

Friday, April 15, 2011

Submission on 2011 State redistribution.

Boundaries ought to place less reliance on such issues as Freeways and highways where these can be manipulated to favour one party against another.

Similarly, local government boundaries should not affect electorate boundaries, particularly in the Assembly boundaries in metropolitan seats where only a few local government authorities are involved. As a member in the Agricultural Region my electorate covered something like 60 local government authorities, and where seats may only cover 3 or 4 local councils in Metropolitan seats, it does not create any additional burden on the representative to be able to represent these areas, and would provide far greater flexibility in maintaining electorates of a similar population.

“Dummy votes”

The concept of dummy votes ought to be abolished as a McGintymander of the state electoral system to suit the ALP within the lightly populated regions covering approximately 90% of WA – much of which is geographically uninhabited, and no member of parliament has or ever will visit, other when they fly over it on their way to the eastern states (i.e. much of the deserts of WA).

Although the WA Electoral commission is bound to assume thousands of dummy voters in these areas, the practice is abhorrent and I would urge the commissioners as far as is possible to redefine the boundaries in these areas to take into account the broadest issues aside from dummy vote weighting.

Consideration also needs to be given to balance up the huge discrepancy in the number of electors in the Agricultural Region versus the south West. This can include changing the status of Mandurah and Dawsville from being in the Country Regions to being in the metropolitan regions, which is more relevant as Perth continues its rapid growth in recent years.

I would propose that the shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe be transferred back into the Agricultural Region as they always were, and rightfully belong to. These were moved out upon submission by the National Party prior to the last election I believe more to suit their election

prospects than for any better representation in these regions. It was done on the back of the proposed BHP Ravensthorpe Nickel which was mothballed before it ever commenced commercial production. Where numbers need to be moved around can be from the eastern end of the electorate which is not reachable other than by plane, or driving via Kalgoorlie. Therefore this ought to be adopted into the seat of Kalgoorlie where possible.

The Agricultural Region ought to be therefore extended back to where it was before the snap 2008 election, (as far east as Esperance), and extending west back into the shires of Boyup Brook, Cranbrook and Bridgetown as was the case before the last election. In addition it should take in the shires of Albany and Mount Barker, which bring it far closer to the Federal seat boundaries. This could even extend as far as Collie if necessary.

Also the Agricultural region should include more of the populated areas other than Mandurah, Bunbury and Busselton which make up most of the current population of the south west.

It ought to be noted that the Agricultural Region now has more upper house members than lower house members (50% more in fact). This is becoming an issue way out of balance with representation in the lower house, and if not addressed will see a significant loss of upper house representation at some time.

The shire of Kalbarri ought to be transferred into the Mining and pastoral region, as it is far more accessible by those MP who must travel through Kalbarri if they drive to their electorates. Even if they fly, Kalbarri is on the way to their electorates, and far easier to service by Mining & Pastoral MP's than from those in the Agricultural Region.

Geraldton, Greenough, and many of the shires surrounding and as far east as Mullewa , Morowa, Perenjori ought to be transferred into Mining & Pastoral which are now very closely tied to the expanding mid west mining sector of WA, and would increase the population in that area.

The seats of Blackwood – Stirling, Vasse, and Collie Preston should be considered in relation to the expanding numbers around Bunbury and Dawsville – i.e. these metro seats are expanding in population while the county regions are shrinking, and the boundaries ought to be considered in line with a more equitable Agriculture Region. I would propose that the present southern boundary in the seat of Vasse be moved south and east; or alternatively Blackwood-Stirling should move west and north to take in Margaret River.

The statistics included on the WAEC website boundaries .wa.gov.au does not give an easy guide to redrawing many of the metropolitan seats. However where populations have expanded rapidly in some of the northern seats, these boundaries need urgent adjustment – preferably to the east. Therefore the existing seats bounded by the Mitchell Freeway ought to be expanded eastwards to crossover the freeway as occurs in seats to the south along the Kwinana freeway.

This could include Cottesloe and Nedlands moving into parts of Perth (i.e. Kings Park, West Perth) which allows the seat of Perth to take in more of East Perth, West Leederville, Leederville and Wembley.

To the south of Perth, the south Metropolitan region should be looked at to include Mandurah and Dawsville, which are essentially metropolitan seats and rely on many of the factors affecting the Metropolitan Region rather than the south West Region.

Boundary adjustment from Fremantle ought to head eastwards rather than southwards. This would take in the western end of Alfred Cove, and parts of Willagee. Seats such as Jandakot should then extend eastwards towards Armadale. The East Metropolitan boundaries can be redrawn to give relatively equal numbers between North, South and East Metropolitan.

If more recent population numbers in those seats that have exceeded quota is available prior to the next round of submissions, I would like to factor these into any response to the Commissions draft boundaries based on the submissions of the opposition and Government.

I would like to follow up this submission with a more detailed comment once the Commissioners have drafted the proposed new boundaries.

Yours faithfully

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