

Transcript of proceedings

Public inquiry of the augmented Electoral Commission for Western Australia

Conducted in Perth, Friday 14 May 2021

Before:

The Hon. Justice Susan Kenny AM

(Chairperson of the Australian Electoral Commission)

Mr Tom Rogers

(Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission)

Dr David Gruen

(Australian Statistician and member of the Australian Electoral Commission)

Ms Gina Dario

(Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia)

Ms Dione Bilick

(Surveyor General of Western Australia)

Ms Caroline Spencer

(Auditor General for Western Australia)

(Recorded and transcribed by Legal Transcripts)

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LEVEL 12, 533 LITTLE LONSDALE STREET MELBOURNE
Telephone 9642 0322

1 CHAIR: Well good morning, everyone. I think we can now begin.
2 Welcome to this hearing of the augmented Electoral
3 Commission for Western Australia. I'd like to begin by
4 acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on
5 which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders
6 past and present. Let me introduce myself. I am Susan
7 Kenny, and Chairperson of this augmented Electoral
8 Commission. The other members of the Electoral
9 Commission are Dr David Gruen, the Australian
10 Statistician, who you will not see, but he is
11 participating by phone today. Mr Tom Rogers is the
12 Australian Electoral Commissioner, on my left. And the
13 other members who make up the Commission are Ms Caroline
14 Spencer, the Auditor General of Western Australia; and
15 further on my left, furthest from me, is Ms Gina Dario,
16 the Australian Electoral Officer; and nearest to me but
17 still on my left is Ms Dione Bilick, the Surveyor General
18 of Western Australia.

19 Now, I'm going to set out some parameters about the
20 Act first. Part 4 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*
21 sets out the requirements to be followed in conducting
22 redistributions. This redistribution is required because
23 Western Australia's entitlement to members of the House
24 of Representatives has decreased from 16 to 15. In
25 accordance with section 66 of the Electoral Act, the
26 Redistribution Committee for Western Australia has
27 prepared a proposal for the redistribution of Western
28 Australia into 15 federal electoral divisions. The
29 proposal, together with written reasons for the proposal,
30 required by section 67 of the Electoral Act, was released

1 by the Redistribution Committee on 19 March, and I'm sure
2 you've all seen it. In accordance with section 68 of the
3 Electoral Act, interested individuals and organisations
4 were invited to make written objections to this proposed
5 redistribution, and provide written comments on the
6 objections. A total of 31 objections and two comments on
7 objections were received within the required timeframes.

8 Now, the augmented Electoral Commission, which is us,
9 is required by sub-section 72(1) of the Electoral Act to
10 consider all objections lodged in relation to the
11 redistribution proposal, and all comments on objections.
12 The inquiry here today provides the opportunities for
13 members of the public, for you, to make submissions about
14 those objections. Now, the Electoral Act specifies how
15 the redistribution process is to be conducted, and which
16 factors are to be taken into account. Sub-section 73(4)
17 of the Electoral Act states that the primary
18 consideration of the Electoral Commission is that each
19 electoral division meets certain numerical requirements
20 in the form of the redistribution quota and the projected
21 enrolment quota, subject to accepted tolerances around
22 the two quotas. And you'll find the detail set out in
23 this document.

24 Subject to an electoral division satisfying those
25 numbers, sub-section 73(4) of the Electoral Act also
26 requires that we have regard to communities of interest
27 within electoral divisions. This includes economic,
28 social and regional interests. We also need to have
29 regard to means of communication and travel within
30 electoral divisions, and the physical features and the

1 area of electoral divisions. The boundaries of existing
2 electoral divisions are also considered, but are
3 subordinate to the other factors. Of course boundaries
4 may change, and often there has to be compensating
5 adjustments to boundaries to make sure the electoral
6 divisions are within the required numerical tolerances.

7 The inquiry today will be recorded. Transcripts of
8 the proceedings will be made available as part of the
9 augmented Electoral Commission's report, and will be on
10 the Australian Electoral Commission's website, once the
11 report has been tabled in Parliament. Now, I'd also like
12 to draw your attention to the fact that we may have some
13 members of the media present today, and I would ask them
14 to focus on ensuring there is an opportunity for speakers
15 to have their say, and for proceedings to run smoothly.
16 Should anyone from the media have a question, I'd ask
17 that they speak to Ms Nicole Taylor, who's sitting at the
18 back there. And any discussion that takes place, takes
19 place outside this room.

