



THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Comment on suggestion 14

Liberal Party of Australia (Western Australian Division)

4 pages



LIBERAL PARTY COMMENT ON SUGGESTIONS FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2020-21

Eight political parties or individuals have submitted comprehensive proposals for the boundaries of all 15 Western Australian divisions: The Liberal Party of Australia (WA Division); WA Labor; Mr Jeff Waddell; Mr David Walsh; Dr Mark Mulcair; Anonymous; Mr Darren McSweeney; and Mr Dean Ashley. In addition, The Nationals WA have submitted suggestions for the divisions of Durack, O'Connor, Forrest and Pearce.

- All these submissions are based on the projected 2025 enrolment statistics.

Two notable areas of consensus arise from these submissions:

- A metropolitan division north of the Swan River will need to be abolished.
- There is substantial agreement that the three regional/rural divisions of Durack, O'Connor and Forrest retain their existing configurations with minimal change, with the non-metropolitan component of the division of Pearce being transferred to Durack and/or O'Connor.

RURAL/REGIONAL DIVISIONS

The sole exception to the consensus regarding regional/rural Western Australia is the submission of Mr McSweeney that seeks to recreate the pre-2008 boundaries of Kalgoorlie and O'Connor, and to transfer the Collie LGA to the division of Forrest.

The Liberal Party most strongly objects to this regressive proposal that would confine most of the State's land area in one enormous division, rather than providing for the representation of remote Western Australia to be shared between two divisions.

- The current divisions of Durack and O'Connor provide firm lines of communication from near-metropolitan rural Shires respectively to the Pilbara and Kimberley, and to the Eastern Goldfields.
- In contrast there are very tenuous communications between Kalgoorlie-Esperance and the north of the State.
- The division of Grey in South Australia provides a useful example. It extends from the far north of that State to the edge of metropolitan Adelaide without creating any representational anomaly.

There is no reason why Collie should not remain in the division of O'Connor, as affirmed by all other suggestions, including that of WA Labor. We submit that O'Connor should gain the adjacent Donnybrook-Balingup LGA rather than the Augusta-Margaret River LGA as proposed by The Nationals, Mr Waddell, Dr Mulcair and Mr Ashley. This would extend the southwestern extremity of O'Connor to an unnecessary degree.

The Liberal Party does not support those aspects of the submissions of WA Labor, Mr Walsh, Anonymous and Mr McSweeney that propose the encroachment of regional/rural divisions into the City of Swan and the Shire of Mundaring.

- Contrary to some erroneous assertions, there are no “rural” components within the current division of Hasluck.
- The two LGAs of Swan and Mundaring have formed part of the Metropolitan Area for decades. It is inappropriate that any of the three regional/rural divisions should cross the boundary of the Metropolitan Area.

NORTHERN METROPOLITAN DIVISIONS

In regard to the abolition of a division in the northern metropolitan area, it is noted that the submissions of Anonymous, Mr McSweeney and Mr Ashley support the suggestion of the Liberal Party that the division of Cowan be abolished, and that its northern section merge with the division of Pearce. Mr Walsh also advocates this northern Cowan-Pearce merger while suggesting the abolition of the division of Stirling.

- All of the eight holistic submissions advocate the disappearance of a division north of the Swan River.

While some may criticise the Liberal Party suggestion to extend the division of Perth northward, it is notable that WA Labor suggests that Perth extend a considerable degree eastward to include Midland, which has been a central focus of the division of Hasluck since its creation in 2001. Be that as it may, it is a useful reminder that for over 50 years the division of Perth has generally extended far from the CBD into what might be described as medium/outer suburbs.

- The Liberal Party considers that electors in Beechboro, Ballajura and related areas are likely to use the Morley Galleria in the division of Perth for retail shopping.
- Both the Liberal Party and WA Labor suggest that Perth take in significant if different parts of the City of Swan.

The Liberal Party disagrees with suggestions to remove the coastal section of Stirling, which has been part of this division since its creation in 1955. The proposal of Anonymous for Stirling to include such established parts of the division of Curtin such as Wembley and West Leederville is a pointless displacement of electors.

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN DIVISIONS

It is noted that all submissions save that of Mr Ashley advocated no change or minimal change to the divisions of Fremantle and Brand.

The Liberal Party disagrees most strongly with the suggestion from WA Labor that the division of Tangney cross the lower Canning River to include the City of South Perth.

