

COMMENTS ON SUGGESTIONS FOR WA STATE REDIVISION

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W A E C

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INTRODUCTION

Suggestions for the whole state were received from all political parties, plus myself and one other individual. They can be broken down into two clear groups:

- Those that support abolishing a District in Mining/Pastoral and creating a new District in Perth (myself, Suggestion 9, Labor, Greens).
- Those that support retaining all rural Districts (Liberals and Nationals).

Suggestions for parts of the state or individual seats or shires were received from various individuals and local councils.

I will begin by making a couple of general observations on all comments, before addressing each comment individually.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Should a seat be abolished in rural WA?

The enrolment disparity between metropolitan Perth and rural Western Australia is marked.

Submissions from Labor, the Greens, Suggestion 9, and myself all support abolishing one District in rural WA. There is general agreement that Kalgoorlie and Eyre be amalgamated, with Esperance/Ravensthorpe being used to top up Agricultural. Labor also agrees with me that Westonia and Yilgarn could be moved to Agricultural Region, and that Northampton Shire could be used to top up North West Central. I maintain that this arrangement is the most fair and logical way to address the enrolment disparity, without making any District gratuitously large or diverse.

Both the Liberal and National suggestions propose what might be called an “extreme incremental” approach in regional WA. They make the absolute bare minimum of changes necessary to bring Districts just above the lowest enrolment threshold, in order to retain all existing rural seats.

I do not support this approach, because it is simply unsustainable. There are ten Perth Districts over the 10% tolerance, and another 2 approaching it, with only one District (Belmont) approaching the -10% limit. In contrast, there are two regional Districts below the threshold and another two approaching it, even with the benefit of LDA electors and the increased 20% tolerance. Continued “incremental” change only exacerbates the problem, with metropolitan Districts all set at the higher extreme of tolerance, and rural Districts all near the bottom.

I am sympathetic to the argument that the sense of community in rural areas is strong, and that geographically large electorates make it more difficult for rural people to access their local MP. However, the numbers do not lie; Agricultural and Mining/Pastoral Regions are collectively close to a whole District under quota. Combined with the strong growth and over-population in metropolitan Perth, it is appropriate that a rural District be abolished.

Where should the new Perth District be created?

Both Northern and Southern Metropolitan Regions contain clusters of Districts that are over quota. There are basically two options available:

- 1) Create a new District in the Wanneroo area, taking up the excess from Butler, Wanneroo and Girrawheen.
- 2) Create a new District around Kwinana and Baldivis, taking up the excess from Warnbro and Kwinana.

The Greens and I favoured the first option in my suggestions, while Suggestion 9 and Labor (although they make no specific proposal) support the latter.

In my opinion, creating the new District in Northern Metropolitan has several advantages:

- Neither Northern nor Southern have quite enough electors for a new District, so need to gain from elsewhere. Creating a new District in Northern allows suburbs such as Balga, immediately adjacent to Girrawheen and having good links with it, to be added to the Region.

In contrast, creating a new District in Southern requires Kwinana to push right across into semi-rural areas such as Mundijong or Serpentine-Jarrahdale, or north across unpopulated industrial areas into Cockburn. Neither of these areas have particularly strong links to the Kwinana/Rockingham area.

- Creating a new seat in Northern has smoother flow-on effects through Eastern Metropolitan. Mirrabooka can gain the suburb of Ballajura, West Swan becomes an entirely Ellenbrook-based District, and Swan Hills becomes a clear hills-based District. In contrast, suggestions which create a new seat in Southern are forced to retain West Swan and Swan Hills as electorates of two halves.
- If a new seat is created in Northern, the Southern region can shed its excess very neatly, by shedding southern Rockingham to the District of Mandurah. This is a logical deletion that is agreed by many suggestions, and has no flow-on effects to other Districts.