20 Now, we would ask people making submissions to come
21 to the table in front, which I guess is there. Please
22 state your name before you commence your presentation.
23 We would like to ensure that everyone is able to make a
24 submission if they wish. To enable this to happen we
25 would ask that you keep your remarks to no more than ten
26 minutes. A bell will be rung at the nine minute mark.
27 Subject to timing, there may be an opportunity to provide
28 further remarks once everyone has finished. If you've
29 not registered to speak, and decide to do so in the
30 course of the morning, after listening to others, please

1 can you talk to the person at the very back of the room,
2 and just let her know that you would like that
3 opportunity?

4 I would emphasise, and I think you'll all understand,
5 that this is an opportunity to present new arguments and
6 material, not simply to read out aloud again your
7 objection or comment on objection. I can assure you that
8 we have read the objections and comments on objections
9 thoroughly, and those objections and comments on
10 objections that have been received are available on the
11 AEC website for everyone to view. After the inquiry
12 today, we will deliberate on what we've received and
13 heard. We will endeavour to make a public announcement
14 as soon as practicable.

15 And finally, could I just remind you, we're trying to
16 conduct this inquiry in as COVID-safe a manner as
17 possible. I think we're succeeding reasonably well, but
18 keep your distances from one another to the extent you're
19 able. If I could now call upon the first speaker, I
20 shall. And I understand that that is to be Ms Laura
21 Dwyer, from the Shire of Wiluna.

22 MS DWYER: Good morning, and as you know, I am Laura Dwyer, the
23 Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Wiluna. It's not
24 an easy feat for me to make my way here. I couldn't
25 afford three days out of the office, so I drove to
26 Kalgoorlie yesterday, so 534 kilometres, and then took a
27 flight last night. So thank you very much for having me.
28 So the Shire of Wiluna, we are a bit over a thousand
29 kilometres from Perth, and we're the fourth most
30 disadvantaged local government in Western Australia.

1 We're also classed as RA5, so very remote in terms of our
2 geographical classification there. Why we're here - what
3 our sort of request is, is that we lose a lot of
4 collaboration with government agencies and other bodies
5 by actually being separated between two regional areas.
6 So we've gone for boundary realignments with the
7 development commissions, which we're expecting the
8 announcement on very, very shortly.

9 We've also applied for Regional Development Australia
10 boundary realignments in the federal sort of areas, but
11 we want to make sure that when we're heard, we're heard
12 in our electoral boundaries as well. So we really need
13 to see us move from Durack to O'Connor to ensure we have
14 that full alignment. We've come across reports or gap
15 analysis which have been conducted back in 2004, so
16 that's 17 years ago. We've allowed children to go all
17 the way from being born through high school, and we
18 haven't listened to a lot of these recommendations in
19 this report.

20 And it's very simple, where they say, you know, sort
21 of back then, in this report, that Wiluna's a divided
22 community, and that's because you know, sort of we've
23 been classified as part of the Goldfields, Mid-west or
24 Central Desert, and we do lose, you know, sort of some of
25 them are administered from Kalgoorlie, Geraldton,
26 Meekatharra, Port Hedland and so forth. Like we've got
27 real poverty in our community, we have 30 per cent
28 Indigenous populations, there's massive overcrowding, and
29 I really struggle as a CEO to collaborate between two
30 regions. I get told quite often that you're not in our

1 patch so you can't speak to me about your issues, and it
2 takes - sometimes it takes a month for regional directors
3 to talk to each other for me to get responses. So for
4 us, if we can have this, we've got serious opportunity to
5 improve Wiluna.

6 It's a really tough job, being out there. We've got
7 challenges with two inquiry reports in four years. So
8 we've actually got to start listening. And the community
9 have come to me and said, Laura, we want to see stuff
10 come from the same place. So we're hoping that, you
11 know, sort of it's a simple thing, I've spoken to our MP
12 for O'Connor, and he's happy to support. I've had no
13 resistance from any of the other development commissions
14 or regional development sort of organisations.