- Since 1984 the Swan and lower Canning Rivers have not been crossed by any division.
- Prior to 1984 the division of Tangney tended to be a mixture of disparate localities without clear lines of communication or community of interest. The 1974-84 boundaries of Tangney are a very poor example for this distribution.
- The localities of South Perth and Como have continually fallen within the division of Swan since it was reoriented as an urban division from 1949.
- WA Labor appears to rely on “community of socio-economic interest” to justify this suggestion. Such arguments are historically weak when they seek to override the geographic logic of a wide river boundary, and often lend themselves to partisan advantage.

In contrast the submissions of Dr Mulcair, Anonymous and Mr McSweeney agree with the suggestion of the Liberal Party that the division of Tangney recoup its enrolment by reabsorbing the locality of Canning Vale.

- There are no geographic barriers to the southward expansion of Tangney into a locality that was included within this division as recently as the 2010 and 2013 elections.

While the submission of Mr Ashley also incorporates the locality of Canning Vale within the division of Tangney, the Liberal Party considers that in general his suggestions for the southern metropolitan area and the Peel Region lack merit, as they involve a capricious and unnecessary scrambling of established boundaries and communities of interest.

- There is no justification whatsoever for moving the division of Forrest into the metropolitan area, pushing the division of Canning into the City of Rockingham and distorting the divisions of Brand and Fremantle while cutting the division of Tangney in half.
- It is significant that while the effect of the suggestions of the Liberal Party would result in 17.4% of Western Australians being placed in different electoral divisions, as many as 31.6% of WA electors would be displaced under Mr Ashley's proposal.

The Liberal Party disagrees with the suggestion by Anonymous that the divisions of Burt and Canning exchange the localities of Harrisdale/Piara Waters with those parts of the City of Armadale that fall within Canning. This is once again an unnecessary displacement of electors.

NON-HOLISTIC SUBMISSIONS

The Liberal Party acknowledges the suggestions of the Cities of Mandurah and Armadale that seek to maintain the integrity of the Peel Region and the division of Burt respectively.

- We would respectfully submit that the requirements of balancing 15 divisions may involve adjustments to the boundaries of Canning and Burt.
- It is not possible to maintain all of the Peel Region within Canning, especially the Boddington LGA.
- As the division of Burt is the only logical source of additional electors for the division of Tangney its boundaries must change to some degree. The Liberal Party however does not advocate a splitting of the urban core of the City of Armadale.
- The population projections supplied by the City of Armadale beyond 2025 are not relevant to the requirements of this distribution and should not be considered.

The submissions of Mr Hedger and Mr Strange, advocating the abolition of the divisions of Swan and Burt respectively, appear to disregard the numerical requirements of this redistribution and the effect of these proposals on other divisions.

The suggestion of Ms Bunce that the Cocos/Keeling Islands be incorporated in a Western Australian division would run counter to the Australian Constitution. These islands are not legally part of the State of Western Australia regardless of any administrative links.

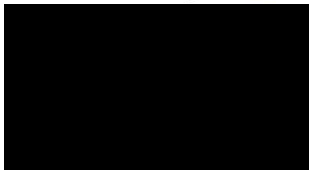
- For the same reason that the electors of Cocos/Keeling vote in a Northern Territory division, the electors of Norfolk Island, despite being administered through New South Wales, vote within the ACT in the division of Bean.

NAMING OF DIVISIONS

Because this distribution involves the abolition of a division, the Liberal Party disagrees with those suggestions putting forward new names for any of the 15 divisions. We reiterate the desirability of retaining those divisional names commemorating former members of the federal Parliament in particular.

- Ms Trish Bergin and the other signatories to this suggestion appear to be unaware that a new division will not in fact be created in Western Australia: an existing division must disappear. The suggested names of Balbuk, Cardell-Oliver, Hummerston and Rischbeith would have merit in a different scenario. This list omits the distinguished name of May Holman, the second elected female parliamentarian in Western Australia and the first to be re-elected.
- Mr Benjamin Riley's proposal to rename an existing division as Hawke ignores the likelihood that the additional seat to be created in the concurrent Victorian redistribution will be named Hawke. This distinguished former Prime Minister represented a Victorian seat in federal Parliament from 1980 to 1991.
- The Liberal Party disagrees with the suggestion of Mr Walsh and Mr Riley to abolish the division of Stirling.

Yours sincerely,



Sam Calabrese
State Director