more sensible to contract Mindarie on its northern and eastern boundaries, leaving its southern boundary with Ocean Reef intact. By *not* creating a new seat in this area, the major parties are forced to drag surrounding seats northwards, in clear violation of community of interest.

Likewise, the seats of West Swan, Girrawheen and/or Kingsley are forced to take in more of Wanneroo to reduce the numbers in that seat. This has flow on effects to surrounding seats in Northern and Eastern Metropolitan.

In rural WA, both major parties are forced to make messy changes, splitting shires and making awkward add-ons to several seats. The Liberals’ decision to transfer Collie to Wagin has major impact on other districts in South-West Region, while the ALP make messy splits of Busselton and shires around Albany.

I would submit very strongly to the Committee that the best way to maintain and improve community of interest throughout WA is to create a new seat in Wanneroo and abolish a seat in Mining/Pastoral Region. Under my proposals, a small number of Goldfields-based shires may experience dislocation from their focal point of Kalgoorlie, but the remainder of the proposals improve community of interest; especially throughout Wanneroo, Swan Valley, Swan Hills, Darling Range, large parts of southern Perth, and Agricultural Region. Also, South West and the remainder of northern Perth are left relatively untouched. As a general rule, districts close to tolerance experience only minor change, and the metropolitan/rural boundary is not altered.

Contrast this to the wide-ranging dislocation that would be experienced by trying to retain the existing 42/17 balance between Perth and Rural WA, as demonstrated by the major parties' submissions.

Note also that the trend of population change is likely to continue, with strong growth in outer metropolitan Perth and South West compared to slow growth in Agricultural and Mining/Pastoral. So if the Committee does not address this issue in 2011, they are likely to be faced with an even greater disparity in 2015, possibly resulting in the need to abolish two or three seats in rural WA. This would create even more voter confusion and dislocation than if the Committee simply abolished a single seat now.

As a final note, both parties do acknowledge that there is significant disparity in enrolment, and that major changes may be necessary, despite choosing the Minimal/Incremental Change approach. I suspect both major parties may privately support abolishing a rural District, but choose not to say so publicly for political reasons. Certainly, their submissions tend to lend their support to a Fundamental Change approach, since they show how messy things get when they try to do something else.

SUBMISSION FROM THE LIBERAL PARTY

Despite their decision not to alter the balance of seats between Perth and rural WA, the Liberals' submission has a number of points in common with my own:

- The transfer of Wandering, Brookton, Pingelly and Corrigin to Central Wheatbelt (although I go further by transferring all of the former Avon and Merredin).
- The transfer of Wongan-Ballidu, Goomalling, and Dowerin to Moore.
- The transfer of the town of Margaret River to Vasse.
- The transfer of Dalyellup to Bunbury, although the Liberals are forced to remove part of the City of Bunbury as a result of their decisions for Collie-Preston.
- In Southern Metropolitan, the general pattern for Willagee, Alfred Cove, Bateman, and Riverton, although I go further than the Liberals to make better use of major roads and railways.
- In Eastern Metropolitan; the transfer of Inglewood to Mount Lawley, Hazelmere to Belmont, Mount Helena to Swan Hills, Ellenbrook to West Swan, northern Beechboro to Bassendean, and the balance of Bayswater to Maylands.

However, there are also a number of problems with the Liberal submission, all of which basically stem from adopting the Minimalist/Incremental Change approach:

- In trying to retain 5 Districts in Mining/Pastoral region, the Liberals are forced into shifting Collie into Wagin to boost the numbers in Agricultural (there is probably a strong political motive for this move as well). This causes significant flow-on effects to Bunbury, Dawesville, Mandurah, and Murray-Wellington, all of which require minor changes at most. Under my proposals, Collie-Preston can easily be brought within tolerance by shedding Dalyellup to low-tolerance Bunbury, which causes no flow-on effects to any other district.
- While I would still prefer transferring Northampton and Chapman Valley to Geraldton, so Moore no longer has to extend north of Geraldton, the Liberals' proposal to transfer Irwin Shire has merit as an alternative, and I would not object to it.
- I do not support altering the metropolitan/rural boundary as proposed by the Liberals. In particular, the removal of eastern parts of Mundaring makes yet another split of this Shire, which is already split four ways. Under my proposals, these areas would all be united in Swan Hills, and Mundaring would only be split between two districts instead of four (or five!).
- While I support the removal of Maddington from Forrestfield, it is clearly a better fit with Kalamunda than Gosnells. Part of Maddington is already in Kalamunda, and is cut off from Gosnells by the Canning River.
- I support transferring Hazelmere to Belmont, but the further transfer of Guildford (forcing Belmont across the Helena River) is not necessary. Likewise, Caversham is a much better fit with Bassendean than with Midland, from which it is completely cut off by the Swan River.
- As mentioned, the reluctance to create a new district in Northern metropolitan results in messy and confusing boundaries in the Wanneroo area, particularly around Mindarie and Joondalup.
- Leaving Landsdale in West Swan not only forces this district to straddle three distinct areas instead of two, but requires the self-contained area of Ellenbrook to be split. It is more sensible to unite Ellenbrook in West Swan and transfer Landsdale to a Wanneroo-based district.
- Several of the Liberals' proposals in Southern and Eastern Metropolitan are similar to those I explored when considering a new district in Southern Metropolitan. If the Committee wished to create a new District in Southern Metropolitan instead of Northern Metropolitan, I would support the general thrust of the Liberals' proposals for Cockburn, Jandakot, Southern River, Armadale, and Darling Range (apart from shedding parts of Mundaring to Central Wheatbelt).