15 I actually - I do declare an interest, I sit on the
16 Goldfields-Esperance one. But also, Kalgoorlie is our
17 main access point in terms of bitumen. So for us to get
18 to a meeting there is quite - much easier than travelling
19 740 kilometres across to Geraldton. So I'm going to keep
20 it short and sweet. We've done our homework, we've
21 pushed hard. We've also had several reports on this
22 stuff, and if the community is asking for that, I think
23 it's a pretty simple request. So I'll leave it at that.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. Next speaker is, I think,
26 Mr Buxton.

27 MR BUXTON: Thank you very much, I represent the Liberal Party
28 of Western Australia division today. I would like to
29 apologise for the fact that our comments on the
30 objections were well and truly written, but an

1 administrative problem arose, they were not lodged. So I
2 will substantially address that this morning. I first
3 want to say that the Liberal Party is totally in support
4 of the Shire of Wiluna in a very reasonable request to be
5 transferred to the Division of O'Connor. It's a matter
6 of 169 current, 152 projected electors, we very much hope
7 that this can be accommodated, because the communities of
8 interest, those of communication that have just been so
9 very well described, I think is a very strong case.
10 What we'd also like to emphasise in our comments on
11 objections is that we are strongly in support of Ron and
12 Annette Rowton and with WA Labor regarding the proposed
13 boundary between the Divisions of Burt and Canning. The
14 semi-rural localities of Orange Grove and eastern Martin
15 share a strong community of interest with the adjacent
16 localities of Canning Mills, Karragullen and Roleystone
17 that are in the Division of Canning. And have far less
18 affinity with suburban localities west of Tonkin Highway.
19 It's been pointed out, the amount of disruption caused by
20 earlier redistributions of this comparatively small area,
21 would be far better if that could remain within Canning.
22 There are two SAls that cover the urbanised section of
23 Martin. They are with 866 current and 973 projected
24 electors, they would need to transfer from Canning to
25 Burt to maintain Burt within quota. But the four SAls
26 that include Orange Grove and the remainder of Martin
27 have 811 current and 837 projected electors. We submit
28 and agree they should remain within the Division of
29 Canning. They should not, as WA Labor has said, be
30 unnecessarily transferred. We are also in agreement with

1 Matt Keogh MP to adjust the boundary between the
2 Divisions of Burt and Canning, so that the entirety of
3 the locality of Armadale would be included in Burt on the
4 basis this small area has no electors.

5 The Liberal Party however does disagree with WA Labor
6 in proposing a series of adjustments between the
7 Divisions of Swan, Hasluck, Cowan, Curtin and Moore. The
8 locality of Maida Vale that is argued should stay within
9 Hasluck, does have an affinity with Kalamunda. But it is
10 also included over many years with Forrestfield and High
11 Wycombe in the same State Parliamentary district.

12 Similarly Bennett Springs has communities of interest
13 with Caversham, Dayton and Brabham to its east. The
14 weakest point of that argument is transferring the
15 locality of Stirling to the Division of Curtin and would
16 result in a distorted boundary, whereby Curtin would
17 cross a major established boundary that is provided by
18 the Mitchell Freeway in order to follow the rather
19 convoluted locality boundaries of Stirling along
20 comparatively minor roads. It would also seem the
21 locality of Karrinyup would need to be unnecessarily
22 divided by unspecified minor roads in order to
23 accommodate this proposal.

24 We'd also make comment, again thanking the
25 Commissioners for their very sensitive dual naming of the
26 Division of Canning. We do object very strongly to the
27 objection put forward by Mr Daniel Ortlepp that the names
28 of Moore and Pearce be retired. We think he's
29 fundamentally mistaken as these divisions are not named
30 after localities, neither the Moore River nor the Pearce

1 RAAF base. They are named after, respectively, George
2 Fletcher Moore, noted in his time for his respectful
3 attitude to indigenous people, and to George Pearce who
4 served as a Senator for Western Australia from 1901 to
5 1938 and was a Minister for much of that time with an
6 unsurpassed record of public service. Pearce as a name
7 in our view should never be retired.

