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Executive Officer  
The Office of the Electoral Commissioners  
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RE: My Submission on the Electoral Boundaries  
Suggested in the Commissioners Report

Dear Executive Officer

Please find herewith my submission on the above. Could you please confirm receipt by e mail.

Yours sincerely

David Smith



**SUBMISSION BY DAVID SMITH ON THE PROPOSED STATE  
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ISSUED BY THE STATE ELECTORAL  
COMMISSIONERS ON 24TH DAY OF JULY, 2015**

**CONTACT DETAILS.**

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## SUBMISSION

1. The Report on the proposed boundaries presents a view that the Commissioners are proposing drastic changes. That is not an opinion I share in relation to the South West and Agricultural Regions.
2. Reference is made to the democratic principles that should apply. The one principle that should underpin Electoral boundaries are one vote one value, community of interest and sensible boundaries. These principles should apply to Regional boundaries as well as individual Electorate Boundaries
3. The representation proposed for the Legislative Council does not satisfy these principles.
4. The Anthony Green analysis also shows that on the new boundaries only seven Liberal seats have a margin of less than 5% and only nine Liberal seats have less than 10%.
5. For the Labor seats there are 12 that are under 5% and another 5 under ten percent.
6. This is magnified by the Anthony Greens analysis that on the new boundaries there are 39 notional Liberal National seats and only 20 notional Labor seats and no Green seats. In effect only three Labor seats have a margin over 10 percent.
7. While one presumes that such a one-sided outcome was not intended by the Commissioners, the Commissioners cannot ignore such a favourable outcome for the Conservative side of politics. The proposed Boundaries do not give a democratic or fair outcome and needs to be reconsidered.
8. The outcome for the Legislative Council also fails the one vote one value principal. This of course arose from the statutory allocation of 6 Legislative Councillors to each of the country and metropolitan regions.
9. The Regional boundaries in the country are very disadvantageous to the South West Region. Without change in the Country Region Boundaries, this will increase dramatically over time. In the Country the relevant figures are as follows:-

### Agricultural.

6 LCS for 98,015 electors or one for each 16,335 electors.

Mining & Pastoral.

6 LCS for 97,235 or one for each 16,205 electors.

South West.

6 LCS for 205,720 or one for each 34,212 electors.

10. In effect the current Regional District Boundaries means voters in the other country regions have a voter value in the Legislative Council of 2 to 1 over the South West. The total electoral enrolment for WA which the Commissioners have used is 400,610 in the country and 1,103,174 in the Metro area for a total of 1,503,784. This means the South West has 51.35% of all country electors. This allocation of 6 seats to each country region means the metro has one Legislative Councillor for every 61,287 voters, and in the Country one for every 22,256 electors. The Commissioners need to bring attention to the fact that this does not meet the one vote one value test.
11. In the Metro area the Metro regions have more or less equal numbers, but this is certainly not so in the Country. This imbalance will increase given the popularity of Busselton, Margaret River, and Mandurah and Greater Bunbury as retirement centres.
12. Without any change in the regional boundaries, the quota for the South West Legislative Assembly seats will be increasingly much larger than other country regions.
13. Logically this should lead the commissioners to avoid any transfer of electors from the Agricultural Region to the South West as the Commissioners have proposed.
14. The transfer of Jerramungup into Albany means that Shire and the Shire of Plantagenet and the remainder of the Stirling Range National Park have been transferred from the Agricultural Region to the South West, all of which exacerbates the lack of one vote one value in the Legislative Council seats in the country regions and confounds any community of interest test.
15. Perth decision makers always seem to believe that the majority of electors in the Great Southern have a community of interest with the South West which is simply not the case.
16. My own view is that all of the Great Southern, including Albany, has a greater community of interest with the Agricultural region, and while it would only have a minor effect on the Legislative Council disparities, Albany, Jerramungup, and Plantagenet and all of the Stirling Regional Park, should all be transferred into

the Agricultural Region. The Port of Albany is one of the four major grain ports (the others being Kwinana, Geraldton and Esperance). All the Shires to the East and North of Albany use Albany as their regional centre.