SUBMISSION FROM THE ALP

- As with the last redistribution, the ALP provide maps of their proposed boundaries but very little in the way of explanation. This makes it difficult to follow the logic of their submission at times, in particular some of their decisions to split shires and suburbs.
- While Labor retain 5 seats in Mining/Pastoral, they forced to split Roebourne and Ashburton Shires between Pilbara and North West. It seems more logical to unite Roebourne in Pilbara and Ashburton in North West (or 'Mid North' in my submission).
- Uniting Yilgarn with Westonia in one district is supported by the local shires, and I would recommend that the Committee seek to achieve this.
- While I proposed changes to the boundary between Geraldton and Moore, I would have no objection if the Committee left these boundaries unchanged, as proposed by the ALP.
- Labor's decision to transfer Albany to Agricultural Region has merit, but unfortunately they can only achieve this by splitting shires to give Wagin a contiguous border with Albany. I agree with the ALP that the numbers for each Region are imbalanced, but suggest this move be saved for a future redistribution, when growth in South West allows Blackwood-Stirling to contract completely west of Albany.
- It is not clear why the ALP split Busselton instead of transferring Margaret River from Vasse. The splitting of Busselton before 2007 caused great confusion for locals and led to many objections, and would certainly be objected to strongly if implemented again.
- While the general thrust of Labor's submission around Kwinana is similar to my own, many of their boundaries follow minor streets, and seem to detach small parts of Baldivis and Medina from the remainder of their suburb. The most logical approach is to place all of Baldivis and Medina in Kwinana, and transfer all of Bertram to Cockburn. It is also not clear why a small part of Kwinana (Wandi) has been detached to Jandakot instead of being placed in Kwinana or Cockburn.
- Labor offer no explanation for expanding Riverton eastwards into part of Ferndale. The obvious way for Riverton to expand is westwards, taking in all of Rossmoyne and utilising the strong boundary of Bull Creek. Labor's proposals split Ferndale and appear to cause flow on effects to Cannington and surrounding seats.
- Labor's boundaries at the junction of Belmont, Forrestfield, and Kalamunda are confusing, again seemingly following minor streets and splitting small parts of suburbs off from each other. It is not clear why Belmont takes in a small part of High Wycombe instead of the obvious gain of Hazelmere.

- I would not support West Swan moving east of the Swan River; the logical expansion is north along the river, not east across it. This seems to be a consequence of retaining Landsdale in West Swan, which again is a consequence of not creating a new seat in Northern Metropolitan.
- As with the Liberal submission, Labor is forced to draw convoluted boundaries along minor streets and CCD boundaries around Wanneroo and Mindarie, as a consequence of not creating a new seat in this area. Labor do retain Balga in a single seat, as supported by Balga Action Group, but this comes at the expense of dragging Kingsley east of Wanneroo Road, which is clearly undesirable.

Submission from the National Party and its MPs:

The Nationals follow a similar Minimalist/Incremental approach to the two major parties, but seem to do a much better job of drawing logical and sensible boundaries in rural WA. In particular, they have made a greater effort to unite Shires and avoid gratuitous transfers between districts.

- The Nationals leave the 5 seats in Mining/Pastoral virtually untouched, apart from a small removal from North-West. While this does meet the numerical criteria, it leaves North-West and especially Pilbara at the very bottom of tolerance even with the benefit of LDA electors. This approach also means the Nationals have missed the opportunity to unite shires such as Ashburton that are currently split. It also means Yilgarn and Westonia are left divided, when the two shires clearly wish to be placed in the same district.
- The Nationals propose a “minimalist” change to Blackwood-Stirling by leaving the major centre of Margaret River in Vasse. This is supported in the submission of Mr Terry Redman, the MP for Blackwood-Stirling. As noted in my original submission, this does leave the two seats less balanced, but I have no objection if the Committee decides on this approach. Similarly, I would no objection if Mandurah and Murray-Wellington were left unchanged, as proposed by the Nationals, instead of making the minor changes suggested in my original submission.
- The Nationals’ proposals for Bunbury are identical to my own; transferring Dalyellup, with no further changes necessary to Collie-Preston.