8 And there have been other examples, the City of
9 Canning and the Canning River actually have no relation
10 to the Division of Canning even though they may have in
11 past times been part of it. The Liberal Party would
12 return to its original objection that - well it was in
13 two parts. One was to support Wiluna and the other was
14 to review and rearrange the boundaries between Cowan,
15 projected Cowan and Perth. We submit that it would be
16 preferable for all of the current electors of Perth to
17 stay in Perth, so Morley and Noranda would not be
18 transferred to Cowan and that section of Cowan, of
19 Beechboro that was in Perth previously for many years, go
20 back into Perth. And then in turn, return such areas
21 such as Tuart Hill, the western parts of the City of
22 Stirling go into the Division of Cowan. We've made our
23 case we think that would strengthen community of interest
24 and it would avoid sub-dividing the locality of Osborne
25 Park.

26 In conclusion we do appreciate the task of the
27 Commissioners was a difficult one. It is the first time
28 ever that Western Australia has needed to lose a seat
29 and it's appreciated that while Stirling and Cowan have
30 effectively been amalgamated that widespread disruption

1 of other electorates has been kept to a minimum. So
2 again we, you know we emphasise that bipartisanship with
3 the proposed boundary between Burt and Canning, as it
4 will not put either electorate out of quota. We do
5 strongly ask the Commission to take that one on board and
6 keep Orange Grove and the rural part of Martin within
7 Canning. Thank you.

8 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. The next speaker is Mr Tim
9 Picton.

10 MR PICTON: Thank you and if it's okay we're going to do a bit
11 of a double-team situation here. But thank you first of
12 all for allowing us to present today and for the
13 consultation so far. I'm going to try and provide a bit
14 of a brief introduction and then we've got a bit to get
15 through, so we'll try and be as quick as we can. First
16 of all I'd like to say WA Labor wholeheartedly supports
17 the Committee's decision to abolish the Division of
18 Stirling. Our initial submission didn't suggest
19 Stirling's abolition but we sought to resolve the same
20 issues that the Committee has successfully resolved,
21 particularly around the rapid population growth in the
22 northern suburbs and the metropolitan parts of the
23 Division of Pearce and we think that you've resolved them
24 well.

25 The Division of Pearce in our view, in its current
26 form would've continued to create a divide between the
27 traditional peri-urban and semi-rural constituencies of
28 that Division as well as the growing areas in Ellenbrook
29 and the northern beaches. It wasn't sustainable in our
30 view for Pearce to continue consisting of the towns and

1 shires during that era of population growth in distinctly
2 metropolitan areas and in effect, it had to in some way
3 become a more compact outer metropolitan peri-urban
4 electorate.

5 The abolition of Stirling was one of several that we
6 actually modelled and while it didn't feature in our
7 submission, we believe your boundaries are a simple way
8 to achieve these goals and minimise the disruption to as
9 many electors as possible. As outlined in each of our
10 submissions, we consider the retention of the Division of
11 Cowan critical on community of interest grounds. We also
12 support your decision to move Cowan south, creating a
13 more compact division that better aligns communities of
14 interest and services in Perth's established middle
15 northern suburbs.

16 Overall we consider your draft boundaries a sensible
17 solution to a complex set of issues in the northern
18 suburbs and we'll run through a couple of issues, in
19 particular to some of the objections now. First of all,
20 on the Division of Cowan. We submitted that the suburb
21 of Bennett Springs remain in the Division of Cowan. We
22 support the general realignment that the Committee has
23 suggested, however, the suburb of Bennett Springs under
24 the current draft boundaries would be isolated from the
25 rest of its broader community and I'll now let Ellie talk
26 to that in more detail.

27 CHAIR: Can I just ask you to state your name please?

28 MS WHITEAKER: Yes my name's Ellie Whiteaker I'm the Assistant
29 Secretary WA Labor. As Tim has mentioned WA Labor

30 objects to the proposal to transfer the suburb of Bennett

1 Springs from the Division of Cowan to the Division of
2 Hasluck. The Committee in its draft boundaries proposes
3 to transfer 3,130 electors from the suburb of Bennett
4 Springs into the Division of Hasluck. This would result
5 in Bennett Springs being isolated from its strong
6 community of interest in the Division of Cowan. Bennett
7 Springs is isolated geographically from the vast majority
8 of the Division of Hasluck by the expansive Whiteman Park
9 and other parkland east of Lord Street. Therefore it
10 shares few common amenities, school catchments or
11 community services and has limited means of accessible
12 travel between that suburb and the remainder of the
13 proposed Division of Hasluck.

