



Mick Murray MLA WAEC
Member for Collie-Preston 24 AUG 2015
*Shadow Minister for Regional Roads;
 Racing & Gaming; Forestry; South West*
Parliament of Western Australia



August 24 2015

Electoral Distribution Commissioners
 GPO Box F316 PERTH WA 6841

Dear Commissioners,

RE: ELECTORAL BOUNDARY CHANGES IN COLLIE REGION

In the 14 years that I have been a Member of Parliament I have seen significant changes to my electorate boundaries. Over the years I have variously represented the shires of Boddington, Harvey, Waroona, Dardanup, Capel, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook, and Collie. Each change has brought with it a need to engage with new communities and I have done what was necessary to advocate on behalf of my new electorate.

In years past I have served the wide range of aforementioned localities without major concern, because the "shared community of interest" requirement has been reasonably satisfied with each boundary change. This is simply not the case with the move to add half of the Busselton region into the new Collie-Capel electorate. It makes the task of the Member of Parliament difficult to reconcile disparate economic, social and political characteristics of the Collie/Dardanup regions and the Busselton region and challenging in terms of providing representation on major policy issues.

Collie is home to WA's only coal mining community, with the industry intrinsically linked to the region's economic, political and social interests. The coal industry is the region's biggest employer, with approximately 700 people employed in coal mining, approximately 400 in power generation, and about 2000 at South32's Worsley Alumina refinery. The community of interest test is not satisfied when one compares attitudes towards coal in Collie/Dardanup with the dominant views of people in the Busselton region. The most pertinent example is the major 2012 community-based campaign which ended plans for a coal mine in Vasse. Nine months of sustained community pressure from the Busselton and Margaret River communities forced the then-mining minister to terminate all coal mining applications in the area. When contrasting the passionately anti-coal Busselton community with the highly coal-dependent Collie and Dardanup communities, it is clear that the "shared community of interest" aspect is not satisfied.

The lack of shared community hubs – such as schools, large shopping centres, and entertainment venues – between Collie/Dardanup and Busselton provides further evidence of the lack of a strong link between these regions. Traditionally people living in the Collie and Dardanup regions travelled to Busselton in droves for their annual holidays, but this is no longer the case. The proliferation of budget overseas travel, more domestic destination options, and the lure of the state's north has meant the days of Busselton being the region's preferred holiday destination are over.

It is my belief that there are other communities in the region which could be more appropriately grouped within the new Collie-Capel electorate. Significant numbers of people from Roelands,



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Brunswick, Leschenault, Australind and Harvey are employed in the Collie region, and by adding electors from these communities to replace those from the Busselton region, the Commission could ensure the creation of a more tightly-linked electorate. In years past – when the Collie-Preston/Collie-Wellington electorates included the Harvey and Waroona shires – there was a large shared community interest between localities. The Collie Shire expended major funding to assist building the Worsley back road to allow safe travel for workers travelling north – a reflection of the strong connection between Collie and Harvey and those localities existing within.

As an alternative arrangement I would suggest some shifting of the northern and southern boundaries of the proposed Collie-Capel electorate to include those localities with stronger links to the Collie/Dardanup communities. The stronger community relationship between Collie and the Roelands and Brunswick localities makes them more appropriately grouped in Collie-Capel rather than their current position in Murray-Wellington. I suggest Collie-Capel's northern boundary shifts north to run in line with the Brunswick River and join the Collie Shire's boundary. The southern boundary could then be moved north to Layman Road, terminating at the Wonnerup Beach turn-off. While this arrangement may distort elector numbers in the short term, the coming growth in the Eaton, Treendale, and wider Dardanup areas would soon push these volumes higher towards the average range. South West Development Commission population modelling shows Dardanup's population is expected to increase from the 2011 mark of 11,962 to 23,000 by 2026, with its percentage of the South West population to increase from 7.8% to 10% during the same period.

I appreciate the challenges faced by the Commissioners when adjusting WA's electoral boundaries and request that these adjustments be considered to ensure better alignment of community interest for the proposed seat of Collie-Capel.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Murray MLA
 Member for Collie-Preston