



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Objection 30

Darren McSweeney

16 pages

Objection Redistribution of Commonwealth Electoral Divisions

Darren McSweeney



Western Australia 2023

Killili Bridge, Gascoyne River, Gascoyne Junction

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This Public Objection was lodged 25 June 2024 by
Darren McSweeney
an Australian Citizen, resident of Victoria, and member of the Australian Public Service.



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which I live and write, the Bunurong people of the Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

Every effort has been made to ensure data and calculations in this submission are accurate, however unintended errors or omissions of data or calculations still may occur. The author has not attempted to mislead readers by way of errors or omissions in the data presented herein.

References and data sources

This product (submission) incorporates data that is © Commonwealth of Australia ([Australian Electoral Commission](#)) 2023 and 2024

Division spatial data are derived from the digital datasets provided by the Australian Electoral Commission. Original data files in .shp format were edited for mapping in [QGIS](#) and converted to .kml format within [Google Earth](#) and .GeoJSON format for presentation in maps.

Other spatial data, including Local Government Areas, are provided by Australian Bureau of Statistics [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\) Edition 3](#), under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) licencing.

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Political disclaimer

The views, opinions, arguments and recommendations presented in this Objection to the redistribution of electoral divisions of Western Australia are the author's own and in no way reflect the views of Services Australia, the Australian Public Service or Australian Government.

My right to hold and express views as an Australian Citizen is [protected under Australian law](#).

Exercising this right to participate in public and political debate by lodging this public submission in no way affects my capacity to fulfill my duties in a professional, impartial, and apolitical manner.

This submission complies with conditions of employment in the Australian Public Service (APS) in accordance with the *Public Service Act 1999*, the [APS Values, Code of Conduct and Employment Principles](#), and [Social media: Guidance for Australian Public Service Employees and Agencies](#)

I hold no interest in, and do not stand to receive any benefit or advantage resulting from the outcome of this redistribution. I have written this submission as a private citizen taking a personal interest in psephology and the electoral redistribution process. I am not now, nor at any time in the past been a member of any political party or similar associated organisation.

This submission is lodged claiming political neutrality. No political bias or partiality is implied within this submission and none should be inferred. This submission is lodged in accordance with [guidelines for making public submissions to a redistribution](#). The political implications – if any – of the recommendations have not formed part of the recommendation and should not be inferred.

Division names – including any suggested new names– comply with [guidelines for naming federal electoral divisions](#). Suggested names are based on the individual's merit and contribution to Australian society, and do not imply any political bias towards the eponymous persons. Proposals to abolish or rename a division – if any – do not reflect the performance or character of the current member of Parliament representing that division or the eponymous person, unless specified.

Criticism of submissions or decisions taken as part of this redistribution is based solely on the merit of the arguments and recommendations presented therein and serves solely to improve electoral representation for the people of Western Australia. It is not in any way a reflection upon the character or abilities of any individual, government or community group or organisation participating in this process, nor any member of a Redistribution Committee, augmented Electoral Commission, any other member of the APS, the Australian Electoral Commission, any other Australian Government entity, agency, department or any current or past member of Parliament.

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Introduction

Overall, I am pleased with the results of this proposal. Given the issue of incorrect elector projections rendered suggestions and comments on suggestions useless, I am pleased to see the results end up as strong as they are. There are few areas I would suggest changing, and I commend the Committee on their achievement.

I will provide an analysis and assessment of each proposed division, rating the proposed divisions on how well they adhere to the criteria specified in section 66(3)(b) of the Electoral Act. Following my analysis, I will present my own suggested changes to the proposed divisions.

Proposed name of new division

I fully support the proposed division name **BULLWINKEL** after Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel Statham AO MBE ARRC ED FNM FRCNA. She is more than worthy as a recipient. Of note, none of the suggestions even mentioned her as a candidate, which maybe reflects what criteria those making suggestions focussed on. I certainly approve of a division named after someone making such a difference, and someone who endured so much. Lt Col Bullwinkel is far more deserving than any politician and I am pleased to see the Committee taking this matter upon themselves to ensure suitable candidates were selected.

