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Mr Warwick Gately
Electoral Redistribution Commissioner
111 St Georges Tce
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Warwick

Re: 2007 Electoral Redistribution

Please find enclosed the objections of the Australian Labor Party (Western Australian Branch) regarding the proposed division of Western Australia into Districts and Regions by the Electoral Redistribution Commissioners.

I look forward to the opportunity to make further oral submissions at the appropriate time.

If you have any enquiries regarding this submission please contact me on 9328 7222.

Yours sincerely

Bill Johnston
State Secretary

30 July 2007

Encl.

Objections by the Australian Labor Party (WA Branch) to the proposed division of Western Australia into Districts and Regions by the Electoral Distribution Commissioners of 29 June 2007

The Australian Labor Party (WA Branch) ("ALP") notes the Electoral Distribution Commissioners proposed boundaries of 29 June 2007.

The ALP notes that many of the submissions of the ALP have not been included in the Commissioners' proposal. This is naturally disappointing to the ALP, as we believed that our submissions represented an excellent course for the Commissioners to follow.

However, the ALP respects the Commissioners decision. We note that the Commissioners are not obliged to follow the submissions of political parties, and acknowledge that the Commissioners proposals meet the requirements of the Act.

However, we do offer a small number of suggestions concerning some important issues for additional consideration of the Commissioners. This is done on a small number of important issues and is designed to assist the Commissioners in their considerations to ensure an improved outcome for the final boundaries.

Mining and Pastoral Region

The ALP notes the proposed boundaries for the Mining and Pastoral Region. We note that the Commissioners did not accept the submissions of the ALP. We note that the Commissioners have expanded the Mining and Pastoral Region into the agricultural areas of the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe.

While we do have strong reservations regarding the inclusion of this area into the Mining and Pastoral Region we are not raising formal objection to the Commissioners' proposal.

In respect of the Districts proposed for this region, we believe the Commissioners could have chosen stronger boundaries in some of the Districts, particularly by re-uniting the whole of the Shire of Ashburton into the North West District. However, we recognise that attempting to redraw any of the boundaries of the five Districts in the Mining and Pastoral Region at this point will be too complicated and should not be attempted as part of this current redistribution.

The ALP recognises that there will be a further redistribution during the next Parliament, and many of the views of the ALP will need to be addressed at that time, particularly the reuniting of the Shire of Ashburton and placing Warburton back into a seat that includes the Goldfields region.

Agricultural Region

The determination of the Commissioners to transfer 9,343 electors residing within the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe into the Mining and Pastoral Region is noted. This creates a Region with 73,776 electors (as at February 2007) compared with 64,730 electors currently within Mining and Pastoral. This may be seen as appropriate given the increase in representation for the Region (from five to six MLCs)

We note however, that the transfer of these 9,343 electors from the Agricultural Region and a continued natural decline creates the anomaly of that region increasing its Council representation by 20%, while actually decreasing its elector population by almost 15%. The proposed new Agricultural Region consists of only four Legislative Assembly districts, three of which are considerably under quota.

There is now a two to one disparity between the proposed Agricultural Region with six MLCs and 82,479 electors and the South West Region with six MLCs and 167,871 electors. Both these regions abut the metropolitan area and neither is subject to statutory provisions that are applicable to large and remote districts comprising the Mining and Pastoral Region.

We believe that the Commission has, without just cause, departed from the principle of relative parity applied by previous commissioners.

In the 2003 redistribution the Commissioners noted, "In addition to these changes [in Assembly Districts] it has been necessary to adjust the respective region boundaries to better balance the elector numbers between the regions".

The Commissioners moved the Shires of Boyup Brook, Tambellup and Boddington as well as part of the Shire of Bridgetown – Greenbushes from the South West to the Agricultural Region on that occasion. The balance achieved was as follows:

Agricultural Region	5 MLCs	94,877 electors
South West Region	7 MLCs	152,494 electors

The Commissioners gave serious consideration to the transfer of the Districts of Stirling and Albany to the Agricultural Region in 2003.

