

OBJECTIONS TO 2019 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REDISTRIBUTION

(Dr Mark Mulcair)

This redistribution was always going to be difficult for the Committee, as they tried to balance the disparity between urban Perth and regional WA without making excessive changes.

In metropolitan Perth, I think the Committee has done a good job. They have chosen not to create a new seat here, so many of the enrolments are towards the higher end of quota, but the Committee has been able to balance the numbers reasonably well. A number of Districts do have odd shapes due to following suburb boundaries, but I do not have any serious Objections to the boundaries in any of the three urban Regions.

Regional Western Australia is a very different story, with a strong imbalance between the three Regions. My 'Objection' is essentially a redraw of the boundaries in this part of the state, to better balance the numbers, and to provide a boost to the chronically under-quota Districts in the Agricultural and Mining/Pastoral areas.

MODIFIED PROPOSAL FOR REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The two key issues in regional WA are:

- The disparity between the enrolments in the proposed Mining/Pastoral and Agricultural Region, and the South West Region.
- The continued 8/4/4 inequality between the number of Districts in each Region.

The South-West Region is by far the highest growth area in regional WA, yet nearly every District in this area is proposed to be set at the higher end of tolerance. Conversely, Districts in Mining/Pastoral and Agricultural Regions are set near the bottom of tolerance (even with LDA electors added) when growth is predicted to be much lower. This is not sustainable even in the short term.

The District of North-West Central is of particular concern, and has been for many years. The Committee has made some attempt to improve the enrolment here, but the District is still 16% under quota even with a large LDA allowance. Also, the LDA electors still outweigh actual real people in this seat, meaning there is very limited room for growth. It is extremely likely that this District will fall outside the 20% limit very quickly.

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Therefore, I recommend that the Committee consider making more significant changes in regional WA, in order to boost the numbers in Agricultural Region (and by flow-on, Mining/Pastoral Region). This would help better balance the enrolment across all three Regions.

I propose that the Shires of Collie, Denmark, and Plantagenet be transferred from South West Region to Agricultural Region. Collie can be placed in the District of Central Wheatbelt, while Denmark and Plantagenet can be transferred to Roe. This transfer then allows the Agricultural Districts to move southwards, providing electors to boost North-West Central.

Both Denmark and Plantagenet Shires have been associated with the South West, but they are also part of the 'Great Southern' area, and would fit well with other Great Southern shires currently in Roe.

I acknowledge that Collie has strong links to Bunbury, and in an ideal it would be placed in a Bunbury hinterland type District instead of with the Wheatbelt. However, Collie is a discrete area and not merely a suburb of Bunbury, and it has been linked to the east at different times over the years, especially at federal level. Also, removing Collie would allow the 'Preston' District to move northwards, helping to relieve pressure on the Murray-Wellington and the two Mandurah Districts. While not ideal, I think the benefits of transferring Collie outweigh the negatives.

MINING AND PASTORAL REGION

North West Central

I propose that North West Central gain ALL of Northampton Shire, as well as Chapman Valley Shire, from the District of Moore. This provides a more significant boost to the numbers in this chronically under-quota seat, as well as providing an excess of real people over LDA electors. North-West Central would remain under quota, but only by ~7%, and with greater prospects of some real growth in the future.

It could certainly be argued that these two shires are more 'Agricultural' than 'Pastoral' in nature. However, the Committee has proposed transferring a significant part of Northampton Shire anyway, so this is simply a logical extension. Sheer population numbers make it inevitable that the Mining/Pastoral Districts will have to expand beyond the strict 'Pastoral' areas.

North West Central would have an enrolment of 25,575, including an LDA component of 12,562.

Kalgoorlie

Kalgoorlie is within tolerance; however to assist with other changes, I suggest the Shire of Yilgarn be added. Yilgarn is something of a transitional Shire between the Agricultural and Mining/Pastoral Regions, and fits fairly well in either Region.

Kalgoorlie would have an enrolment of 29,098, including an LDA component of 8793.

AGRICULTURAL REGION

Geraldton

With the loss of Northampton and Chapman Valley Shires, there is no need for Moore to take in any part of Greater Geraldton LGA. Therefore, I suggest that it is very logical for all of Geraldton to be united in the District of that name. Only a few hundred electors are transferred.

Geraldton would have an enrolment of 26,222.

Moore

Losses to Geraldton and North-West Central mean that the District of Moore needs to gain a significant number of electors. Logically, this can only be from Central Wheatbelt in the south.

I suggest transferring essentially everything north and east of Northam; this includes all the Shires along the Great Eastern Highway from Cunderdin to Merredin, and everything north of this (including Westonia).