Analysis of proposed divisions

Methodology

I have assessed each proposed division, and subjectively scored against the criteria outlined in the Electoral Act:

- i. community of interests within the proposed electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests,
- ii. means of communication and travel within the proposed electoral division,
- iv. the physical features and area of the proposed electoral division, and
- v. the boundaries of existing electoral divisions in Western Australia, with this factor being subordinate to the consideration of i, ii and iv.

When assessing the proposed division against the criteria, I am specifically looking for the following:

Criterion i: I am looking at whether the proposed division includes like suburbs and neighbourhoods, whether there are isolated parts of suburbs excluded from the division, or a section of a suburb is included and isolated from the remaining of the suburb in another division.

Criterion ii: whether there is sufficient means of effective travel and lines that make sense and allows both the elected member and electors to travel to other communities within the division. In large rural divisions, electors may be widely dispersed, however they should be able to travel along corridors to reach other communities.

Criterion iv: Assessment includes if the proposed division follows natural contours and barriers – such as rivers and mountains – as well as man-made barriers such as freeways, railways or major highways. In addition, assessment includes whether some parts of the division are physically excluded or isolated by natural features. In cases where a community is physically isolated from all other communities, this is not considered as important.

Criterion v: In many cases, the existing boundaries are useful indicators of community. Long established and unchanged boundaries could be indicators of a clear divide in communities. However, the time can come where certain boundaries need to be breached. A reliance on the existing boundaries to the detriment of, or at the expense of, the other criteria will be scored lower.

Furthermore, an additional criterion is assessed based on the general appearance, compactness and cohesiveness of the division. Divisions that are overly elongated, contorted, twisted, or those that stretch across wide areas of unused land to connect communities can lead to lower communities of interest and lines of communication can be impacted.

Additionally, an overly elongated or twisted division is more likely to be subject to accusations of gerrymandering and perceptions that the division may be drawn in such a manner as to gain political advantage by including or excluding certain communities.

Brand

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	3
General appearance and cohesiveness	4
Overall assessment	21

I think this is really the only viable solution for **BRAND**. It does reiterate the issue that occurs when trying to align division and entire LGA boundaries. The suburbs of Secret Harbour, Golden Bay and Karnup are now disconnected from the rest of the community in Rockingham. For this reason, I'd suggest that there is little need to continue to adhere to the LGA boundary as the division boundary to the east.

Bullwinkel

Community of interests	5
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	24

As a new division this has ideal boundaries and the communities that are included seem coherent and logical. Combining the four wheatbelt LGAs in Toodyay, Northam, York, and Beverley with the outer suburban areas and Darling Range makes for a sensible division. There are only two issues I can identify. The first being using the Canning River and Gosnells Road West as a boundary instead of the stronger barrier in the Tonkin Highway. The second issue is defining part of the boundary along SA1 boundary instead of a more easily identifiable line on the ground.

Burt

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	4
Physical features	4
Reliance on existing boundaries	3
General appearance and cohesiveness	3
Overall assessment	18

The proposed division is stretched in a north-south direction in what is too elongated to be a single cohesive division. The inclusion of parts of Serpentine-Jarrahdale LGA while extending to the northernmost point of Gosnells LGA mean this is not the best division it could be. I'd also have preferred to see Canning Vale added to **BURT**, as it is really distinct from the rest of **TANGNEY**, as well as being physically separated from the other communities.

Canning

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	3
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	5
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	22

The proposed **CANNING** is an order of magnitude of an improvement over the existing **CANNING**. I am happy to see the disconnected areas in Kalamunda LGA have been removed. The parts in Serpentine-Jarrahdale LGA are still slightly disconnected with no direct road links to the main population centre of Mandurah. However, this a vast improvement over the existing arrangement.

