

LIBERAL PARTY RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS TO 2011 REDISTRIBUTION

Submissions from the Australian Labor Party, the Nationals and the Liberal Party are in substantial agreement in their contention that the country areas should maintain all their current districts, that no district should be abolished, and that no new seats be created. This is a welcome consensus, showing a concern to minimise change after the redrawing of the electoral map in 2007.

The Australian Labor Party and the Nationals have generally adopted the minimalist approach as described in the Preliminary Observations of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners. That taken by the Liberal Party is generally minimalist, but could be considered as incremental in recognising the static enrolments of some country areas.

There is also general agreement that the six Legislative Council regions should maintain their present configurations. The Liberal Party does not agree with the proposal of the Australian Labor Party that the Albany district should be transferred from the South West Region to the Agricultural Region. This proposal is geographically feasible only through an awkward bisection of the eastern shires of the Blackwood-Stirling district. Albany and Blackwood-Stirling have long been associated in the same region and there is no need for change. Neither do we support the removal of Esperance and Ravensthorpe from the Mining and Pastoral Region, proposed by Dr Mulcair as part of a general proposal to abolish the district of Eyre.

The proposals by Dr Mulcair and Mr Kelly for the reduction of the Mining and Pastoral Region to four districts should be rejected. Both of these submissions create a thinly populated central district with a massive land area: the Mid North district as proposed by Dr Mulcair would have an enrolment of only 10,954 and a Large District Allowance of 12,934. It places such Eastern Goldfields communities as Leonora and Laverton in a Carnarvon-based district rather than one based on Kalgoorlie. A similar district proposed by Mr Kelly places the town of Carnarvon at its very edge, severely compromising local community of interest.

The enrolment figures submitted by Dr Mulcair underline the difficulties created by any radical submission. Eight of these proposed districts have enrolments exceeding 25,000, taking the variation from average district enrolment as high as 9.0%. The creation of a new district in the Wanneroo area as proposed both by Dr Mulcair and Mr Kelly results in major consequential changes to other districts, the unnecessary bisection of suburbs, and leaves some districts in other parts of the metropolitan area with far higher enrolments.

MINING AND PASTORAL REGION

In contrast to the submissions of Dr Mulcair and Mr Kelly, the differences between the proposals of the Nationals, the Liberal Party and the ALP are minor in nature. The Liberal Party and the ALP are in notable agreement in proposing the transfer of Wickham and Roebourne from the North West to the Pilbara district.

The Liberal Party would query the proposed transfer of the Yalgoo Shire from North West to the Moore district on the grounds that its land use is pastoral rather than agricultural. We would oppose the transfer of Warburton from the district of Kalgoorlie, however untidy the bisection of Ngaanyatjarraku appears on a map. It was made clear by the Electoral Distribution Commissioners in 2007 that after full consultations, the electors of Warburton were anxious to be linked to Kalgoorlie rather than Port Hedland. This decision should therefore not be overturned.

The Australian Labor Party appears to suggest the renaming of the Kalgoorlie district as 'Goldfields'. There would be no sound reason for this. The name Kalgoorlie no longer applies to a federal electoral division, and in 2007 local sentiment opposed such a change.

AGRICULTURAL REGION

All submissions support the continuation of the current four districts in their current general configurations. The contention of the Nationals and the ALP that the Geraldton district should remain unchanged is noted, but the Liberal Party would raise the question whether its low enrolment is appropriate for a regional centre, as distinct from the three broad acre farming districts that also make up the region. However so, we oppose the suggestion of Dr Mulcair that Geraldton extend to Kalbarri with a VFADE of 8.4%.

Should Geraldton remain unchanged then there is no need to alter the boundaries of Moore. There can be no justification for the proposal of the Australian Labor Party that crosses the boundaries of the Shires of Moora, Victoria Plains, Goomalling and Toodyay, bisecting all these communities. While it may sometimes be necessary to divide large and urbanised local governments, it is entirely undesirable to remove sections of already small shires for no apparent reason.

The Liberal Party respects the argument of the Nationals for the inclusion of the Boyup Brook Shire within the Wagin district, but would consider that the low and static enrolment of this district (and of the Agricultural Region generally) requires a larger addition of electors. On the other hand we urge a firm rejection of the ALP proposal that crudely divides the Shires of Cranbrook and Plantagenet along the line of Albany Highway, cutting off the western parts of both Shires from their major population centres. Electors in the area of Mount Barker would be awkwardly placed in different electorates.

SOUTH WEST REGION

Again a major consensus is noted, particularly in the case of the Albany district. Although the Liberal and National submissions differ as to whether the Town of Margaret River should be placed within Vasse or Blackwood-Stirling, both submissions are in basic agreement that electors should be transferred from the former to the latter district, minimising the need for consequential changes affecting other districts.

