

Mr Glynn Evans
260 South Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
17 August 2015

Dear Commissioners

I write to express some thoughts on the recent proposed redistribution of WA state boundaries. Before getting down to the details of my suggestions, I'll tell you a little bit about myself. I am currently undertaking a PhD degree in Politics at Adelaide University, which I intend to name 'Proportional Representation in Theory and Practice.' Before that, I completed a Masters' degree at Adelaide University, with my thesis titled 'Fairness and Unfairness in South Australian Elections.' I completed this degree in 2005... My undergraduate degree was undertaken in Perth, where I completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree at Curtin University in 1993. My thesis was titled 'The Extinct Gerrymander: The drawing OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN Australia.' In spite of its title, the thesis dealt almost exclusively with western Australia.

Most of my comments relate to the names proposed for the new divisions, but there is one specific proposed seat that I wish to comment on. It is the new seat of Burt, which happens to be the one in which I reside when I am in Perth. My principal objection to the proposed boundaries contain areas that, both because of their suburb names and location, would be more appropriately placed in Fremantle. I refer specifically to the areas lying between Stirling Highway and Carrington Street, which fall under the suburb names of East Fremantle and Fremantle. These areas have been situated in Fremantle for all of my living memory, and indeed the living memory of most living voters. The same is true of the parts of East Fremantle lying north of Canning Highway, although I acknowledge there is some case to be made this area, on the basis of its socio-demographic status, is more appropriately grouped with the more salubrious suburbs to the east.

Aside from the confusion felt by voters living in the eastern part of Fremantle when they find in the Fremantle election, there is huge potential for confusion and chaos at East Fremantle Primary School on election day. It is likely that people living in the part of East Fremantle placed in Burt that is south of Canning Highway and the part of Fremantle encased by Stirling Highway, High Street, Carrington Street and Marmion Street will still vote at East Fremantle PS as it is easily the booth in closest proximity for most of them. It will be confusing for the voters, but it will be an absolute nightmare for party workers handing out how to vote cards, because they will have to ascertain which side of Stirling Highway on which they live to know which how to vote card to give them.

It has the potential to be as bad as in the 1996-2001 situation when Palmyra Primary School was split between three electorates. While nearly all voters knew they lived in Palmyra, very few knew which electorate they lived in and so it was necessary to ascertain whether they lived east or west of

McKimmie Road, but also if they lived north or south of Marmion street. The number of voters who were confused by these questions was quite staggering.

Looked at in cold blood, the drawing of boundaries in Fremantle area seats looks like a blatant attempt to concentrate the areas of Labor's strongest support in one electorate (Fremantle) while weakening the party's position elsewhere. This was probably not the Commissioners' intention, but nevertheless there would seem to be a reasonable alternative that is more in line with historical boundaries in the area and avoids divisions of suburbs and local government areas.

My proposal is that Petra Street (from the river to Marmion Street) and Carrington Street (from Marmion Street to however far south as is deemed necessary to satisfy elector enrolment requirements) should constitute the western boundary of the Fremantle district. Thus the boundaries for Fremantle would resemble those similar to those which applied prior to the 1989 election. It would have the following advantages over the current proposal:

It keeps all of the suburbs of Fremantle and East Fremantle in the one electorate (Fremantle)

It keeps all of the City of Fremantle and the Town of East Fremantle within the one electorate (Fremantle)

It keeps all of the suburbs that have traditionally made up Fremantle (stretching back 68 years) in Fremantle.

It does have the disadvantage of dividing the suburb of Hamilton Hill between two districts. However it is argued here that it is better to have one suburb divided rather than two (as in the current proposal) and it is also more important that the suburb (and local government area) that bears the name of a seat not be divided.

Hamilton Hill has traditionally been divided on an east-west pattern. For example, the boundaries used in 1989 and 1993 elections used Carrington Street/Hamilton Road as the eastern boundary for the seat of Fremantle... The only Hamilton Hill both that was used as a joint booth at this election was Phoenix Primary School, and that booth is classified as being part of Spearwood nowadays.

The seat to the East of Fremantle (which I am proposing to call Melville) would contain none of East Fremantle or Fremantle or Fremantle, and would instead pick up Hilton, and as much of Hamilton Hill as is required for the seat to meet required elector numbers. Ideally, this southern boundary would be Forrest Road, but it might even be necessary to extend it as far as Phoenix Road. If the latter were to occur, it would mean that the only part of Hamilton Hill not lying within Melville would be the part west of Carrington Street. This, it is argued, would cause little confusion, as the number of voters from this part who would venture across to vote at East Hamilton Hill Primary School or Southwell Primary School would be quite small. Certainly it would be far smaller than the number of voters in the proposed division of Burt who would continue to vote at East Fremantle Primary School.

As to why I am suggesting naming the seat Melville rather than Burt, I have noted the reasons given on Page 16 of the Commissioners' report outlining the reasons why it has been decided that some

districts will be named after prominent people rather than localities. This policy has been part of the naming policy in South Australia for some time, and it became an issue in the 1990s. The South Australian Government Gazette of 1998 noted that:

“In 1994 the Labor Party asked the Commission to revert to the practice of giving seats geographical names, on the ground that most of the personal names signified nothing to the majority of electors and that it was far more convenient for an electoral district to have a name that identified its location to everyone.”

