



**Comments by WA Labor
In response to the proposed electoral boundary changes submitted by
The Electoral Redistribution Commissioners**

These comments are made on behalf of the Australian Labor Party (Western Australian Branch) to the Electoral Redistribution Commissioners in respect of the proposed 2011 Redistribution of Electoral Districts and Regions for Western Australia.

Throughout this process WA Labor has maintained its commitment to the principle of *one vote one value* and has confirmed its belief that the current 17 regional districts should remain intact.

WA Labor has also maintained that incremental change is the best approach at this redistribution. We appreciate the work that the Commissioners have undertaken and their stated belief that “the incremental approach better serves the interests of the electorate in the current circumstances.”

However there are two main issues we would like to raise with the proposed electoral boundary changes submitted by the Electoral Redistribution Commissioners.

1. There are a number of examples where we believe the current divisional boundary is superior to the boundary proposed by the Commissioners.
2. The South West region is wrongly constructed. Mandurah is integral to the community of the South West, but excluded from the Region. Albany is marginal to the community of the South West but included in the region.

Current divisional boundaries

When approaching a redistribution with incremental change it should be uppermost in the minds of the Commissioners that the redistribution “shall give due consideration to...existing boundaries of regions and districts;”

Changing divisions is no small matter for most voters. In making boundary changes it is very important to consider potential confusion and disenfranchisement of voters who are forced to change their division.

In each of the four cases below we believe the existing boundary can be maintained and is superior to the proposed boundary.

Wanneroo

The Commissioners have adjusted the northern boundary of the division of Wanneroo to move the suburb of Banksia Grove into the division of Butler. This leaves Wanneroo with 23,434 electors which is only 1.1% over the 2010 average district enrolment while the new division of Butler has 24,608 electors which is 6.17% over the average district enrolment.

A return to the current northern boundary of the division of Wanneroo will mean a transfer of 1,861 electors from Butler to Wanneroo which would change the relative enrolments to 25,295 for Wanneroo and 22,747 for Butler. These are both within the permissible variation of average district enrolment and would still leave Butler with the areas in the Northern suburbs with the highest potential for strong population growth.

Riverton

The removal of the suburb of Rossmoyne from Bateman seems to be a completely unnecessary change.

It leaves Riverton with 24,493 which is 5.67% over the 2010 average district enrolment and Bateman 23,037 electors which is 0.61% under the average district enrolment. Bateman is a very settled community with little prospect of strong population growth in the coming years.

A return to the current boundary of Fifth Avenue will mean a transfer of 2,159 electors back to Riverton which would change the relative enrolments to 22,334 for Riverton and 25,196 for Bateman, which are both within the permissible variation of average district enrolment.

Joondalup

In their dramatic redrawing of the district of Joondalup the Commissioners have split the suburb of Kinross. In the 2007 distribution the whole suburb is in Ocean Reef and there seems to be no statistical reason to split Kinross and move any of it into Joondalup.

The draft boundaries proposed by the Commissioners leave Joondalup with 24,019 electors which is 3.63% over the 2010 average district enrolment while Ocean Reef has only 23,407 electors which is 0.99% over the average district enrolment. Again, Ocean Reef is a very settled community with little prospect of strong population growth in the coming years.

Moving the northern boundary of Joondalup back to Burns Beach Road and leaving Kinross entirely within the division of Ocean Reef will mean a transfer of 1,748 electors back to Ocean Reef which would change the relative enrolments to 22,271 for Joondalup and 25,155 for Ocean Reef. Again, these are within the permissible variation of average district enrolment and have the benefit of leaving Kinross electors in their current district.

North West Central

WA Labor sees no need for the dramatic adjustment within the Mining and Pastoral Region and specifically between the Pilbara and North West divisions.