14 While Reid Highway is a major road, it doesn't serve
15 as a natural boundary as residents in Bennett Springs
16 regularly cross that road to access key services and
17 amenities. This includes local shopping centres and
18 health services where residents in Bennett Springs access
19 services in the neighbouring suburbs of Malaga and
20 Beechboro which are currently in the proposed Division of
21 Cowan and vice versa. By way of example, the two major
22 shopping centres in the area, Coles to the south in the
23 suburb of Kiara and Woolworths to the north of Reid
24 Highway in Bennett Springs, are used regularly by
25 residents across all of those suburbs. Further, the
26 school catchment areas of three primary schools, those
27 being Beechboro Primary School, West Beechboro Primary
28 School and East Beechboro Primary School, all extend
29 north beyond Reid Highway into the suburb of Bennett
30 Springs. And the high school and primary school combined

1 school, and Beechboro Christian School takes residents
2 from suburbs south of Reid Highway, while it's based
3 north of Reid Highway.

4 A large proportion of the Sikh community resides in
5 the Division of Cowan and the main hub for this community
6 is the Sikh Gurdwara Temple in Bennett Springs. We
7 submit that disconnecting this important hub for the Sikh
8 community from the Cowan electorate does not suit
9 communities of interest. In addition a large proportion
10 of the Polish community also resides in the Division of
11 Cowan and disconnecting the Cracovia Club in Bennett
12 Springs also wouldn't serve these communities. The
13 residents of Bennett Springs often travel back and forth
14 from Malaga and Beechboro to access shopping amenities,
15 specifically Beechboro Community Hub at Altone Park,
16 which services all of those surrounding suburbs.

17 The suburb of Bennett Springs is also connected to
18 other suburbs in the Division of Cowan by the 345 bus
19 route which travels through Beechboro, Kiara and
20 Lockridge and is a main public transport route for the
21 residents of Bennett Springs. The proposed Morley
22 Ellenbrook line will also result in the construction of
23 Malaga Station, which on the proposed boundaries would
24 currently be in the Division of Hasluck, separating it
25 from the majority of residents who would use that station
26 in the Division of Cowan.

27 This would create major residential and commercial
28 developments in the currently vacant area which would
29 provide strong community of interest ties to the suburb
30 of Malaga in the Division of Cowan.

1 MR PICTON: Moving on to what we propose the Committee do to
2 offset the Bennett Springs addition into Cowan. Noting
3 that your primary objective is to ensure that each
4 electorate has a similar number of electors, so those new
5 electors in the proposed boundaries for Cowan would
6 require an offset and we believe the solution that would
7 better align communities of interest would be to transfer
8 the areas south of Karrinyup Road from Cowan to the
9 Division of Curtin. And to accommodate these additional
10 numbers in Curtin, the areas north of Karrinyup could be
11 transferred from Curtin to the Division of Moore. And
12 I'll let Ellie talk to that in more detail.

13 MS WHITEAKER: This proposal would transfer 3,999 electors from
14 the suburb of Stirling from the Division of Cowan to the
15 Division of Curtin, and transfer 4,354 electors from the
16 northern parts of the suburb of Karrinyup and 1,670
17 electors from the suburb of Gwelup all north of Karrinyup
18 Road to the Division of Moore. We propose this creates
19 much neater boundaries for all three divisions; Cowan,
20 Curtin and Moore with the Curtin/Moore boundary
21 consistently following along Karrinyup Road. These
22 proposals will also better align communities of interest,
23 particularly in the Division of Moore allowing the
24 entirety of the suburb of Gwelup to remain in the same
25 division. And Karrinyup Road, we contend serves just as
26 strong a southern boundary as North Beach Road.