The Commission went on to acknowledge that there was some force in this point of view, but considered it a point on which opinion would be divided, and thought it best not to overturn a policy that had been applied fairly consistently over twenty years. However after the passing of a parliamentary resolution in 1998, the Commissioners took the decision later that year to adopt eight geographical names to replace those of eight distinguished South Australians.

I am likewise very strongly in favour of using geographical names for districts on the grounds identified above. This is especially so in the case of the current redistribution proposal that only one person after whom a district was named (Jack Mann) had a significant association with the district. By contrast, in South Australia many of the people after whom districts are named (Flinders, Giles, Chaffey, Stuart, Schubert, MacKillop, Playford, Dunstan) either explored the area, developed industries in the area, or was a parliamentary representative of the area which commemorates them. (Max Schubert, like Jack Mann, was a winemaker.)

I therefore suggest some alternatives to those districts that are proposed to be named after deceased western Australians.

Molloy

As the Commissioners have themselves suggested, Blackwood-Stirling appears to be a more appropriate name as it signifies two significant geographical features, thereby defining the districts location, as well as commemorating one of Western Australia's most famous sons. Captain James Stirling is much better known to most Western Australians than is George Molloy.

Hale

I would suggest Burns Beach, or simply Burns, as a possible name. I presume that Mr Burns had a link with the area where the suburb is located, while Bishop Hale does not appear to have any such link.

Erickson

The best name for this proposed district would appear to be Marangaroo, on the basis that it is a central suburb of the electorate, it was used as a name for the boundaries that applied at the 1989 and 1993 elections, and it would address one of the major criticisms of this report, the absence of aboriginal names for districts. The person that the electorate is proposed to be named after is neither particularly well known or have any identifiable link with the electorate.

Coombs

Herbert Cole 'Nugget' Coombs is a name well known to students of politics, and his worthiness as a person to be commemorated is not questioned. However he has no particular links with the electorate and, moreover, he did his good works at a federal rather than state level. It is also a case where a very good geographical name exists. While Gosnells is now split between two suburbs, Thornlie is now all in the one electorate, and I therefore propose that the name of Thornlie, which was in use from 1989 until 2008, be reinstated.

Salvador

Finding a suitable geographical name for this district is difficult. Mundaring would have been ideal, except for the fact that the suburb is split within two electorates. Salvador does appear to have a link with the area, if a little tenuous. Possible alternative would be to name it Moondyne, after bushranger Moondyne Joe, but also after a nearby geographical feature, the Moondyne Hills. I am aware that some people would argue that Moondyne Joe was not a man of good repute, although the extent of his status as a villain could be argued. I present this suggestion as something to consider, not as a strong recommendation.

Burt

As previously mentioned, on the boundaries I propose for this seat, I would call it Melville. However, if the current boundaries were maintained, I would suggest calling it Palmyra, as that suburb is reasonably central within the electorate.

This name can be used as an example as to why the suggested solution to the problem identified by the Commissioners on page 16 need not be used as a consistent policy. If it becomes more difficult to maintain geographical names because of rapid movements of suburbs from district to district, it may mean that certain less well known suburbs take a turn at heading the electorate and are, so to speak, put on the map. I'm sure the residents of such a suburb would gain great joy from that.

Toohey

Like Coombs, John Toohey is well known to students of politics and law. However, like Coombs, he has little link with the area proposed to be named after him. I suggest the 1989 to 1996 district name of Applecross, or the 1962-1989 name of East Me4lville, as an alternative. Another option would be to use the most central suburb of Booragoon as the name. It is also identifiably Aboriginal.

Both Coombs and Toohey would be best used as future names for federal electorates, as I am sure there will be a future need for further such names as the WA population continues to grow.

Murdoch

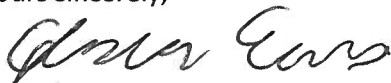
I share the Commissioners concern at the potential confusion that results from part of Murdoch not being in the proposed district. I would have no problem with the name of Willagee being retained,

although I presume that the name has been abolished because the suburb is on the periphery of the electorate rather than the centre. If the Commissioners were looking for a suitable location name, I would suggest Bibra Lake, or simply Bibra, as a possible name. As well as Bibra Lake being roughly in the centre of the electorate, Bibra was a name suggested by an original commission proposal in 1987, before it was agreed to retain the previous name of Cockburn.

I make no suggestions for the proposed districts of Brearley and Roe. Brearley is an entirely suitable name for a district containing an airport as well as an Air Force Memorial home, while Roe not only commemorates a famous west Australian, but it also has a historic link with the district. Many of the areas proposed to be contained in the new district were part of the seat of Roe that existed between 1989 and 2008, while other areas were contained within the district of Katanning-Roe that was used at the 1983 and 1986 elections.

As a footnote, I would like to express my admiration at the clarity of the maps and the precision demonstrated in explaining changes to the boundaries and names of the various electorates. I look forward to seeing final product of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glynn Evans', written in a cursive style.

Glynn Evans.