However, Northern Metropolitan cannot shed its excess easily without causing flow-on problems elsewhere. Suggestion 9 is forced to make changes to Kingsley, Hillarys, Joondalup, and Ocean Reef that are not really necessary.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL SUGGESTIONS

Liberal Party Submission:

The Liberal proposal is very different from mine, in not creating a new seat in Perth. However, there are still some points of agreement between the proposals, including:

- Placing Dianella in the District of Morley, using the strong boundary of Reid Highway, and uniting Inglewood in the District of Maylands.
- Placing Floreat in Churchlands (although I place all of the suburb), and leaving Cottesloe unchanged.
- Uniting Warwick in Kingsley, allowing the use of major roads as boundaries.
- Removing Darlington from Kalamunda (although I place it in Swan Hills, it fits equally well in Midland).
- Transferring Wilson to the District of Victoria Park.
- Removing the Maddington area from Forrestfield.
- Apart from the transfer of Collie, discussed below, the general broad thrust of the Liberals' suggestions for South-West Region.
- While their proposals for South Metropolitan are different to mine, the Liberals provide a workable alternative arrangement (outside of the Kwinana area, discussed below).
- Some of their proposals for Eastern Metropolitan were options I had explored when drawing up my suggestions, and I would not object to; placing Roleystone in Kalamunda, the Guildford area in Belmont, and Huntingdale into Gosnells.

However, there are some major points of disagreement:

- As mentioned, the Liberal Party makes the most minimal change possible in rural WA, in order to maintain all existing Districts. I do not support this arrangement, as it leaves every District in Agricultural and Mining/Pastoral well under quota, despite being of slow growth.
- The Liberals claim there is "no justification" for adding the agricultural Shire of Northampton to Mining/Pastoral Region, yet leaves the clearly agricultural Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe within this Region anyway.
- As at previous redistributions, the Liberals propose transferring Collie to the seat of Wagin. Previous committees have rejected this proposal, citing Collie's very strong links with Bunbury and the South West, and I recommend it be rejected once again.
- While the Liberals unite Baldivis in Kwinana, they are then forced to drag Cockburn south across large tracts of empty space to take in parts of Kwinana. I believe my proposals in this area make more sense; leaving Baldivis split, but making a much cleaner split of it. This leaves the very strong Kwinana/Cockburn boundary in place.
- The Liberals' arrangements in Eastern Metropolitan leave West Swan and Swan Hills as mixed bits-and-pieces Districts, and are forced to make a new messy split of Ballajura.

- Placing Caversham in Bassendean has merit, but this means that the Bassendean/Maylands boundary remains along minor side streets instead of adopting the clear boundary of Tonkin Highway.
- The Liberals propose uniting Gwelup in Scarborough, but it seems more logical to unite it in Carine, allowing the use of the strong boundary of Karrinyup Road. The Liberals' other proposals for Carine and Hillarys are not necessary.
- There is also no need to split the suburb of Scarborough. If Churchlands needs to gain electors, it makes far more sense to unite all of Floreat in the District.
- I still think West Perth is a more logical deletion from the District of Perth than an adjustment on the eastern boundary. West Perth also seems a more logical gain for Nedlands than West Leederville.

National Party Submission:

The Nationals adopt the same “extreme incremental” change as the Liberals, so many of my comments on the Liberal submission apply here.

The Nationals in fact go even further by making virtually no changes at all to South West Region. In doing so, the Nationals have missed the opportunity to make beneficial changes, such as uniting Augusta-Margaret River in Warren-Blackwood, or tidying up the boundaries around Bunbury.

Labor Party Submission:

Surprisingly, the ALP make no detailed suggestions, and no suggestions for metropolitan Perth at all. While they lean towards abolishing a seat in Mining/Pastoral, they do not identify a seat for removal, and do not propose specifically where the new seat in Perth should go.

- One of their options is basically the same as my suggestion: amalgamate Kalgoorlie and Eyre, with Northampton going into North West Central, Esperance and Ravensthorpe into Wagin, and Westonia/Yilgarn into Moore. Flow on effects allow Moore to be confined south of Geraldton, also in agreement with my suggestions. I strongly support this option.
- Labor's second option (basically, abolishing North West Central) is much less desirable. Pilbara does not require change, and it is unwieldy to stretch Moore and Kalgoorlie that far north. This option also does not appear to suggest where the remaining parts of North West Central (Murchison, Yalgoo, Upper Gascoyne) should go.
- Labor leaves South West unchanged, which means they miss the same opportunity to tidy up some boundaries as the National Party. I do support, however, their argument that Collie remain with a Bunbury region District than with Wagin.
- As stated above, I think creating a seat in Northern rather than Southern Metropolitan leads to better flow on effects for metropolitan Perth.

