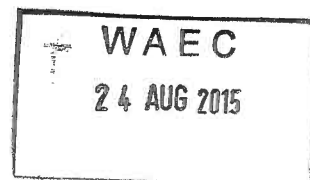




**Peter Tinley** AM MLA  
Member for **Willagee**



Electoral Distribution Commissioners  
GPO Box F316  
PERTH WA 6841

[boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au](mailto:boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au)

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed electoral boundaries as advertised on Friday 24 July, and can I thank the Commissioners for their work to date.

Firstly, whilst proposed changes to the district of Willagee would involve the loss of large portions of several suburbs, of which I am particularly proud to represent, I do acknowledge the unenviable task the Commissioners have in conducting a redistribution such as this, especially given large movements in the distribution of electors across the state, and that boundary changes are therefore inevitable.

I wish to lodge two specific objections regard the proposed electorate of Willagee (Murdoch), being the excision of the suburb of Hilton, and the western part of O'Connor, as well as the proposed name change.

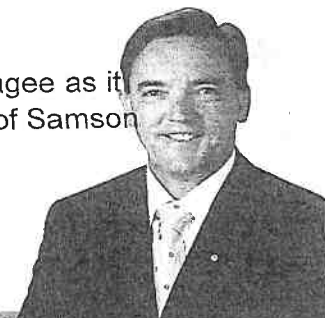
#### **EXCISION OF HILTON AND O'CONNOR (WEST)**

The proposal to transfer the suburbs of Hilton and part of O'Connor to the electorate of Fremantle, in my view, fails several factors for making a boundary adjustment.

Firstly, the **community of interest** is not preserved with this proposal.

The suburb of O'Connor serves as a vital industrial and commercial employment hub for the wider area. The community of interest for both O'Connor residents and business alike would not be served by dividing the suburb between two electorates and should remain, as a whole, within Willagee.

Similarly, the suburb of Hilton, should remain within the electorate of Willagee as it holds a strong community of interest with both O'Connor and the suburb of Samson including being all within the boundaries of the City of Fremantle.



**Our Community Counts**

Like Samson, many residents of Hilton and O'Connor have employment in the adjacent industrial and commercial parts of O'Connor.

Samson and Hilton residents also share common interests in local schools, including Our Lady of Mt Carmel School (Hilton) and Seton Catholic College (Samson) which both share a boundary with Stock Road.

There is also community of interest from a recreational perspective for residents of Hilton and Samson. Residents of both suburbs use the Fremantle PCYC and community centre in Hilton, as well as enjoying the natural bushland at the Sir Frederick Samson Memorial Park in Samson.

These facilities and open spaces are particularly used by the residential portions of O'Connor due the unfortunate lack of open space and recreational opportunities in that suburb.

I believe that these communities of interest show that Stock Road is not a natural boundary in this instance, even if the current Government's ill-conceived and poorly planned Perth Freight Link proposal is built along this route.

**Land use patterns** should also be a consideration, and given much of O'Connor contains commercial and industrial land, and as a significant employment and economic generator for the local area, splitting this suburb does not make any sense from a land use point of view.

Changes to the Electoral Act in 2014 mean that the Commissioners are to consider such things as how the **local community access their local MP** when considering boundary changes. Currently, the Member for Willagee's office is in the suburb of Hilton, with the current office and fit-out a little more than 12 months old. Removing the suburb of Hilton from the seat would render the local member's office outside the electorate, and eventually lead to a costly office relocation as well as reduced access to the Member for some time until the location of the new office was widely known.

Commissioners are also to take into consideration the **existing boundaries** of districts. The suburbs of O'Connor and Hilton (like Willagee, Samson and western Kardinya) have all been a part of the seat of Willagee since its inception at the 1996 election, should remain in the seat in order to reduce confusion and subsequent disenfranchisement.

Lastly, noting that the proposed boundaries have Willagee at 1.14% under quota and Fremantle 3.52% over quota, the Commissioner have not taken **demographic change** into account. Under the Department of Planning's draft Towards Perth and

Peel@3.5million strategy, these is an anticipation of significant increases in urban infill in both Fremantle and the Murdoch Activity Centre (which is partially in the proposed new boundary of Willagee).

