

The Electoral Distribution Commissioners
Ms Gillian Nicoll
The Hon Neville Owen
Mr Warwick Gately AM

Dear Commissioners

Please accept my objection to the proposed boundaries you have published in June.

Yours sincerely

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In 1987 and 2005 the State Parliament passed two significant electoral reform Acts. The core purpose of each of these reforms was reduction of imbalance in representation by bringing our electoral system closer to the democratic principle of one person, one vote one value.

In view of the trend toward equality in representation demonstrated by our Parliament it is both a surprise and a disappointment that the proposed boundaries published in June 2011 countermand this trend. By re-locating the district of Mandurah from South West region to South Metropolitan region the proposed boundaries increase inequality. Table A below illustrates the overall effect this proposal has on representation. Regional enrolment statistics may be used since every region is represented by 6 Members.

Table A

Inequality among electors in Legislative Council regions		
Metropolitan enrolment	Country enrolment	Ratio between Metropolitan and Country enrolments
Sept 2010 1,021,503	Sept 2010 380,238	2.95 : 1
Proposed boundaries		
June 2011 1,042,327	June 2011 325,205	3.20 : 1

Table B illustrates the effect the proposed boundaries have on the comparison between extreme cases.

Table B

Comparison between the highest and lowest regional enrolments		
Highest	Lowest	Ratio between highest and lowest enrolments
North Metropolitan Sept 2010 312,578	Mining and Pastoral Sept 2010 72,821	4.29 : 1
Proposed boundaries		
South Metropolitan June 2011 359,651	Mining and Pastoral June 2011 73,007	4.90 : 1

1.

For the reasons above I recommend to you that the district of Mandurah remain a part of South West region.

2.

Since enrolments of districts just inside and outside the Metropolitan Area boundary must fall within a plus or minus 10% tolerance of the State average and Parliament has altered the Electoral Act to permit flexibility in the allocation of districts into regions across the boundary, the redistribution should follow the trend and opportunity to move toward greater equality. The districts of Butler, Darling Range and Swan Hills should be re-allocated to Agricultural region. The districts of Warnbro and Mandurah should be re-allocated to South West region. These alterations would leave an overall imbalance in enrolments of approximately 2 : 1 between Metropolitan and Country regions; a ratio similar to that which existed among Legislative Assembly districts between 1988 and 2008.

It is not the role of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners to propose boundaries which increase inequality.

Graham Hawkes

7th July 2011