Cowan

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	4
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	3
Overall assessment	20

Overall, the proposed **COWAN** is a reasonable and sensible proposal. I am glad the Committee managed to avoid splitting suburbs in the north and Ocean Reef Road is a logical boundary. The only issue I have is the awkward looking dogleg around Ballajura and Malaga. I would like to see this line straightened, but changes in this area lead to cascading effects in **HASLUCK**.

Curtin

Community of interests	5
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	5
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	25

The proposed **CURTIN** has no defects and meets all criteria. It is cohesive and confined using strong and logical major roads as boundaries.

Durack

Community of interests	3
Means of communication	4
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	4
Overall assessment	20

In general, the proposed **DURACK** is acceptable and meets the criteria. It is unfortunate that the suburb of Bullsbrook is still included. I could suggest that Bullsbrook be transferred into **HASLUCK**, however this will result in **DURACK** falling below threshold, which could be remedied by transferring all of Toodyay from **BULLWINKEL** to Durack. Whether this change is justified would be a matter for the Augmented Electoral Commission. This is not the issue with

Forrest

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	4
Overall assessment	22

The trend continues that **FORREST** is now an Indian Ocean facing division instead of a south west focussed division. While I don't feel this is an issue, there may be some concern from communities inland that are connected to the coastal towns. I agree with the general approach to use LGA boundaries in rural areas, however in this case it leads to an overwhelmingly jagged and unwieldy boundary in the east of Dardanup LGA.

Fremantle

Community of interests	5
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	24

The proposed **FREMANTLE** is cohesive and compact. The only issues with perfectly aligning with the LGA boundaries is that future redistributions will likely need to exclude a small part of the LGA, or include a small community from elsewhere to meet future numerical thresholds. This small community would therefore be detached and isolated from the rest of their community.

Hasluck

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	4
Physical features	4
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	3
Overall assessment	19

Overall, this is actually a decent proposal for the division. The awkward dogleg at Malaga, and the exclusion of Bullsbrook are what bring this division down slightly. I'm still unsure why Committees have determined that Lexia and Melaleuca fit better in **PEARCE** than with the remaining communities in the Swan LGA, however, as the number of electors in this area is negligible, I think persisting with the strong boundary of the Tonkin Highway makes sense. It is unfortunate that Bullsbrook cannot be accommodated as part of this division.

Moore

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	23

The proposed **MOORE** is a sensible division. Gaining everything north of Karrinyup Road from **CURTIN** and using the Mitchell Freeway, the boundaries are clear and strong. The only issue is the communities of Burns Beach and Kinross probably belong in **MOORE** rather than **PEARCE**, and using Burns Beach Road as a boundary, these suburbs become physically separated from the rest of **PEARCE**. However, this is probably the preferred option over breaking up Kingsley and Woodvale or crossing the Mitchell Freeway to the south.

O'Connor

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	3
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	5
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	22

Overall, the proposed division is as good as we can get it. There is some lack of communication methods between the south west and the greater part of the division, and this has probably been exacerbated by the creation of Bullwinkel and moving the LGAs along the Great Eastern Highway into **DURACK**. There will be some concern from residents in the far south west that they identify clearer with the towns in **FORREST**, but in order to meet the numerical threshold, they must be included in **O'CONNOR**.

Pearce

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	5
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	24

The proposed division of **PEARCE** is logical and cohesive. I'm still not sure why Lexia and Melaleuca get included here, where they fit better in **HASLUCK**, but the effect is negligible so I'm willing to concede that point. The suburbs of Burns Beach and Kinross are physically separated from the rest of the division by the Tamala Park Conservation Reserve. But overall, I am happy with their inclusion in **PEARCE**.

Perth

Community of interests	5
Means of communication	5
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	5
General appearance and cohesiveness	5
Overall assessment	25

The proposed **PERTH** is a clear and compact division that meets all criteria. Using the Tonkin Highway and Morely Drive/Karrinyup Road leads to clear boundaries and united communities.