This is a significant change, with Merredin being split from Northam, and I acknowledge that the communities along the Great Eastern Highway probably have stronger links to the west than to the north. However, this arrangement is quite similar to the boundaries before 2007, with one seat based on Merredin and the eastern Wheatbelt, and one seat based more clearly on the Avon Valley. My proposed Moore would basically be an amalgamation of the pre-2007 'Moore' and 'Merredin'.

Moore would have an enrolment of 27,697.

Central Wheatbelt

This District loses Yilgarn to Kalgoorlie, and a large area in its north-east to Moore, leaving it well under quota. I am recommending that Collie Shire be transferred to this District, to better balance the numbers between South West and Agricultural Regions.

In addition to Collie, I propose that Narrogin, Williams, and West Arthur Shires be transferred from Roe. This brings Central Wheatbelt back within tolerance, as well as opening up the main east-west connections between Collie and the rest of the seat.

As I mentioned, I do acknowledge that Collie would ideally be placed in a coastal/Bunbury focused District, and that its links are stronger to the west than to the east. However, the Coalfields Highway provides a good connection to the east, and the more compact nature of the District probably makes Collie a better fit.

If my suggestion is adopted, the Committee may wish to consider a different name for this seat, as it has lost a geographically large area in the Wheatbelt.

Central Wheatbelt would have an enrolment of 29,682

Roe

With the losses in the north, Roe can now gain Denmark and Plantagenet Shires. These two Shires fit well with the other 'Great Southern' areas currently in Roe, with the Albany Highway providing a strong north-south link in the region.

Roe would have an enrolment of 29,724, including an LDA of 1573.

Albany

I propose no changes to this District; however, with Roe now encircling Albany, it seems logical to transfer this District to Agricultural Region. This also helps better balance the Regions, with a 7/5/4 instead of an 8/4/4 arrangement.

SOUTH WEST REGION

Warren Blackwood

If Denmark and Plantagenet Shires are transferred to Agricultural Region, this District will need an addition to bring it back up to quota.

I suggest a logical change is to gain the balance of Augusta-Margaret River from the District of Vasse, and the remainder of Donnybrook-Balingup from the District of Collie-Preston. Both of these Shires are split by the proposed boundaries, and it seems sensible to unite them in a single seat if possible. Donnybrook-Balingup has previously been in Warren-Blackwood, and the South Western Highway would provide strong links through the District.

Warren-Blackwood would have an enrolment of 26,177.

Vasse

Shedding the balance of Augusta-Margaret River leaves Vasse within tolerance. I also recommend that the proposed small transfer from Collie-Preston be reversed.

Vasse would have an enrolment of 27,162.

(Collie-Preston)

The removal of Collie and Donnybrook Shires would allow this District to consolidate as an outer Bunbury seat. In addition to the gain of Roelands, I suggest it gain the balance of Australind and Leschenault from the District of Murray-Wellington. These are essentially suburban areas of Bunbury, and would fit well with areas such as Eaton that are currently in this District.

With my proposed change, the Greater Bunbury area would essentially be split into two Districts instead of three. This change would also allow Murray-Wellington to push northwards to relieve the population pressure on the two Mandurah seats.

With the removal of Collie, this seat requires a new name. 'Leschenault' or simply 'Preston' could be possible options.

This seat would have an enrolment of 28,115.

(Murray-Wellington)

In addition to the proposed gains from Dawesville and Mandurah, I suggest this District push further north to the Dawesville Channel, taking in Dawesville itself. The estuary inlet is a strong and clear boundary, and Dawesville township provides a solid transfer of electors, to better balance the numbers in the three Mandurah-based seats.

With its consolidation on the Peel Estuary, perhaps 'Peel' could be a new name for this District. Alternatively, this seat could take the name 'Dawesville'.

This seat would have an enrolment of 26,215.

'Mandurah South' (Dawesville)

Removing Dawesville itself and retaining the Dudley Park area leaves this seat with a much lower enrolment, which is more appropriate given its strong growth. The District is now focused more clearly on the southern urban areas of Mandurah. With the loss of Dawesville itself, I suggest 'Mandurah South' is a suitable new name for this seat.

Mandurah South would have an enrolment of 25,567.

'Mandurah North' (Mandurah)

If the transfer of Dudley Park is reversed, this would leave Mandurah only ~4% over quota, as opposed to the nearly 7% proposed by the Committee. Again, a lower figure is much more appropriate given Mandurah's high growth.

With the changes further south, I suggest 'Mandurah North' is a more suitable new name for this District.

These changes leave the Greater Mandurah area split between three Districts instead of two. However, with the continued strong growth in Mandurah, this was an inevitable development. There is no way for the Mandurah urban area to be contained within only two seats, even in the short term.

Mandurah North would have an enrolment of 28,744.