While I do not support the Minimalist/Incremental model, if the Committee did decide on such an approach, I would recommend the general thrust of the Nationals’ proposals for rural WA over those of the major parties.

Submission from the Greens:

The Greens begin their submission by seemingly supporting a Fundamental Change model, but for some reason, they then go on to propose a series of very Minimalist changes instead. Many of their proposals result in similar flow-on problems and numerical imbalances as those from the major parties, and for those reasons already given I would not support them.

SUBMISSIONS FROM SHIRES

Shire of Capel:

The Shire of Capel recommends against transferring Dalyellup to Bunbury; however given Collie-Preston is over quota and Bunbury under, this is the most logical change that does not lead to undesirable flow-on effects. Capel's proposal to remove Collie to an Agricultural district would cause the same flow-on problems as with the Liberal's submission.

Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes:

The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes wishes to remain united and a South-West district. All submissions appear to respect this, leaving the Shire united in its current district of Blackwood-Stirling.

Shire of Dardanup:

The request of the Shire to remain united in one District has been accommodated in my Submission and (I think) that of the Liberals, while the ALP appears to split a small part of this shire off into Bunbury. Given Dalyellup is a logical transfer to balance Collie-Preston and Bunbury, there is no need to split the Shire of Dardanup in the way proposed by the ALP.

Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup:

The Shire's request for Collie-Preston to remain unchanged cannot be accommodated since the district is outside tolerance. However, both my Submission and that of the Liberal Party leave the Shire united in Collie-Preston. The ALP, however, splits the Shire between Collie-Preston and Blackwood-Stirling; this is completely unnecessary and should be avoided.

Shire of Westonia:

The Shire notes that Westonia and Yilgarn will be amalgamated in 2012, and their proposal to unite both Shires in the same district is logical and sensible. I note that Westonia could be added to my proposed Kalgoorlie-Eyre without pushing that district outside tolerance, and I would recommend that change to my original Submission. I also note the ALP Submission proposes uniting Westonia and Yilgarn in their District of Eyre.

SUBMISSION OF BALGA ACTION GROUP

Balga Action Group notes the difficulties of having the suburb split across multiple districts, and recommends Balga remain united in a single district. My submission leaves Balga united in Girrawheen, as does that of the ALP, and I would oppose the Liberals' plan to split the suburb in half between Girrawheen and Nollamara.

SUBMISSION FROM INDIVIDUALS

Mr Antony Fels:

Mr Fels' submission seems to be based around removing the LDA, and several of his suggestions are outside the scope of this redistribution. However, I note that he does support returning Esperance and Ravensthorpe to Agricultural Region. The major changes he proposes around Geraldton and at the urban/rural fringe are not necessary, and can be easily avoided by abolishing a district in Mining/Pastoral Region.

Mr A R Fullarton:

Mr Fullarton recommends North-West be left unaltered, citing population and land-use arguments. However, the problem is not so much with North-West itself as with its neighbours, and given the shortfall in Pilbara and the Agricultural districts, it seems inevitable that flow-on effects will occur to the boundaries of North-West.

Under my proposals, North-West would undergo significant change, but I still believe that community of interest throughout Gascoyne and the Pilbara, and the remainder of rural WA, would be respected.

Mr P A Garbutt:

Mr Garbutt notes the "confusion" caused by having the suburb of Booragoon split, but then proposes that the District of Bateman remain unchanged, which would in fact leave Booragoon divided between Bateman and Alfred Cove.

I suggest that community of interest in the area is best served by making the small change to unite Booragoon in Bateman, as proposed in my original Submission and that of the Liberal Party.

Mr Jon Kelly:

The basic outline of Mr Kelly's outline is similar to mine; create a new seat in Wanneroo and abolish a seat in Mining/Pastoral Region. He supports transferring Esperance and Ravensthorpe to Wagin, uniting Kalgoorlie and Boulder in a single seat, and the general thrust of my suggestions for the north of the state. In a couple of areas (e.g. Mindarie), I feel my proposals make better use of major roads and clearer boundaries, but I obviously support the general approach that Mr Kelly has taken.

Mr Findlay Osborn:

Mr Osborn's submission basically echoes that of the Liberal Party in proposing Collie be transferred to Wagin. As mentioned, I do not believe this is necessary or desirable, either on its own terms or in the flow-on effects it causes to neighbouring districts.

Mr R P Woodhouse:

Mr Woodhouse notes the confusion of having a small part of Mount Lawley not contained within the district of that name. His suggestion to return to the former name of Yokine has plenty of merit, and I would have no objection to it provided all of Yokine was contained within the seat.