Greens Submission:

Of all the suggestions, the Greens' submission is clearly the closest to my own, and the one with which I find the most agreement. While there are some differences with a few of the specifics, I strongly support the Greens' proposal to:

- Amalgamate Kalgoorlie and Eyre, and transfer Esperance and Ravensthorpe to Wagin.
- Unite Margaret River in Warren-Blackwood.
- Place the rural parts of Capel Shire in Vasse, and placing the Dalyellup area in Bunbury.
- Unite Australind and Leschenault in Collie-Preston (although I add Brunswick and Roelands to provide a stronger link between the two halves of the seat).
- Place parts of Mandurah in Murray, and parts of southern Rockingham in Mandurah.
- Maintain the strong northern boundary of Kwinana in place.
- Unite Spearwood in Willagee
- Unite Mount Richon and Wungong in Armadale.
- Create a new seat in the northern Wanneroo area (although I think my arrangement is better, see below), and moving Wanneroo itself southwards into Madeley and Lansdale.

The Greens adopt a fairly minimalist change in metropolitan Perth, which is somewhat different from my proposals. I still think it is better to go a bit further than strictly necessary for quota if a boundary can be improved, but most of the Greens' proposals throughout Perth make logical sense.

The main points of disagreement are:

- I do not recommend Moore pushing northwards into North West Central, as this forces the latter District to stretch as far as Menzies and Laverton Shires. These are clearly a better fit in a Kalgoorlie based District, and add nothing but LDA electors to North-West Central when some "real" electors are what is needed. This arrangement also forces Pilbara to undergo change, when none is needed. In line with my own suggestions, I think the reverse arrangement is still the best option here; if Kalbarri goes into North West Central, then this District does not need to push so far south.
- I still think Denmark Shire is a better transfer to Wagin than the clearly South-Western Shire of Boyup Brook. Transferring Denmark Shire also facilitates Albany moving to Agricultural Region.
- While the proposal to transfer rural parts of Darling Range to Murray has some merit, I would oppose extending Murray north into Rockingham City. With Mandurah already extending northwards into Rockingham, there is no need for a second District to do so as well. If Murray is low on numbers, it could simply gain a further part of urban Mandurah.
- I do not support the rural parts of Swan City between Midland and Ellenbrook going into Midland; they seem a better fit in West Swan or Swan Hills. This allows Midland to remain an entirely suburban District.
- The Greens submission still leaves West Swan and Swan Hills as bits-and-pieces Districts, and still leaves Ballajura split between Mirrabooka and West Swan.

- The arrangement of Carramar and Butler could be improved slightly. The Greens split Clarkson off from Butler but leave semi-rural northern Wanneroo in the District. I think my proposed arrangement makes a little more sense: one District based entirely on the fairly self-contained patch of suburbs around Butler (apart from Mindarie), and one District based on northern Wanneroo and the semi-rural areas beyond.
- Given the strong and clear boundary of the Swan River, I do not support removing North Fremantle from Cottesloe.

In all, I would strongly recommend the Greens' suggestions to the Committee. They provide a logical and workable alternative arrangement to my own suggestions, within the same framework.

Suggestion 9:

Suggestion 9 also proposes a very similar arrangement to mine in rural WA, although the proposals for metropolitan Perth are quite different. Rather than repeat the arguments, I simply say that I support Suggestion 9's suggestions for Mining/Pastoral and Agricultural Region, which are virtually identical to mine. However, the proposals to leave South West untouched results in the same missed opportunities as for the Labor and Nationals submissions.

By creating a new District in the southern part of Perth, this suggestion is obviously different to mine. Linking Baldivis and Serpentine-Jarrahdale has some merit, but would create a District of two distinct "ends" with unpopulated territory between them. It does, however, have the advantage of not requiring any of Rockingham to be placed in a Mandurah-based seat, so would be one option if the Committee wanted to maintain the existing urban/rural boundary.

The flow-on effects throughout metropolitan Perth are basically the exact opposite of mine, so there is no point listing all the differences. I will merely comment on a few specifics:

- Removing Serpentine-Jarrahdale does reduce the size of Darling Range, and makes it a completely urban District. I was concerned such a change would affect the shape of the District, but this suggestion addresses this problem by placing all of Darling Range's western "tail" in Southern River or Armadale. This is a workable arrangement.
- These suggestions do unite the Ellenbrook area in "Swan Valley", and also unite Ballajura with surrounding areas in the redrawn West Swan. However, Darling Range is dragged as far north-east as Mundaring itself, and Mundaring Shire is re-split several ways. If the Committee wished to adopt this arrangement, it would be better to unite all of the Mundaring communities in one District (e.g. Kalamunda).
- Pushing Girrawheen westwards into Kingsley causes flow on effects to several neighbouring Districts in Northern Metropolitan (Kingsley, Hillarys, Ocean Reef) that do not require major change. Balga would seem to be a more logical gain for Girrawheen.

