



**Comments by WA Labor  
on submissions by other parties to the  
Electoral Redistribution Commissioners  
in respect of the 2011 redistribution  
of districts and regions**

**Overview**

In its' submission WA Labor has sought to ensure that both it met the requirements of *The Electoral Act 1907* in both practise and spirit of the Act. The provisions of s161 state that due consideration be paid to the matters of: community of Interest, current patterns and features of districts, existing boundaries and demographic changes.

WA Labor has both in its submission and in discussions with the Commissioners sought to identify that the need for incremental change be foremost in determining new boundaries. It is the contention of WA Labor, that this is highly necessary given the dramatic redistribution, which occurred in 2007.

The Act is in fact an excellent guide in regards of the very reality of electoral boundaries. Communities grow around the concept of their electorate and relate quite specifically to the district and incorporate that into the sense of their belonging to that community. Subsequently elected Members are seen as being significant members of the community and the person to whom they turn in representing their interest.

WA Labor has stated that due to significant growth in some districts there has needed to be a necessary adjustment of districts to ensure that the mean population is met. This has been achieved through due consideration to the community of interest in districts and to the principles stated. In the submission WA Labor has ensured that the current Metropolitan/ Non - Metropolitan boundary has remained intact and with only 1 exception, recommended that Country Regional boundaries remain consistent.

At all times, the proposed adjustments made by WA Labor have been in the spirit of the Act and not sought to be political in nature. It is with regret that we note that the submission made by the Liberal Party fails to meet this important criteria.

As stated before the importance of maintaining the current balance of districts and being mindful of the community of interest has been of paramount importance. Regretfully the submission by The Greens seeks to make dramatic adjustments to the boundaries of regions and fails to take into consideration those very real and important factors.

## **Comments Regarding the Liberal Party (WA) submission.**

The Liberal Party has stated that it “..supports incremental rather than drastic alteration of the boundaries of the six Regions.”, however they then seek to make significant changes to the boundaries of the South Metropolitan, East Metropolitan and Agricultural Regions.

Quite frequently the proposed changes they propose are overtly political in nature. They are made in order to increase their capacity to win seats in future elections or to reduce the margins of non-Government sitting members. This is in direct contravention of the principle of maintaining communities of interest.

### **South West Region**

The Liberals state that the Agricultural Region needs to grow and believes that the Mining and Pastoral Region should not be the region from where populations are achieved. This is not contested by WA Labor, what is contested is the proposal to take the population from the district of Collie-Preston.

Collie-Preston has been part of the South West region for a significant period of time. The community identifies itself as being part of the South West. The local sporting community plays in the South West competition. A large percentage of workers in the District live in areas such as Bunbury, Murray-Wellington or Blackwood-Stirling. There is an inherent community of interest with the South West Region.

The Liberal proposal is quite blatant in its attempt to remove a highly regarded and effective sitting member by dramatically realigning the district. In essence they are seeking to abolish the seat altogether to achieve their political objectives. It is worth noting that the Liberal's coalition partner, The National Party, does not support the changes they propose.

The locality of Dalyellup has been a part of the Shire of Capel since its inception and this area remains very connected to Capel. It would be against any community of interest therefore to move Dalyellup into Bunbury.

The proposed changes to the district of Vasse are also quite blatant in their design. The locality of Margaret River is increasingly moving away from traditional conservative voting patterns. In order to sustain the margin in Vasse, the Liberals are simply seeking to move this troublesome area into Blackwood-Stirling where they feel it will not be an issue. Towns in the northern part of the Shire of Margaret River which have maintained conservative patterns are being argued to be retained. This should clearly be rejected.

The Liberals state:

*.....we propose that in order to maintain the current number of non-metropolitan seats, two alterations be made to the current Metropolitan boundary: at the conjunction of the Cities of Mandurah and Rockingham (9223 electors), and at the border of the Shires of Northam and Mundaring (1773 electors).*

This represents anything but incremental change in the boundaries. They propose moving voters within the City of Rockingham into a non-metropolitan upper house region. This is clearly ridiculous. They are seeking to significantly alter the Metropolitan/ Non- Metropolitan boundaries and this is further evidenced in other regions.