Swan

Community of interests	4
Means of communication	4
Physical features	3
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	4
Overall assessment	19

I think the proposed division of **SWAN** is generally acceptable. I think the suburbs of Ferndale, Lynwood and Langford are disconnected from the rest of the division being the only suburbs south of the Canning River. These suburbs have been moved in and out of both **SWAN** and **TANGNEY** over the years and it would be good to see some stability in this area. Furthermore, using SA1 boundaries as the division boundary around the airport could result in confusion as electors cannot easily identify where these boundaries are on the ground. I'd prefer to see a boundary using roads or railways in the area especially as the SA1 boundaries in question will probably impact few electors. Finally, I believe that **SWAN** could have been given the suburbs around Kenwick or Maddington rather than these being included in an elongated **BURT**.

Tangney

Community of interests	3
Means of communication	4
Physical features	5
Reliance on existing boundaries	4
General appearance and cohesiveness	4
Overall assessment	20

On the whole this division is sensible and logical. I suggest that the suburbs of Ferndale, Lynwood and Langford fit better in **TANGNEY** than they do in **SWAN**, and utilising the Canning River as the northern boundary makes sense. Excising the distinct and separate Canning Vale would have been an improvement, however, in doing this it would not have been possible to meet the numerical threshold.

Suggested changes to proposed division boundaries

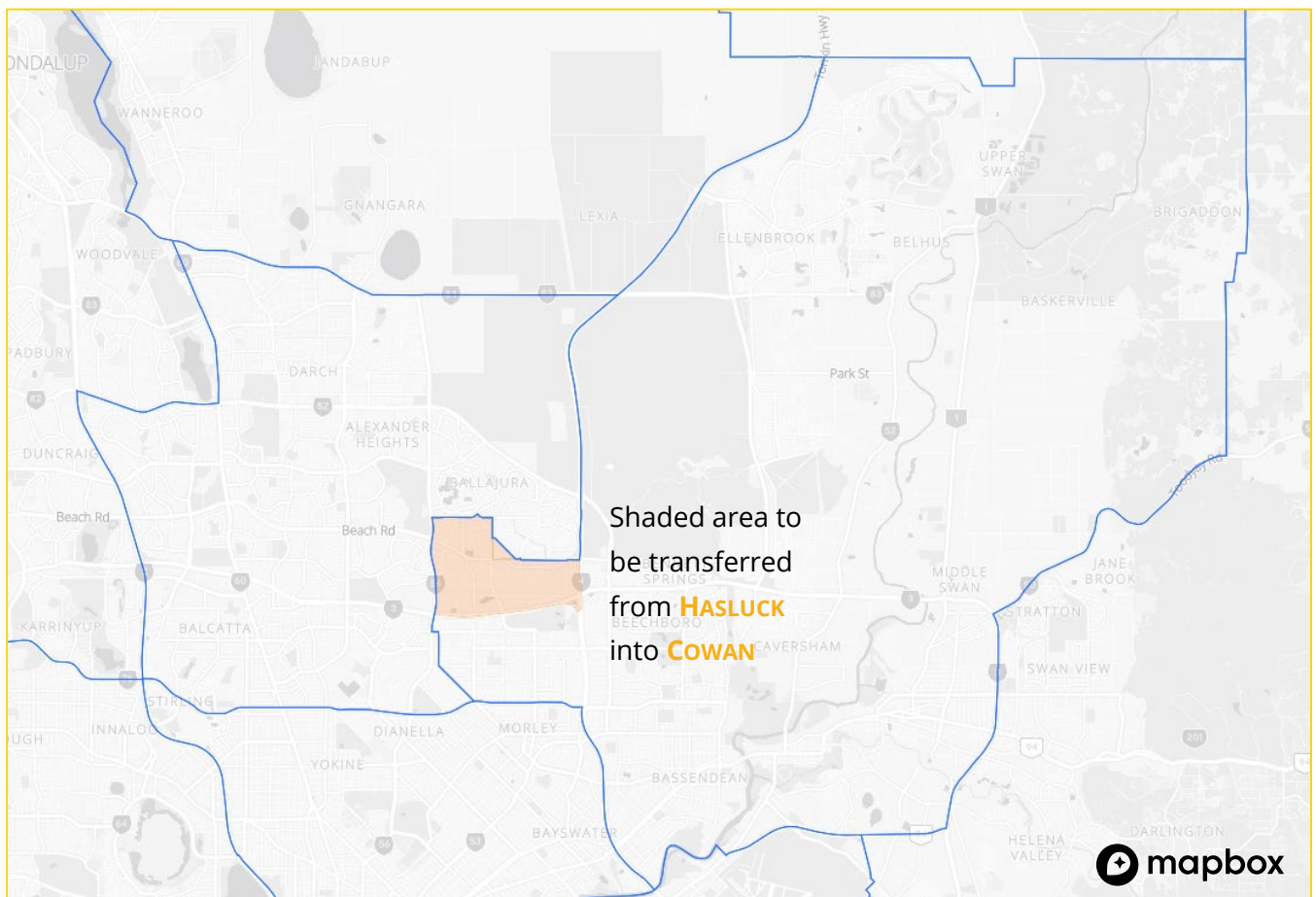
I feel that it is pointless and unhelpful to object without providing an alternative solution, so I feel compelled to contribute some specific suggestions to change the proposed redistribution.