In all, if the Committee did not propose creating a new seat in Northern Metropolitan (as recommend by myself and the Greens), I would probably prefer the general thrust of the Liberal submissions in Perth than those of Suggestion 9.

Submissions from Councils:

The City of Armadale proposes creating three new metropolitan Districts, one in each Region, and presumably three rural seats are to be abolished. Sufficient rural territory is then to be added to each metropolitan Region to balance the numbers. This appears to be overkill, as there is not sufficient electors to create three new Perth Districts, and apart from the Mandurah/Rockingham boundary, there is no obvious place for the urban/metro boundary to be adjusted.

The City of Wanneroo highlights the strong projected growth in the municipality. My proposals would address this by creating a new District to relieve the pressure on Butler and Wanneroo, and better spread the growth areas.

The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes highlights its strong connection to the South-West, which suggestions have generally respected.

The Shire of Denmark opposes being placed with Wagin, preferring to remain with Warren-Blackwood. However, my proposed Stirling would be more compact than the current Wagin, containing coastal areas such as Esperance and Ravensthorpe, and containing areas generally close to and having strong links with Albany. I don't believe Denmark would be gratuitously out of place in this more compact, coastal District.

However, I note that enrolment numbers in Warren-Blackwood and my proposed Stirling would probably still balance (just) if Denmark was left where it was. In addition, The Greens and Suggestion 9 provide workable alternative arrangements in this area, leaving Denmark in Warren-Blackwood. So this should not be a barrier to "fundamental change" in rural WA.

The Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils propose that other shires such as Boyup Brook be transferred to Wagin, so provide an alternative if removing Denmark was seen as unreasonable. I do not, however, support their suggestion to remove the Shire of Collie. This has been rejected many times before and should be rejected again.

The Shire of Nannup recommends excising Mandurah from South-West and placing it in a metropolitan Region. However, this is directly contrasted with the submission of Paddi Creevey, who makes it clear that no part of Mandurah should be included with metropolitan Perth. I note most proposals make some adjustment to the Mandurah/Warnbro boundary, but do not include any part of Mandurah in Southern Metropolitan.

Submissions from individuals:

Most of Mr Hawkes' suggestions are outside the scope of a redivision. I do note that transferring the southern Rockingham area would provide some improvement in the balance of metropolitan vs rural Regions. Transferring Albany to Agricultural Region would also provide a slightly better spread of electors across different Regions.

I support Mary Alderson's suggestion for all of Currambine to be united within Joondalup. Burns Beach Road is a strong and clear boundary, and both Joondalup and Ocean Reef can easily accommodate the transfer.

Cr Matthew Whitfield proposes a slightly different arrangement for the Rockingham/Kwinana area, involving creating a new seat and pushing Warnbro southwards. His proposals have merit, but I think his proposed Rockingham would be over tolerance.

For reasons I have given above, I still prefer creating a new District in the north, and addressing the excess in the south by removing parts of Rockingham to Mandurah. However, if the Committee did create a new seat in the south, I would probably prefer Cr Whitfield's suggestions to those of Suggestion 9. Pushing Warnbro south into Mandurah makes more sense than dragging a Kwinana-based District into rural areas around Mundijong and Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

My submission would leave Baldivis split, but would provide a much cleaner division along a major road. So it would at least be a "less worse" option for Baldivis than the current boundaries.

As mentioned, Paddi Creevey requests that no part of Mandurah be included in a metropolitan Region. This has been respected in most submissions.

George Levissianos' suggestions cannot be implemented, as the enrolment numbers do not allow for another MP in the Pilbara region, despite predicted growth. All suggestions have left Pilbara mostly alone, as there is a strong community of interest throughout the existing District.

Given the chronic shortage of numbers in North West Central, removing the Shire of Ashburton is not really a practical approach. North West Central needs to gain electors, not lose them.

Submissions 4 and 7 are more general comments on the redivision itself.