

July 7, 20110

Mr Justin Harbord  
Secretary to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners  
Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners  
GPO Box F316  
PERTH WA 6841

Dear Mr Harbord

As the current Member for Blackwood-Stirling I welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed electoral boundaries, released by the Electoral Distribution Commissioners on June 10, 2011.

My comments centre on community of interest concerns as to the proposed inclusion of the Shires of Plantagenet and Cranbrook within the Wagin electoral district. The Commissioners have noted that “indications of local sentiment are that the Shires of Plantagenet and Cranbrook have a community of interest with neighbouring areas in the southern part of the district of Wagin.” However, the feedback I have received from individuals and groups within both Shires does not reflect this view.

As other submissions have noted, the economy and land use patterns of the Wagin district as it currently exists, are dominated by broad acre farming and the production of wheat, other cereal crops and wool. In the main, the communities within the Wagin district are centred around those economic and land use factors. Communities in the west of the Wagin district are oriented towards Narrogin and those to the east are oriented towards Katanning.

The economic and land use patterns and community of interest of the Shire of Plantagenet are distinct from those of the Wagin district. This is also the case for the western sector of the Cranbrook Shire, which includes the township of Frankland River. Horticulture, viticulture, farm forestry, aquaculture and dairying are important components of the Plantagenet Shire’s economy and land use, whilst the cattle saleyards at Mount Barker are an indicator of the continuing importance of that local industry. All of these sectors demonstrate strong commonalities with those shires to the west.

Viticulture is one of the features that most starkly distinguishes the Plantagenet and Cranbrook Shires from those to the east, and links them closely with those communities and Shires to the west. The wine sub-regions of Mount Barker and Porongurup (Shire of Plantagenet), Frankland River (Shire of Cranbrook) and Denmark, form the major part of one of Australia’s largest wine regions. This strong viticulture focus forms a clear community of interest linking the Shires of Plantagenet, Cranbrook, Denmark, Manjimup, Nannup, Bridgetown-Greenbushes and Augusta-Margaret River.



Tourism in the Plantagenet and Cranbrook areas is strongly linked to a combination of wine and food production and natural attractions, including the Porongurup and Stirling Range Nationals Parks, both of which are listed on the National Heritage Register. These community of interest factors mirror those in the Shires to the west, including Denmark, Nannup, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Manjimup and Augusta-Margaret River, all of which share a tourism sector founded on food, wine and the natural environment. The Walpole Wilderness Area takes in areas of the Manjimup, Denmark and Plantagenet Shires.

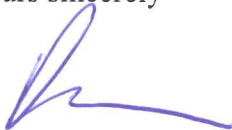
Forest and timber plantations are obviously a dominant landscape feature of the South West corner of the State and this includes the Shire of Plantagenet. The Karri trees that are the unique trademark of this area are typically located in the Shires of Manjimup and Denmark but also in the Porongurup area of Plantagenet. The Conservation Commission of Western Australia Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 designates forests from Manjimup to Mount Barker as being in the one forestry sector.

I submit that the Shires of Plantagenet, in particular, and Cranbrook share a strong community of interest with Shires to their west and that by every benchmark the Plantagenet Shire, in particular, is distinct from Shires to the east. Therefore, I submit the view that the interests of the Plantagenet, Cranbrook and Donnybrook-Balingup Shires would be best served by those boundaries remaining as they currently are, although recognising that some other adjustment to Collie-Preston would be necessary. In making these comments I also note that the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup's written suggestion seems to indicate a desire to remain in its current district. The retention of these three Shires within their current districts could be achieved without placing Warren Blackwood's quota outside permissible limits.

I submit that retaining Plantagenet and possibly Cranbrook in their current districts would allow a more incremental change for the Blackwood-Stirling (Warren Blackwood) electorate following the fundamental scale of change at the 2007 redistribution. This smaller change could also enable the retention of the name Blackwood-Stirling, which was only created in 2008, and this would minimise confusion and result in some saving to taxpayers.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Yours sincerely



TERRY REDMAN MLA  
MEMBER FOR BLACKWOOD-STIRLING