In contrast the Australian Labor Party proposal, having overturned community of interest on the eastern boundary of Blackwood-Stirling, continues to disregard local government boundaries by following the lines of CCDs without apparent thought to representational

outcomes. No justification is offered for bisecting the rural Shire of Donnybrook, and it must be stressed that using road lines rather than shire boundaries often has the effect of dividing small rural communities. It would seem that the town of Donnybrook itself has been partially divided. Even the use of the Bussell Highway as the boundary between Vasse and Blackwood-Stirling has the effect of separating the urban locality of Bovell from the remainder of Busselton. There is simply no need for any division of the Busselton Shire in this redistribution.

There is full agreement that the Bunbury district requires additional electors, with differing suggestions that these be obtained from Dalyellup, from Eaton and from Australind. It is this suggestion that lacks merit, as it takes the Bunbury district across the Collie River to include an awkward appendage of southern Australind, bypassing Eaton that has a more obvious affinity to the locality of Pelican Point. It is noted that the submissions of the Shires of Capel and Dardanup, and that of Mr Osborne, all support the removal of the Shire of Collie from the current Collie-Preston district.

EAST METROPOLITAN REGION

Although there is a measure of agreement in regard to some districts, there remain some significant differences in the proposals of the ALP and the Liberal Party. It is unnecessary to discuss all minor differences.

All submissions propose little major change to the boundaries of the Armadale district. Dr Mulcair and the Liberal Party agree that the locality of Mount Richon could appropriately be transferred to the district of Darling Range.

There would be no reason of community of interest, or geographic logic, for the district of Belmont to cross the expanse of Perth Airport to include a section of the unrelated locality of High Wycombe. This proposed boundary between the districts of Belmont and Forrestfield would not only create an arbitrary division of High Wycombe, but would run along such very minor suburban streets as Kenneth Road. The locality of Maida Vale would also be divided to no purpose. The south eastern boundary of the Forrestfield district would create a similar division of the most populated section of the locality of Maddington, running along Pitchford Avenue, another quiet suburban street. This disregard of community of interest would seem to result from considerations of political advantage in regard to the Forrestfield district.

In contrast Dr Mulcair proposes that the district of Belmont gain the locality of Hazelmere that has a clear affinity with South Guildford.

While the ALP and the Liberal Party are agreed that the south west boundary of the district of Gosnells should advance to the Southern River and to the line of Bullfinch Street, we cannot support the excision of the north west corner of the locality of Thornlie, using such inappropriate minor streets as Sandon Road as the boundary. This unnecessary change results from the awkward and unjustified transfer of part of the Ferndale locality from the Cannington district.

The Australian Labor Party proposes that the district of West Swan becomes even further elongated by the addition of parts of the localities of Middle Swan and Herne Hill. There is no need for the community of interest of these localities to be so disregarded. It becomes apparent that the Swan River should remain as the optimum boundary between the districts of West Swan and Swan Hills. Without endorsing the broader sweep of Dr Mulcair's submission it is noted that he advocates the withdrawal of the West Swan district from the locality of Caversham and its expansion northward across Gnangara Road.

There is general agreement that the district of Morley should retain its northern and eastern boundary. There is also support for the use of the local government boundary as a revised western boundary for the district of Bassendean.

The Liberal Party would however strongly disagree with the proposal of the Australian Labor Party to disregard Morley Drive as the well defined northern boundary of the inner suburban district of Mount Lawley. Instead the proposed boundary crosses Morley Drive and arbitrarily removes a part of the locality of Nollamara and follows the narrow residential street of St Albans Road. Rather than remove part of the eponymous locality from the district of Nollamara, community of interest would be better served by the transfer of north western Dianella to the Morley district.

There is an equal misuse of a minor suburban street as the proposed southern boundary of Mount Lawley running along Gardiner Street, dividing the small riverside community lying south of Guildford Road and east of East Parade/Plain Street. Gardiner Street forms the boundary between the localities of East Perth and Mount Lawley, but has no other significance – an example of the often meaningless official locality names in this corner of the district. The Liberal Party would argue that should the Electoral Distribution Commissioners not accept that riverside East Perth be added to Mount Lawley, the district might then if necessary expand north eastward into that part of Dianella lying south of Morley Drive.

NORTH METROPOLITAN REGION

As the Liberal Party disagrees in principle with the creation of a new metropolitan district, it is unnecessary to criticise in detail the submissions of Mr Kelly, and of Dr Mulcair in regard to the northern part of this region. There is otherwise general agreement that the districts in the southern part of the region require little or no change; the Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party have identical proposals for the seat of Balcatta. There is continued bipartisan respect for the Mitchell Freeway as a definitive boundary as far north as Ocean Reef Road.