While I am not entirely satisfied with the area around Gosnells and Armadale area, I have not proposed any changes or transfers in this area, as I cannot make the numbers work without resorting to wholesale changes covering the entire area.

I would like to see the dog leg between **COWAN** and **HASLUCK** removed, just mostly because it's unwieldy and awkward. I tried several solutions to maintain the Tonkin Highway and transfer Noranda and the parts of Morely west of the highway back to **COWAN**, but nothing worked, without making wholesale changes across multiple divisions. In the end, I think transferring the industrial Malaga, and using the Reid Highway would make for a stronger boundary.

I propose that 5 actual and 4 projected electors in the SA2 of Malaga, proposed to be transferred to **HASLUCK**, remain within **COWAN**.

I propose that 0 actual and projected electors in the SA2 of Ballajura proposed to be transferred to **HASLUCK**, remain within **COWAN**.



The next suggestion is one that I am at two minds about, but have decided that I might as well at least put it forward for consideration and let the Augmented Committee decide if it is justified. I feel that Bullsbrook really does not belong in a division spanning the entire width and length of the continent, so should be transferred into a more urban division. Alongside that, and to make a straighter border, the sparsely populated part of Swan LGA north of the Tonkin Highway is also transferred out of **PEARCE** and into **HASLUCK**.

However, I realise that transferring Toodyay into **DURACK** and splitting it from Northam seems to be the only realistic way to bring **DURACK** into threshold. I put it forward for the Augmented Committee to determine which of Bullsbrook or Toodyay is a better fit in **DURACK**.

I propose that 4,103 actual and 4,569 projected electors in the SA2 of Bullsbrook proposed to remain in **DURACK**, be transferred to **HASLUCK**.

I propose that 0 actual and projected electors in the SA2 of Melaleuca – Lexia, proposed to remain in **DURACK**, be transferred to **HASLUCK**.

I propose that 2 actual and 1 projected electors in the SA2 of Melaleuca – Lexia, proposed to remain in **PEARCE**, be transferred to **HASLUCK**.

I propose that 0 actual and projected electors in the SA2 of Ellenbrook, proposed to remain in **PEARCE**, be transferred to **HASLUCK**.

I propose that 1 actual and projected elector in the SA2 of Walyunga National Park, proposed to remain in **DURACK**, be transferred to **HASLUCK**.

I propose that 3,565 actual and 3,642 projected electors in the SA2 of Toodyay proposed to be included in **BULLWINKEL**, instead be transferred to **DURACK**.