27 MR PICTON: Our next comment is on the proposed boundaries,
28 including the suburb of Maida Vale which we contend
29 should remain in the Division of Hasluck. The Committee
30 has proposed a significant redrawing of the boundaries to

1 the Division of Hasluck and minor changes to Swan. WA
2 Labor supports these proposed boundaries, however we
3 object to the transfer of the suburb of Maida Vale to
4 Swan and argue it remain in Hasluck to better align
5 communities of interest. It's separated from remaining
6 suburbs, Maida Vale that is, by the proposed - in the
7 proposed Division of Swan by Roe Highway which is
8 obviously a main road. Residents in the suburb are
9 likely to use amenities and services including major
10 shopping centres and shopping strips in nearby Kalamunda
11 and Gooseberry Hill in the proposed Division of Hasluck.

12 This would also allow more of the City of Kalamunda
13 to be drawn within the Division of Hasluck where most of
14 that local government area remains. Quickly on to the
15 boundaries of the Divisions of Canning and Burt. The
16 Committee has determined that to compensate the Division
17 of Burt for the loss of electors, from the movement of
18 Canning Vale from Burt to Tangney, that the suburbs of
19 Martin and Orange Grove be transferred from the Division
20 of Canning to the Division of Burt. We object to this
21 proposal on communities of interest and physical feature
22 grounds and propose that the electors in Orange Grove and
23 Martin, to the east of Tonkin Highway, remain in the
24 Division of Canning.

25 MS WHITEAKER: The only other objection received in addition to
26 our own, from Ron and Annette Rowton, they note that our
27 objections to the boundary of Canning and Burt are
28 consistent and I also note that in a Liberal Party
29 submission just earlier, they also support these
30 objections. Those objections, like ours argue that

1 Martin is primarily a rural area, made up of large
2 reserves and parkland and shares no common interest with
3 the urbanised Division of Burt. But instead it shares
4 affinity with adjoining suburbs in the Division of
5 Canning, such as Roleystone, Canning Mills, Pickering
6 Brook, Karragullen and Carmel. Our proposed changes to
7 the Committee's draft boundaries maintain the status quo
8 along current boundaries and save the unnecessary
9 transfer of just over 800 electors to a different
10 division. It also keeps rural and hobby farm areas in
11 Martin to the east of Tonkin Highway and Orange Grove in
12 the same division as similar adjacent areas in the
13 Division of Canning.

14 We note that these changes are still maintaining the
15 Division of Canning within the numerical requirements and
16 also provide for a better grouping of communities of
17 interest in each relevant division. And it reduces the
18 number of electors that are required to change divisions
19 as a consequence of the redistribution.

20 MR PICTON: Next, we strongly reject the suggestion raised in
21 the objections from our colleagues in the Liberal Party,
22 that the suburb of Lockridge and Kiara shift from the
23 draft Cowan to the draft Division of Perth. We note that
24 this would in fact, go some way to achieve the Liberal
25 Party's original submission in abolishing the Division of
26 Cowan and instead renaming the Division of Stirling,
27 Cowan. We see this as a political move that actually
28 serves no real purpose, be it community of interest,
29 physical, demographic or geographic. And note that the
30 only argument actually outlined in that objection is a

1 client of long association of these suburbs with the
2 Division of Perth.

3 MS WHITEAKER: The objection by the Liberal Party means the
4 proposed Division of Cowan looks much more like the
5 current Division of Stirling, as Tim noted, effectively
6 abolishing the current Division of Cowan and
7 significantly redraws the boundaries proposed by the
8 Commission in the way that splits communities of
9 interest. The suburbs of Beechboro, Lockridge and Kiara
10 all share many demographic similarities and a clear
11 community of interest exists across these neighbouring
12 suburbs and we propose they should remain in the same
13 division. These suburbs share many services,
14 specifically the Meerilinga Children and Family Centre
15 and Brockman Community House. Both are located within
16 Beechboro and provide essential community services to
17 families in Lockridge and Kiara.

18 Community programs targeting Aboriginal and Torres
19 Strait Islander families are accessed by families in
20 Lockridge that make up 6.8 per cent of the suburb
21 population so to split these suburbs into separate
22 divisions would be to the detriment of those communities.
23 In addition, the catchment area for Hampton Park Primary
24 School in Noranda crosses Tonkin Highway and includes, in
25 addition to the suburb of Noranda, much of the suburb of
26 Kiara. John Septimus Roe Anglican School takes students
27 from across many of these suburbs, Lockridge and Kiara,
28 as well as Morley, Noranda and Dianella, and it is for
29 those reasons the suburbs of Lockridge and Kiara should
30 remain in the Division of Cowan, as is proposed in the

1 draft boundaries of the Commission.