There remains however, much work to do in infrastructure provision and rezoning for the Murdoch area to get a significant uplift in population, which will take many years, especially given the unfortunate lack of investment by the State in progressing the plan.

The City of Fremantle of the other hand, have been proactive in promoting infill with rezoning and other progressive planning policies being enacted over the past few years to encourage smaller and affordable dwellings in that locality.

The City has also been working on increasing the number of residents in Fremantle itself, with several large-scale residential projects either approved or proposed at this time.

Whilst I understand that any changes to the proposed boundary will have a knock-on effect to other electorates, I believe that there are several options that could be considered by the Commissioners that would have a minimal impact on adjoining seats, ensure all seats are within quota and do not have an impact on the boundaries of the South Metropolitan Region.

### **CHANGE OF ELECTORATE NAME**

I am concerned that renaming the seat of *Willagee* to *Murdoch* would lead to confusion amongst electors and, more generally, that any wholesale change to the naming of electorates needs further consideration and consultation outside of the redistribution process.

The electorate of Willagee has represented constituents in the suburbs of Willagee, Samson, Coolbellup, O'Connor and the western portion of Kardinya since the seats creation in the 1994 redistribution. Changing the electorate name for the sake of change alone would cause confusion in these communities.

Naming the seat after a suburb that is proposed to be within the seat is also inconsistent with the Commissioner's view that geographic names (in this case the suburb of Murdoch) should be avoided.

The proposed change of name would also cause confusion both for existing Willagee electors as well as new electors, which has already been foreshadowed by the Commissioners:

*“the Commissioners acknowledge the potential for confusion between the name of the district and that of the suburb that is within close proximity but not in the district”*

Given that this statement is erroneous (as the suburb of Murdoch *will* be within the proposed seat), it shows that even the Commissioners are confused with their own naming proposal.

Many electors were also within the abolished seat of Murdoch that existed from 1977 to 1989 and 1996 to 2008 before it was largely replaced by the current electorate of Bateman at the last redistribution. This would also add to confusion for some electors from the old seat of Murdoch, both within and outside of the proposed boundaries.

I am also concerned more broadly with the electoral commissioner’s unexpected proposal to reverse the previous convention of using geographic names as electorate names. In 2007, the then electoral commissioners in that year’s redistribution quite rightly stated:

*“Names representing the geography of districts and regions have historically been used for electorates in Western Australia and any proposal to depart from this convention would need to be carefully considered. The current strict statutory deadlines do not allow sufficient time for consideration of such matters once the distribution process has commenced”*

There is, therefore, a need to carefully consider the impact of changing this convention in conjunction with the public and political parties. In my view, this should be separated from the complex task at hand of an electoral boundary review.

Should a change in the WA convention be deemed appropriate, however, there needs to be a proper conversation with the community about possible outstanding Western Australians whose names could be used.

Furthermore, the lack of Aboriginal names in this redistribution is unacceptable in my view, and, as the Commissioners:

*"feel it would be discourteous to do so without having consulted widely with elders and others within and from the language groups of the ancestors concerned"*

and,

*"Time did not permit appropriate inquiries to be made",*

the current naming proposals are precipitous and for now, should be discarded as part of this redistribution.


**I would also note that, importantly, the name Willagee refers to the former Willagee Swamp in the locality, Willagee being the Noongar place name for the area<sup>1</sup>. To change the name of the seat without proper consultation and consideration of this fact alone, would be, at best, discourteous.**

To conclude, I believe that the Commissioners should retain the suburbs of Hilton and western O'Connor in the seat of Willagee for a number of reasons including the strong communities of interest these areas share with other suburbs within the proposed seat.

I also strongly disagree with the renaming proposal, and that to reduce confusion, disenfranchisement and possible insult, the seat should remain named Willagee.

Thank you again for your work to date, and for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

  
Mr Peter Tinley AM  
**MEMBER FOR WILLAGEE**

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.noongarculture.org.au/language/>