17. The transfer of Albany would also mean in the future, that the quota for the Seat of Albany could be the population of only the City of Albany. The agricultural region would then have 5 assembly seats and a total enrolment of 98,015 + 25,011 from Albany plus the Shire of Plantagenet. I do not know the level of enrolment of the latter, but if one assumes it has 3,500 electors then the quota for the agricultural region would be 25,305.  
This would enable the boundaries for Albany to be the City of Albany only as it is a growth area. This would take Wagin to a quota over that for the Central Wheat Belt, which could also be increased, both of which is appropriate for the low growth areas.
18. The transfer out of Plantagenet from the South West to the agricultural region would also mean that the areas of the Busselton Shire that are proposed to go into the Collie Capel (Dardanup) seat could be transferred into the Warren Blackwood seat together with that part of the Capel Shire south of the Capel River, except for the Town of Capel.
19. Which takes me to the Seat of Collie. The proposed new boundaries defy any community of interest test.
20. It also threatens the one vote one value as the seat still has major growth areas in Glen Huon, Millbridge and Waterloo in the Dardanup Shire and Boyanup, Capel, and Peppermint Grove in the Capel Shire, and yet on the current boundaries will start at 8-10% above quota, and 1405 more voters than Bunbury, 1931 more than Albany, 2243 more than Warren-Blackwood, and 1647 more than Murray-Wellington. The growth rates in Murray-Wellington and Warren-Blackwood are relatively low. The Augusta-Margaret River Shire is the only area with real growth potential.
21. Between Murray-Wellington and Collie-Capel, it also seems strange that the area of the Harvey Shire, bounded by Leschenault Estuary, Paris road the Brunswick and Collie River finish up going from Bunbury into Collie and not into Murray-Wellington as they should. The boundary should be the Collie River so all of Australind on both sides of the Brunswick River finish up in the Murray-Wellington seat.
22. I need to note however that I feel the numbers of enrolled electors in the Greater Bunbury, Busselton and Peel Region are all well below what they should be. All of them are marked by a high level of elector turnover exacerbated by high population growth rates. The rate of increase in the roll of electors appears to be well behind what they should be given the ABS population stats and the planning commission's estimates of population.

23. I know from my own doorknocking for Council elections for the City of Bunbury that there appears to be a reluctance by young people to enrol and it takes much longer than expected for new arrivals to get onto the Bunbury electoral roll.
24. I note that the State Electoral Commission has recently remarked on a marked difference between Federal enrolments and State enrolments and I have a very strong perception that this is doubly so in seats with a higher than average turnover and growth in elector numbers.
25. I believe the Federal enrolments are also lower than they should be partly because of the grey nomads, especially those who go north for the winter and the fly in fly out communities and students who move to Perth, all often fall off the rolls, especially when the political parties are running enrolment checks and have people removed from the roll because there is no response to their letters or the Electoral Commission checks. My personal estimates from doorknocking is that the under enrolment could be as high as 15% to 20 % in Greater Bunbury.
26. I believe this is best demonstrated by the surprisingly low impact on the numbers of electors in the Bunbury electorate new boundaries on the transfer of the whole of Dalyellup in the Capel Shire from Collie into the Bunbury Electorate and the transfer of that part of the Bunbury electorate which is in the Harvey Shire into Capel Collie. The number of electors in Dalyellup seems considerably less than I would expect given the estimated population growth and the number of new housing approvals and the current ABS stats.
27. I believe both the State and Federal Electoral Commissions need to conduct on the ground enrolment checks focused on getting young people, new arrivals and recently naturalised persons onto the rolls. I am certain there are many people living in Greater Bunbury who would be happy to do the work regularly at a relatively low cost. I honestly believe you will be quite surprised at the results.
28. I am well aware that the changes I have suggested in relation to the regional boundaries are substantial, but the Commissioners have indicated a willingness to look at major changes. In my view they need to extend this to the changes I am proposing for the Agricultural and South West regional boundaries.
29. When I look at the rest of the South West, I do find it surprising that the seats that border on the Metro area – namely Mandurah, Dawesville, and Murray Wellington, are not being changed at all, despite their close relationship with the Metro area and the growth potential within those electorates because of the extent of yet to be developed areas, their proximity to Perth and the excellent rail and road connections to Perth. Their growth, the growth in Greater Bunbury and Busselton town areas, all mean that what is now the South West Region will continue to have quotas that are substantially higher and increasingly so than in the other two country regions. This will exacerbate the lack of one vote one value.

30. In short I believe it is inevitable that there will be an increasing need to look at changes in the Regional/District boundaries and you should start that in the 2015 redistribution.
  
31. I appreciate that as Commissioners you have a difficult task, but you do need to keep in mind that both your deliberations and especially the outcomes are meant to be as fair and democratic as they can be under our current legislation. While you need to comply with the limitations imposed by the relevant legislation the boundaries are also critically important to the maintenance of the democratic principles that should remain as essential elements of your decision making.

Yours Sincerely,

David Smith