

Electoral Distribution Commissioners  
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13 May 2023

Dear Commissioners

## **RE: REVIEW OF PERTH BOUNDARIES**

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on proposed submissions to the Western Australian review of electoral boundaries. As a resident and elector in the district of Perth, I wish to make comment and suggest an alternative variation to the submissions which propose to change the Perth district's boundaries.

I make my comments in accordance with the prescribed factors to be considered when reviewing electoral boundaries, including:

- community of interest
- land use patterns
- means of communication, means of travel and distance from capital
- physical features
- existing boundaries of regions and districts
- existing local government boundaries
- the trend of demographic changes.

**Support the proposal to cede the current section of West Perth (bounded by Mitchell Freeway, Malcolm Street and Mounts Bay Road) from the district of Perth to Nedlands, with an estimated transfer of 800 to 900 enrolled voters.**

This proposal has been supported by three submissions: Bruce Reynolds, Co-Chair West Perth Local Community Group; WA Liberal Party and WA Labor Party.

This is a logical proposal, which is in line with the prescribed factors for consideration, including:

- The current West Perth precinct is splintered among two electorates, despite demonstrating a strong community of interest, which is evidence in local community organisations (like West Perth Local) and common/shared access to key facilities (like recreational facilities in Kings Park).
- The town centre/core of the West Perth suburb is the Hay Street precinct (with restaurants/shops/cafes/local services), a primary service area for residents, regardless of their location in West Perth.
- Mitchell Freeway acts a physical boundary between the Perth CBD and West Perth, and this physical feature makes a sensible electoral boundary.
- The proposal is an extension of the existing current Perth and Nedlands district boundary which uses the Mitchell Freeway to separate the majority of the suburb of West Perth from the Perth district.

**Reject the proposal to cede approximately 2000 electors in the part of the locality of Mount Hawthorn bounded by Green Street, London Street and Scarborough Beach Road from the Perth district to the Balcatta district.**

This proposal by the WA Liberal Party submission does not give any reason for removing this section of the Perth district, other than to reduce enrolled voters numbers.

This proposal fails to meet prescribed factors for consideration, in particular:

- By using Scarborough Beach Road as a boundary, splits the major town centre of Mount Hawthorn, which is recognised as a coherent District Centre under the City of Vincent Town Planning Scheme No 2. and by the community itself.
- Fails to recognise key land use patterns, with Scarborough Beach Road precinct acting as the primary town centre for residents in Mt Hawthorn, including residents' accessing the suburb's only major supermarket, and the primary café/retail/services strip, whether north or south of the Scarborough Beach Road.
- Splits a key community of interest, with the Mt Hawthorn community brought together via the primary town centre, which is reflected in community organisations (like the precinct organisation Mt Hawthorn Hub).

**Rather, if the Commissioners wish to further reduce enrolled voters in the district of Perth, a more consistent approach in line with the prescribed factors for boundary reconsideration would be to the following proposal:**

***Consider an alternative proposal to cede the section of Mt Hawthorn west of Brady Street, north of Powis Street, and south of Scarborough Beach Road, ceding from the district of Perth to Churchlands, ceding between 500 to 600 voters.***

In accordance with the prescribed factors for consideration, this proposal is more appropriate, given that:

- This proposal better uses a well-defined precinct of Mt Hawthorn, which is clearly separated and defined by its physical location being completely west of Brady Street, a key traffic corridor to enter a southern entrance onto the Mitchell Freeway; and
- As the most northern and western part of the Mt Hawthorn suburb, this precinct does share some land use patterns and community of interest with the suburb of Glendalough, with the nearby Glendalough Shopping Village providing a close hub for residents for both services and a primary supermarket.
- This proposal cedes electors from the Perth electorate, without dividing the major Mount Hawthorn District Centre.

**Reject a proposal to cede the suburb of Highgate from the Perth district to the Mount Lawley District.**

This proposal cedes the suburb of Highgate to the district of Mount Lawley, utilising Bulwer Street as the new boundary, ceding approximately 1600 enrolled voters, and not changing the western boundary of the Perth district.

It is requested this proposal be rejected, on the basis it fails to meet a number of prescribed considerations for boundary changes, including:

- Splits a strong community of interest shared between Highgate, and other suburbs of the district of Perth, based around the Highgate Primary School. This school is a key activity hub and social connector for the wider community, with primary feeder suburbs Highgate, Perth, Northbridge, and East Perth. Similarly, the district of Mount Lawley has Mount Lawley Primary School as a key primary school for local catchment suburbs.
- Fails to recognise other strong communities of interest shared between the suburb of Highgate and other suburbs of the Perth district, including major recreational facilities like Hyde Park, nearby William Street restaurant and café strip, and NIB Stadium.
- Excludes an inner-city suburb within very close proximity to the Perth CBD, without demonstrating a justified or clear physical barrier (for example a freeway or major road) which clearly defines a specific precinct.
- The suburb of Highgate shares stronger demographic trends with existing suburbs within the district of Perth rather than the district of Mount Lawley: including demographic diversity, tenure of private dwellings (higher rental tenancies rather than home ownership) and type of households.
- The primary Beaufort Street town centre is now connected and located within the district of Mount Lawley, following a previous redistribution in 2016 in the lead up to the State election 2017, and no longer is a consideration for changing boundaries.

**Strongly reject proposals by MJ Proud and L Dixon which offer more significant changes to the existing district of Perth and require major shifts to a number of electorates to accommodate such changes.**

These proposals, while different in their boundary proposals, both propose to split the suburb of North Perth between districts. This has previously been proposed on several occasions and rejected by Commissioners.

In brief, this proposal suggests both proposals should be rejected because of:

- Both proposals significantly split the suburb of North Perth, which has a demonstrated and long held shared community interest, based around the common community of the North Perth town centre, which is located on Fitzgerald Street and Angove Streets, and based on two key school community hubs: North Perth Primary School and Kyilla Primary School.
- Both proposals split a defined District Centre formally recognised under the City of Vincent Town Planning Scheme No 2, which recognise current land use patterns now and guide future development into the future. In their submissions, M.J Proud proposes to split the Fitzgerald Street Town centre and L.Dixon similarly splits the Angove Street town centre.
- Neither proposed change provides a justification for a clear physical barrier in North Perth which separates precincts, land use trends, or define community of interests.

While the electorate of Perth will likely continue to change significantly over time with continuing infill and population growth, the significant population centres, with strong communities of interest, at the present time, as was the case at the time of the last redistribution, are the suburbs of Mt Hawthorn and North Perth/Highgate and these should continue to be retained, as much as possible, in the seat of Perth.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to present my comments on proposed changes to WA electoral boundaries.

Kind regards

Noel Whitehead

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