This 'necessity for adjustment' is all the more pressing now given the decline in electors in the Agricultural Region to 82,479 and the increase in South West electors to 167,871 and also given the effective transfer of one MLC from the South West Region to the Agricultural Region.

We propose that the balance between the Agricultural Region and South West Region be addressed by:

1) The transfer of the Shires of Plantagenet and Cranbrook, which are almost entirely agricultural in nature, from the district of Blackwood – Stirling (South West) to the district of Wagin (Agricultural) with an adjustment to the northern boundary of Wagin by the transfer of shires to the district of Merredin. Consideration ought also be given to the retention of the Shire of Boyup Brook within the district of Wagin.

2) The transfer of the proposed District of Albany to the Agricultural Region.

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We note that the proposed District of Albany has a considerable agricultural hinterland and can as reasonably be included in Agricultural as South West. This would be comparable to the transfer of Esperance and Ravensthorpe from Agricultural to Mining and Pastoral.

The proposed changes would constitute an Agricultural Region of 107,652 electors compared with a South West Region of 142,440 electors.
While it is desirable that both regions consist of six assembly districts, we believe that these limited adjustments are the minimum required in the current circumstances.

South West Region

It is noted that the removal of the Shires of Cranbrook and Plantagenet from the proposed district of Blackwood-Stirling (and South West Region) would require an adjustment to the northern boundary of that district.

There are however, sufficient electors within the proposed districts of Vasse, Collie-Preston and Blackwood-Stirling (minus Cranbrook and Plantagenet) to constitute three whole districts.

Therefore, the ALP proposes the three Districts be modified as detailed here:

Blackwood-Stirling

It is argued that a district of Blackwood-Stirling consisting of the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Nannup, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Manjimup and Denmark, more appropriately meets the criteria contained in the Act. There is no real need to split the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, or to transfer the Shire of Cranbrook and Plantagenet to the proposed district. In fact there is no need to transfer the Shire of Boyup Brook from the current district of Wagin.

Vasse and Collie-Preston

The proposed district of Vasse could be more appropriately constituted from the Shires of Busselton and part of the Shire of Capel. The proposed district of Collie-Preston could more appropriately be constituted from the Shires of Collie, Dardanup, Donnybrook- Balingup and part of the Shire of Capel.

Metropolitan Regions

The Commissioners have rejected a number of the submissions of the ALP in forming the Regions in the metropolitan area. Indeed, the Commissioners have also rejected many of our submissions regarding the formation of individual Metropolitan Districts.

The Commissioners have the authority and right to do so, although the ALP believes that our suggested Regions also properly represented the intentions of the Act. However, we do not intend to raise objection to the proposed boundaries of any of the metropolitan Regions.

The Commissioners have clearly created three metropolitan Regions that comply with the Act, and that provide (within the limits of the Act) communities of interest and logical boundaries.

In respect of the proposed Districts within each of the three metropolitan Regions, the ALP notes that the Commissioners have again rejected many of our suggested Districts and relied more closely on the submissions of the Liberal Party of Australia (WA Division). This can be particularly noticed in the North and East Metropolitan Regions.

For example, the freeway has been relied on as a boundary in the Northern suburbs, while Cullacabardee is not seen as a boundary in the Eastern suburbs. These were the submissions of the Liberal Party and are directly contrary to our submissions.

However, we recognise that the Commissioners have created Districts that comply with the Act, and have boundaries that are generally logical and sensible.

The ALP is aware of the submissions of some individual Members of Parliament that are suggesting small boundary changes that require the addition or deletion of small groups of electors (perhaps limited to two or three hundred electors at a time). With the single exception that we detail below, the ALP believes that only these minor changes should be contemplated in the Metropolitan area.

With the exception stated below, (which affects only two Districts) the ALP believes the Commissioners have created effective Districts across the Metropolitan area. The Commissioners should resist any suggestions to "start again" in the Metropolitan area.