### **Agricultural Region**

It is clear this region has to have more electors included. We submit that Albany should form part of the Agricultural Region. The Liberal Party suggests it should be Collie. This is contradicted by the way the State Government itself organises the regions. The Development Commissions in regional WA have become the single most important method of Government organisation and funding in each of the regions.

The Great Southern Development Commission is headquartered in Albany. Its website clearly states “The dominant industries of the Great Southern's regional economy are wool, broadacre cropping, livestock production, tourism, timber production and fishing. In recent decades the economy has diversified to include horticulture and viticulture. The region's well-established sense of identity and entrepreneurial networks in agricultural industries has fostered growth in tree farming, wine making and meat processing for international markets.”

This is clear recognition that Albany is an integral part of the agricultural sector of the WA economy.

On the other hand Collie is within the South West Development Commission, Bunbury Wellington sub-section. This clearly draws their economic activity towards Bunbury as the current electorate does.

Their website is also clear “The South West has a thriving economy which generated \$12.4 billion during 2009-10. The region derives most of its wealth from healthy mining and manufacturing sectors, which latest figures show produced \$2 billion and \$2.7 billion respectively.” If Collie is known for one thing it is coal mining.

As all other Government activity recognise these two towns as belonging to these two regions, it is ridiculous for the Liberal Party submission to propose they be placed in opposite regions for electorate purposes only.

### **Mining & Pastoral**

WA Labor would contend only that the districts of Northwest and Pilbara be adjusted to achieve mean distribution as per the submission.

## **East Metropolitan Region**

The Liberal proposal for Darling Range is asking that the Metropolitan boundary again be adjusted to shift the localities of Chidlow, Beechina and The Lakes into the Agricultural Region. This is contrary to a claim of incremental change. WA Labor has effectively demonstrated that the current Metropolitan boundary can be maintained.

The Belmont district northern boundary is quite logically set at the Helena River. There is no compelling reason to adjust this boundary.

The Liberal proposal for Forrestfield District changes do not allow for the further establishment of this seat and seeks to impact upon Gosnells which has been set by the natural border of the Canning River. The logical extension of this district is to fully incorporate Maddington into the district, which would allow for the district to fully establish itself for the future.

Midland does not require the excessive changes proposed by the Liberal Party. WA Labor has convincingly demonstrated that with marginal adjustments, the district retains its integrity and community of interest.

The West Swan boundary should be maintained at Gnangara Road. The Liberal proposal for this district, demonstrate a lack of intent in maintaining the community of interest in what is a significant adjustment.

The locality of Ellenbrook is a fast growing area within Metropolitan Perth. WA Labor strongly believes that within the next 10 years Ellenbrook will have a state electorate based on that locality, just like its near neighbours in Wanneroo and Midland.

This significant growth is recognised in the Liberal submission. However they then go on to propose splitting the locality of Ellenbrook between two different electorates. This clearly ignores the best interests of the people of Ellenbrook. The Liberal Party wants to lock these voters into uncertainty over the next 10 years.

WA Labor has demonstrated that there is only need for marginal adjustments to the district of Morley also. The dramatic changes proposed by the Liberal Party are inconsistent and illogical in their determinations. Again the Liberal Party has utilised political gain as the over-riding determination in boundaries.

The Mount Lawley/ Perth boundary changes are far too dramatic and remain illogical in the community of interest argument. The excision of East Perth to Mount Lawley does not in any logical way represent a natural adjustment.

Nollamara is a district, which does require adjustments to be made. What the Liberal Party proposes for this district shows a clear lack of knowledge of this district and its community of interest. Balga has far greater community of interest with Girrawheen and should remain within this district. The offset should be made, by extending the Mount Lawley border further north to St Albans Rd.

## **North Metropolitan Region**

This Region has had substantial growth, but WA Labor has submitted that the changes to the districts within this region need not be overly dramatic and fall outside the community of interest.

