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The Secretary
Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
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Dear Commissioners

Proposed new boundaries of the electorate of Swan Hills

I write to raise my concerns about the proposed new boundaries for the electorate of Swan Hills. I find a number of anomalies in the redistribution, which I believe will have an unfortunate effect on the communities covered by the electorate.

Swan Hills, as the name implies, is comprised of two major divisions: The Swan Valley, and the Perth Hills surrounding Mundaring. Both have distinct identities and interests.

Swan Valley (2003)

As a result of the 2003 redistribution, the Swan Valley was divided, resulting in confusion and some dissatisfaction among residents. It did not appear that those who redrew the boundaries took into the consideration the commonality of interest among Valley residents, nor of the *Swan Valley Planning Act* which covers the area. For many months after the redistribution, in some cases, years, residents have contacted the wrong Member of Parliament when seeking assistance. Not surprisingly, many residents in the Western side of the Swan Valley find it difficult to understand why they are represented by the Member for Bassendean, whose constituency is primarily comprised of a highly urbanised area, and whose residents have little connection with owners of large, semi-rural lifestyle lots.

Darlington (2003)

In addition to the splitting of the Swan Valley in 2003, the small Hills hamlet of Darlington was also divided in two. On election day, there was thorough confusion and consternation at the Darlington booth when people came along with an express voting intention, only to find that they were forced to vote for a candidate in the Midland electorate. The fact that such a small and geographically sequestered area like Darlington was split between electorates, made no sense.

Prior to the 2003 redistribution, the majority of Perth Hills localities were represented by one member, for a long time known as the seat of Mundaring, and later renamed the seat of Swan Hills. It is true that for some time Darlington fell within the seat of Darling Range, however, the township at least fell into one electorate in its entirety.

Financial implications

It is worth noting that there is a serious cost implication for Members when suburbs are split between electorates. Anyone who has had dealings with private distribution companies or Australia Post, knows the difficulties in getting material delivered to households with any level of specificity. The best detail that these organisations seem to be able to achieve is by suburb denominators. It is because of this limitation that I currently continue to communicate with Darlington residents who reside in the Midland electorate, and the same applies to some residents in Henley Brook and West Swan. This is expensive, and misleading; yet there is no option when suburbs are divided between electorates.

The reason that I raise these examples is to illustrate the effect of the past redistribution, which grossly failed to take into account communities of interest when it came to the Swan Valley and Darlington, in particular. I implore you to try and avoid these kinds of effects occurring again.

Ellenbrook/ Morgan Fields/ Henley Brook (2007)

As you will be aware, the largest growing area of the Swan Valley is the new community of Ellenbrook, which is subdivided into a number of 'villages,' including Woodlake, Coolamon, Charlotte's Vineyard, and so on. One of those villages is Morgan Fields, but under the new distribution, this village has been removed from Swan Hills electorate and from the other parts of Ellenbrook, and put into West Swan. Morgan Fields, while technically within the suburb of Henley Brook, clearly identifies with Ellenbrook residents and services, was developed as part of the Ellenbrook development and is suburban in nature unlike the semi-rural remainder of Henley Brook.

Having said this, if Morgan Fields is to be removed from the proposed seat of West Swan and put back into Swan Hills, it must be moved along with the remainder of Henley Brook; for reasons relating to communicating with residents in specific suburbs that I have outlined above.

Hills suburbs along Great Eastern Highway (2007)

Mundaring is known as 'The Heart of the Hills,' a term used to emphasise the fact that Mundaring is where people come to shop from either end of the Shire, and it is the main focus for social, civic and economic activity. I am very concerned that the township of Mundaring would fall outside the seat of Swan Hills under the current proposal.

Under the 2007 proposed redistribution, an already confusing situation will become much more so, with five MPs representing different parts of the North Eastern Hills along Great Eastern Highway, within the Shire of Mundaring. The Member for Midland will retain part of Darlington, which has little in common with the largely urban remainder of Midland; the new seat of Forrestfield will have a piece of Helena Valley; the new seat of Kalamunda will have the other half of Darlington and a portion of Glen Forrest, and the altered seat of Darling Range will collect Mundaring and Sawyers Valley, while Swan Hills will retain the part suburbs to the north of Great Eastern Highway.

The Perth Hills suburbs, from Darlington to Wooroloo, are among the oldest settled parts of the Perth Metropolitan area. Over many years a Hills identity has been built up, which is comprised of interests in tourism, wine, fine dining and outdoor leisure activities including the Bibbulmun Track, the Kep Track (Mundaring to Kalgoorlie pipeline), and the Munda Bidli trail. The Hills suburbs are laced together by the twin strands of Great Eastern Highway and the old Railway Heritage Trail. To artificially separate what has become a cohesive community seems like a backward step.

It is my belief that the division of the 'Mundaring' Hills into five separate electoral districts is a retrograde step which will leave outer metropolitan residents feeling once again like poor relations to their city and country counterparts. Not only will this cause extensive confusion among residents, and unnecessarily expenditure by Members, but the ability to efficiently address 'Hills issues' that come up from time to time and affect all NE Hills residents, will be impeded by the plethora of Members that will represent the suburbs in question. This will also cause extra work for the Shire of Mundaring.

I appreciate the fact that dividing the population into coherent political subdivisions is a mammoth task, however I would nevertheless ask you to look again at the effect of the redistribution on suburbs in the East Metropolitan region, with an eye to rationalising the boundaries in line with the strong communities of interest that exist in our region.

Yours sincerely



Jaye Radisich MLA
Member for Swan Hills