If the Commissioners are urged to significantly change the boundaries of the Metropolitan Districts, it will have significant impact on many Districts. While the Commissioners did not accommodate the views of the ALP in drawing the proposed Districts, they should now resist suggestions to make extensive changes. The Commissioners should limit changes to specific places in the Metropolitan Region, as they did for the 2003 Redistribution.

District of Darling Range

The ALP recognises that the proposed District of Darling Range forms a strong community for hills residents. It is a sensible and logical District that enjoys generally sensible boundaries.

However, this District could be improved by including more of the hills residents from the suburb of Kalamunda, who have previously been included in this District. In exchange, there could be a number of electors from the low-lying suburbs around Kelmscott taken out of the District to balance the additional population. This would strengthen the District of Darling Range, as more hills communities would be included, while creating a stronger neighbouring District, which would represent more low-lying communities.

This swap of electors would only affect the proposed District of Darling Range and the proposed adjoining District of Kalamunda. It would not require any significant change to the wider Metropolitan District boundaries.

The ALP would suggest that the whole of Kalamunda be re-included in the District of Darling Range, but that would require the re-drawing of the boundaries of the proposed Districts of Forrestfield, Gosnells and Armadale and potentially Midland, Belmont and Swan Hills. The Commissioners should resist the urge to significantly amend a large number of boundaries.

It is suggested that the proposed boundary published by the WAEC for Darling Range remain the east, south and parts that adjoin District of Southern River, Jandakot, Kwinana, Warnbro and parts of Armadale plus the northern boundary adjoining the district of Swan Hills remain as published.

We believe these boundaries well serve the intention of the legislation.

To be included in the District of Darling Range is the suburbs of Paulls Valley, Piesse Brook and those parts of the suburb of Darlington, Glen Forrest and Gooseberry Hill not included in the District of Swan Hills and Midland plus parts of Kalamunda and Walliston as outlined below.

The western boundary for the District of Darling Range adjoins the District of Midland and Forrestfield to a point south adjacent to the intersection of Simeon Close and West Terrace (the western suburb boundary for Kalamunda) to the point where West Terrace joins a walkway just east of Crumpet Creek. South along the walkway to Crumpet Creek, south east to Josephine Crescent then east along Bird Road south along Alpine Road then west along Lillie Street south along Peet Road east along Cotherstone Road south along Orange Valley Road east along Lyndhurst south east along Crayden Road north east along Sampson close south along Canning Road east along Lesmurdie Road East then south along Gladstone Road, Palmteer Drive and Ash Road east to Glenisla Road. Then south along the WAEC proposed boundary to the junction of Brockway Road and Chevin Rd. East along Chevin Road then south along the Brookton Highway to the intersection of Hawkstone Road, south along Hawkstone Road then south to the Canning River then west along the Canning River to Mount Street. South along Mount St south east along Scott Road south along Lang Street to the suburb boundary of Kelmscott then south west along the suburb boundary to the proposed WAEC boundary on the border of the suburbs of Kelmscott and Armadale. The District of Darling Range then follows the proposed boundary of the WAEC around the District of Armadale.

District Of Lesmurdie

The intention of the proposed changes is to strengthen the hills community to be represented by the proposed District of Darling Range. The adjoining, proposed District of Kalamunda would be effectively pushed "south", generally out of the suburb of Kalamunda, this District should be re-named as "Lesmurdie" to reflect the communities included.

This new proposed District would have a stronger community of interest, as it would reflect more low-lying communities and allow more hills communities to be represented by the District of Darling Range.

The District of Lesmurdie is those parts remaining after the District of Darling Range has been redrawn.

Conclusion

The ALP has been deliberately modest in its objections. We have concentrated on to areas where the Commissioners can improve boundaries to overcome what we believe to be oversights in the approach adopted.

The ALP believes that the Commissioners should resist being urged to significantly change significant parts of the proposed boundaries. We note that we have resisted the temptation to call for a wide-ranging amendment to the Mining and Pastoral Region and in the Northern and Eastern suburbs of the Metropolitan area.

We urge the Commissioners to adopt the ALP's very limited number of suggested changes.