The removal of the towns of Dampier and Karratha from the North West district, significantly changes the balance of the number of enrolments to the Large District Allowance. Prior to the proposed change, the North West had figures of 15,277 enrolments and an LDA of 6,136. Following the proposed changes the figures change to 9,874 and 9,848 respectively and increases the deviation from 2010 enrolment figures to -14.91% as opposed to -7.61%.

This is a radical change and it seems the whole concept of incremental change has been dispensed with in this district adjustment.

The comprehensive submission made by WA Labor proved that it is possible to manage incremental change in the Mining and Pastoral Region. Our submission largely maintained the existing boundaries but allowed for small adjustments to meet the permissible variation of average district enrolment.

We urge the Commissioners to review our initial submission and restore the balance between Pilbara and North West by returning the towns of Dampier and Karratha to the division of North West.

South West Region

Mandurah

WA Labor notes the proposal of shifting the district of Mandurah out of the South West Region and into the South Metropolitan Region. WA Labor firmly supports the maintenance of the 17 divisions for the country regions.

In determining any adjustment of a division, the Commissioners must be able to justify the changes under s161, which set the criteria to be met for any adjustment of a district or regions boundaries.

The district of Mandurah has been historically considered a part of the South West Region. In fact this is maintained in current Government programs, as the City of Mandurah is included in the scope of the Peel Development Commission (in fact the Peel Development Commission Office is maintained in Mandurah). Added to this is the fact that the district qualifies for funding under country and regional schemes.

The Commissioners note that there were a number of options open to them in their determination of shifting this division into a new region. One of the issues presented was the splitting of the City of Mandurah. In effect this has occurred with now part of Mandurah a part of the South West Region and the other in the Metropolitan area.

It is therefore a contradiction to the principle of community of interest that Mandurah is taken out of the South West Region and placed within the South Metropolitan Region.

WA Labor also notes that there is a curious inconsistency with the fact that by making this change, the Commissioners have increased the population levels of the Metropolitan Region whilst diminishing numbers in the South West Region.

Country regions have been variously encountering growth and decline in Western Australia. One of the issues the ALP has identified that some country regions are now experiencing dramatic decreases in their population. In areas where the Large District Area allowance does not apply, the difficulty in achieving mean population levels is even more difficult.

The major areas of population growth and concern, as identified by the WA Labor's initial submission, were the districts of Wanneroo (North Metropolitan), Swan Hills and Darling Range (East Metropolitan). Given the anticipated increases in population in these metropolitan areas, if the Commissioners felt the need to include a new district within the Metropolitan Regions, then it would have been more logical and maintained greater community of interest by doing so in those areas.

The WA Labor Party respectfully submits therefore, that the district of Mandurah should remain within the South West Region.

Albany

In our initial submission, the WA Labor Party argued that the district of Albany should be moved into the Agricultural Region. We note the changes made to the Agricultural Region, especially to the district of Wagin, make this case even more compelling.

These changes clearly indicate that there is a fundamental agreement with the position long taken by WA Labor. The inclusion of the Plantagenet and Cranbrook LGA's to Wagin are consistent with our view that Albany is identified as being part of the Great Southern. The Great Southern Development Commission has offices in Katanning (Agricultural Region) and in Albany. The community of Albany identifies itself as being part of the Great Southern Area.

Albany has been and continues to be, both a business and community centre for Local Government Areas, which have now been incorporated into the Agricultural Region. This firmly establishes a community of interest relationship with the areas now seen to be part of the Agricultural Region.

In all Government policies and programs, Albany is identified as being a significant part of the Agricultural Region. It remains inconsistent and illogical therefore, for this district to remain in the South West. The Commissioners desire to see the South West Region comprised of 6 districts can be maintained with the district of Mandurah returned to it.

As has been stated in other submissions the Agricultural Region does suffer significantly in terms of population. The incorporation of Albany into the region would partly address this concern and ensure that the region is contiguous and consistent.

In closing I would like to thank the Commissioners for their time and effort in this process and submit these comments for your review.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mead
State Secretary