The Liberal Party disagrees with the ALP proposal for excising part of the locality of West Perth from the Perth district, as this would split the established residential section around Mount Street away from the remainder of West Perth with its growing residential component. Should the Perth district contract on its western boundary it would be preferable to return to the Mitchell Freeway as a clear line of demarcation, as suggested by Dr Mulcair.

Proceeding up the coast, the Liberal Party considers that in any northward movement of the Scarborough district, it is preferable to unite the locality of Trigg than to split the locality of Gwelup as proposed by the ALP. The Australian Labor Party submission continues to divide suburbs along such minor roads as Guron Road in Duncraig, Aristride Avenue in Kallaroo, and Miramar Boulevard as a new boundary between the Joondalup and Ocean Reef districts.

Community of interest and a long established boundary are ignored in the ALP proposals for the districts of Girrawheen and Kingsley. The latter district currently has well recognised boundaries of the Mitchell Freeway and Wanneroo Road, and a VFADE of 1.46%, suggesting that its boundaries do not need to change. The three localities of Woodvale, Kingsley and Greenwood have a long established geographic unity and community of interest.

The Liberal Party does not support the removal of eastern Greenwood and the crossing of Wanneroo Road to include not only the locality of Madeley but also the southern part of the locality of Darch – bisecting two localities for no necessary reason. All previous alterations of the boundaries of Kingsley have been made southward or northward, respecting its natural western and eastern boundaries.

This proposal of the Australian Labor Party has the further effect of leaving a part of the locality of Darch within the Wanneroo district, but as an isolated residential appendage separated by the Wangara industrial area from the core of the Wanneroo district.

There is otherwise a broad measure of agreement between the Liberal Party and the ALP regarding the boundaries of the districts of Wanneroo and Mindarie. It is difficult to discern the exact northern boundary of Wanneroo as proposed by the ALP, and once again it appears to use minor roads, this time within the locality of Carramar.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGION

By proposing an alteration in the south western boundary of the region, the Liberal Party submission differs from those of the ALP, the Greens and Dr Mulcair. There still remains a measure of agreement, with a notable consensus that the district of Willagee should move south to include a major part of the locality of Spearwood.

Dr Mulcair and the Liberal Party agree that the locality of Booragoon should be united within the district of Bateman, enabling the transfer of the locality of Rossmoyne to the Riverton district, and of a major part of the locality of Melville to the district of Alfred Cove.

As noted previously, the submission of the Australian Labor Party to include part of Ferndale within the Riverton district has awkward consequential effects on the boundaries of the Cannington and Gosnells districts. The locality of Ferndale has a lesser community of interest with the suburbs within Riverton, compared to the obvious synergy between the closely related localities of Shelley and Rossmoyne. Moreover for numerical reasons it is not possible to transfer all of Ferndale, creating a boundary running along the minor road of Willcock Street.

There is broad support for a southward contraction of the Cockburn district, with the Greens proposing that a further section of the locality of South Lake, south of Elderberry Drive, be transferred from the district of Jandakot to Cockburn. All submissions propose that the Jandakot district remain based upon the localities of Leeming and Atwell/Aubin Grove, while contracting on its north western border to lose North Lake and Kardinya.

The Liberal Party recommends no change to the boundaries of the Fremantle district while the Australian Labor Party proposes a fairly minor change. The Liberal Party has in the past recommended the same change to the Alfred Cove/Fremantle boundary as is proposed by Dr Mulcair but now accepts it as a 'given'.

It is generally accepted that the locality of Waikiki will remain divided and also enable some expansion of the district of Rockingham. Both the Liberal Party and the ALP propose that the district of Southern River contracts on its eastern boundary and moves southward, although the Liberal Party would suggest that the ALP submission stretches the district excessively in a north-south direction.

The Liberal Party affirms that districts of South Perth and Victoria Park both have logical boundaries with enrolments that are comfortably within quota, and do not require any alteration. We therefore disagree with the proposal of the ALP to transfer that part of Bentley containing major retirement homes from Victoria Park to South Perth. Once more this appears to use minor roads to split a locality. In turn the locality of Queens Park is proposed to be divided unnecessarily between the districts of Victoria Park and Cannington, possibly to facilitate the misguided boundary change with the Riverton district.

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While the Liberal Party might disagree strongly with these aspects of other submissions that have been discussed, the fact remains that no recent redistribution has produced a stronger general consensus against unnecessary change.