

Electoral Boundaries

Having read some of the submissions to the Commissioners, I feel obliged as a concerned citizen with an intimate knowledge of the rural areas in the southern portion of WA to make my own comments.

Overall Summary

There appears to be several issues relating to the equitable representation in both Houses of the Western Australian Parliament which in my belief are inter related as should be considered in concert-not separately.

- The low numbers in the Agricultural Region which is contributed largely by the seats of Central Wheatbelt and Wagin and the forecast likely further decline of these areas.
- The generally high numbers in the South West (excepting Bunbury & Blackwood Stirling) with a very high forecast growth along the western coastal strip, leading to the South West being out of kilt in relative terms to the numbers in the Agricultural Region.

Therefore any distribution should also consider the short term/medium term effects so that future requirements can be easily accommodated without major changes.

Agricultural Region

As this region provides perhaps the greatest challenge in this redistribution outside of the Metropolitan area, it should be the focus or starting point.

Given growth patterns in this region generally and forecasted future growth consideration must be given to adding another Lower House seat to it.

As a number have suggested in previous submissions, **Albany** fits into this region-not the South West.

Albany is the port for much of the agricultural areas being serviced by three major highways, and the Great Southern Railway.

It is also the regional centre for most of the Great Southern and the major holiday destination (and preferred retirement location) as well.

Therefore in making any changes to electoral boundaries, consideration should be given to the likelihood that sooner or later Albany will become part of the Agricultural Region.

With this in mind, I would suggest the following boundary changes -in principle as I haven't got access to exact numbers in the various shires-

Wagin (currently -12.82% requiring 2,971 voters)

Incorporate the two shires (Cranbrook and Plantagenet) on the southern boundary which separate Wagin from the seat of Albany allowing for a smooth transition of Albany into the Agricultural Region, now or in the future.

This allows the transfer of Shires at the top end of the Wagin Electorate (Brookton, Corrigin and Kondinin), which traditionally would be seen as Central Wheatbelt into that seat. It would see one, two or all three of these Shires being transferred now, or in the future without major difficulties.

Thus the **Central Wheatbelt** boundaries (currently -10.87% or 2,499 short) could be adjusted to bring them into line with requirements.

Consideration should also be given to renaming the Electorate of Wagin to Great Southern which more effectively represents the character of the total area.

South West

Blackwood Stirling

Having removed Cranbrook and Plantagenet from **Blackwood Stirling** (which is already currently -9.09% or 2,106 voters down) changes to **Vasse** (+ 11.19% or +2,593 voters) and **Collie Preston** (+10.73 % or +2,487 voters) –both well in excess will allow this seat (Blackwood Stirling) to be accommodated in terms of extra numbers

As much of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River as required can be transferred into this seat. Having removed Cranbrook and Plantagenet from this electorate, it would also be appropriate to omit Stirling from the name.

Vasse

The loss of most, or all, of its portion of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to Blackwood Stirling, would necessitate moving of parts of the Capel Shire which have strong links with Busselton (the major centre for Vasse).

Collie Preston

To bring it in line with required numbers, the removal of the southern parts of the Capel Shire to the Vasse electorate would be the logical move. (This electorate is discussed more fully at the end of this submission).

Bunbury

With limited size of the current boundaries of the City of Bunbury, expansion into other Shires is required. To avoid dual representation and fragmentation of Eaton in the Shire of Dardanup (see their submission) moving parts of the southern edge of Murray Wellington (Clifton Park/Australind) would appear logical, given their closeness to Bunbury.

This would help alleviate the situation in **Murray Wellington** (+8.43% or 1,955 voters).

Collie Preston

As summarised previously parts of the Capel Shire which “best fit” Vasse should be transferred to that electorate. This would require no further changes to the electorate of Collie Preston.

The new boundary should go from the North West corner of the Donnybrook – Balingup Shire along South West Highway to Boyanup West Road and west along this road across the Vasse Highway to the coast along Fisherman’s Road.

This would see the locality of **Dalyellup** being retained in Collie Preston.

The people of Dalyellup see themselves as their own separate community- they tolerate being in the Shire of Capel because they don’t want to be swallowed up by Bunbury.

The community has many fly in - fly out mine workers up north and drive in -drive out workers at Worsley and in the industrial workforce in Collie- Muja and Bluewaters Power Stations and coal mines.

The town of **Boyanup** and its surrounds would also remain in Collie Preston.

Boyanup has strong traditional linkages to both Dardanup and Donnybrook in addition to the Greater Bunbury area.

I believe the residents of Capel would welcome the move to the Vasse Electorate as it would be much closer to the electorate office in Busselton where they would normally be doing business than currently to drive the long distance to Collie for the specific purpose of seeing the local member.

Comment on other submissions

I read with some astonishment and disbelief, that three of the submissions (Capel Shire, Liberal Party and a Mr Osborn from Bunbury) suggested the Shire of Collie should be transferred to the seat of Wagin in the Great Southern.

There is simply no affinity between the two areas- Collie is purely an industrial centre (with very little hinterland due to the State Forest and blue gum plantations) while the electorate of Wagin is almost purely an agricultural area.

Furthermore there would only be a handful of people from the nearest adjoining Shire-West Arthur that work in Collie.

Virtually all external contacts for Collie based residents are based in the South West with nothing to the east.

A summary of these linkages are-

Governance- Collie Shire is a member of the- South West Regional Shires
-Bunbury Wellington Economic Alliance

Transport- Road- Collie is linked to the capital Perth via Forrest Highway and the South West Highway

Rail- A bus service links Collie to Brunswick Junction for the Australind train.

A daily **bus** service transports people from Collie to Greater Bunbury in the morning and returns in the afternoon.

Education- Collie students travel daily to Greater Bunbury to attend the Edith Cowan University, Bunbury Cathedral Grammar, Bunbury Catholic College and the Dr Manea College by the above bus service.

Health- The South West Regional Health Campus at Bunbury is Collie's major external hospital and many people attend medical specialists in Bunbury.

Sport- Football, Netball, Hockey, Soccer, Cricket, Bowls, Badminton and Darts all have affiliations with competitions in the South West on a regular basis.

Recreation- The South West coast (Busselton, Augusta, Dunsborough and Margaret River areas) is the favoured destination for Collie's holiday makers. The Get Away Holiday Bus travels daily from Collie and return during the summer holidays to the coast terminating at Smiths Beach. (This service is financially assisted by the Collie Shire)
Many of Collie's young people regularly travel to the night spots in the Greater Bunbury area.

Culture- The Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre is the major entertainment centre for Collie (the Collie Shire contributes annually to the Centre).

Religion- The major religions (Anglican and Catholic) are part of their respective Diocese of Bunbury. The other religions are also south west orientated.

Business- there is a strong linkage between Collie and South West businesses and a daily courier service operates to and from Collie to the coast.

Having spent all my life living between Collie and Arthur River (near Wagin), I can only assume those making the three above submissions are either doing so in ignorance as they don't know the area or are doing so purely for political gain.

I also found most of the other submissions were well thought out and balanced, which is a credit to those preparing them.

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(The writer has been a Collie Shire Councillor since 1999, a former Board Member of the South West Development Commission, is an author of six local histories from the Collie area eastward through the Great Southern areas to include Lake Grace. He has played cricket throughout a long career in both the Great Southern and South West. He has currently property interests in Collie (home) Arthur River (farming) and Albany and previously had farming and business interests in the Busselton Shire.)