The excision of Balga from Girrawheen as stated above, is inconsistent with the community of interest. The whole intent behind the Liberal Party's proposal is to significantly impact upon a highly regarded and effective member. The suburbs of Balga, Girrawheen, Warwick and Hamersley have a long historical association. To move Balga out of Girrawheen, would be akin to moving the suburb of Fremantle into Alfred Cove.

There is only moderate change required to the district of Joondalup. The excision of Craigie is far too dramatic. In order to achieve the outcomes required, it need only have Currambine moved into Ocean Reef.

The district of Mindarie again only requires marginal adjustments. The Liberal Party proposal is to seek to dramatically redraw the district. WA Labor has provided a submission, which would ensure that Mindarie and Ocean Reef enjoy ongoing community of interest.

The district of Wanneroo does need adjustment, but the Liberal proposal to put suburbs such as Madeley and Darch into Girrawheen require an adjustment to the regional boundary and do not in any way provide any sense of community of interest.

## **South Metropolitan Region**

The Liberal proposal seeks to significantly reduce the district of Cockburn. This fails to anticipate future growth in a region, which has seen ongoing growth over the past decade.

Marmion St should remain constant as the boundary for Willagee. Whilst expansion is necessary this can be achieved through the modest inclusion of the area bounded by Rockingham Rd, Spearwood Ave and Stock Rd.

The proposal for Warnbro is again excessive in its scope. This is contrary to any claim of incremental or gradual change. Too excise three suburbs from a district, is highly disruptive to the community. This proposal cannot be seen as anything but politically motivated to remove a sitting member.

## **Comments Regarding The Nationals submission**

Where the Liberal Party has pursued highly aggressive changes to boundaries, their partner in coalition has shied away from any significant change. Where the Liberals have sought to dramatically redraw regional boundaries, The Nationals have been generally tempered in their deliberations.

As stated previously, the locality of Dalyellup is one, which shares considerable community of interest with the Shire of Capel and should stay within the Collie-Preston district and not move to Bunbury.

## **Comments Regarding The Greens (WA) submission**

The submission by The Greens has not fully taken into consideration the overall effect of dramatic changes upon the community with redistributions. Their proposal seeks to make marked changes to the Metropolitan boundaries, which WA Labor contends is unnecessary.

They have only made submissions in regard to a limited number of districts and have not provided any maps to identify the full scope of their proposals. This makes the task of determining their submission difficult.

## **Comments Regarding Local Government submissions**

A range of Local Government Authorities have made submissions. Noting that all of these submissions are made by instruments of the State Government, WA Labor is not intending to make extensive commentary, other than to say that they all focus on the detail of individual boundaries, and ignore the fact that the Commissioners are required to create 59 Districts for the entire State.

## **Comments Regarding Individual submissions**

WA Labor does not intend to make any commentary regarding submissions of individual members of the public, save to note:

- It is a welcome part of this State's democracy that individuals can make submissions on such an important issue as the drawing of electoral Districts and Regions; and
- Individuals do not represent others, only themselves, and their submissions should be judged strictly on that basis

WA Labor however does note that if the Commissioners choose to ignore our advice to adopt an 'incremental change' approach and instead opt for their self-described 'fundamental change' approach, the submissions made by Mr Kelly and Mr Mulcair are of substance and merit broad consideration.

## **Comments Regarding the nature of submissions**

To conclude, it is disappointing to note that WA Labor provided the only written submission, which included maps of all 59 Legislative Assembly seats. We take this process seriously and view the publication of our submissions as a vital tool in the democratic process of Western Australia. We congratulate the Redistribution Commission on the maintenance of such an effective and informative website.

It is clear that the resources required to undertake the provision of 59 maps is beyond most of the individuals and organisations who provided submissions.

However it is our view that the political parties represented in our Parliament should have taken the time and had the decency to provide the public of Western Australia with their full submissions, including maps. The WA Nationals provided maps and detail about the 17 seats in their submission.

But neither the Liberal or Green Party submissions included maps. And both are written in such a way as to be confusing and opaque to ordinary citizens who lack access to sophisticated software and mapping technology. The very same ordinary citizens who would be most adversely impacted by the radical and illogical approaches taken in the respective submissions.