2 Our next point is we also object to the Liberal's
3 submission which proposes to transfer the suburbs of
4 Stirling, parts of the suburb of Osborne Park, Tuart
5 Hill, Joondanna, Yokine, Coolbinia, Menora and Dianella
6 from the Division of Perth to the Division of Cowan.
7 Again, we argue that this significantly redraws the
8 boundaries of Cowan and effectively results in the
9 abolishing of the Division of Cowan, and renaming the
10 Division of Stirling to the Division of Cowan. We note
11 the submission by the Liberal Party of WA made no
12 argument on geography or community of interest basis in
13 suggesting this move. We propose that Morley Drive and
14 Karrinyup Road is a logical southern boundary for the
15 Division of Cowan, to maintain its character as a
16 northern suburbs division.

17 The Liberal Party proposal is instead to use Benara
18 Road as a southern boundary. This does not serve as a
19 logical, natural southern boundary, as residents in this
20 cluster of suburbs typically cross Benara Road to access
21 services and amenities far more frequently than they
22 would cross Morley Drive to the south. The suburbs of
23 Tuart Hill, Joondanna, Yokine, Coolbinia and Menora form
24 a cluster of suburbs that share much stronger communities
25 of interest that are distinct to suburbs north of Morley
26 Drive and Karrinyup Road. They access services and
27 amenities including shopping centres, health and
28 education providers in neighbouring suburbs of Morley and
29 Mount Lawley, which are in the current and proposed
30 Division of Perth. They are markedly closer to inner

1 city than anywhere currently in the Division of Cowan or
2 in the proposed Division of Cowan, and share little in
3 the way of demographic characteristics with suburbs like
4 Girrawheen, Marangaroo, Mirrabooka and Balga that in the
5 proposed boundaries make up the heart of the Division of
6 Cowan. To include these suburbs in the Division of Cowan
7 would significantly alter the character of that
8 electorate.

9 While we note that the Committee's proposal to divide
10 the suburb of Osborne Park is not an ideal scenario, we
11 believe it's unavoidable in order to preserve those
12 strong communities of interest outlined above. We
13 therefore argue that those suburbs of Stirling, Tuart
14 Hill, Joondanna, Yokine, Coolbinia, Menora and Dianella,
15 as well as parts of the suburb of Osborne Park, should
16 remain in the Division of Perth as is proposed by the
17 Committee.

18 MR PICTON: We thank the WA Liberal Party for their support of
19 Matt Keogh's submission on a small part of Armadale, and
20 would also like to speak in our support of that
21 submission. As Mr Keogh states in his objection, a tiny
22 portion of Armadale to the south-east of the intersection
23 of Albany Highway and South West Highway has been
24 proposed to continue to fall within the Division of
25 Canning, as has been the case since Burt's creation six
26 years ago. With only three lots, all commercial, and no
27 electors in this part of Armadale, the small area does
28 have the Pioneer Village and Pioneer Village Primary
29 School, and the Ye Olde Narrogin Inne, three important
30 institutions serving the people of the suburb of

1 Armadale, all the rest of which continues to fall within
2 the Division of Burt. I'm promised by the Member for
3 Burt that the submission was not just because the
4 Narrogin Inne is such a great pub that he likes to have
5 in his electorate. And finally, WA Labor also supports
6 the Shire of Wiluna's submission as well. Thank you very
7 much.

8 CHAIR: Thank you both very much indeed. Mr Olsen.

9 MR OLSEN: I'm happy not to speak. Mr Buxton has raised all
10 the points I was (indistinct).

11 CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Olsen. Mr Ehrenfeld.

12 MR EHRENFELD: Thank you, Commissioners, for giving me the
13 opportunity to speak. I am a resident of Coolbinia, and
14 a member of the Western Australian Jewish community. The
15 community by and large tries to keep non-political where
16 possible, enjoys good relations with various parties, and
17 I note that they did not put any submission into the
18 inquiry. But having reviewed what happened in Victoria,
19 I see a number of Jewish organisations felt very, very
20 strongly about the fact that they were being carved up by
21 the proposed redistribution, and I think, therefore, it's
22 important for someone in the community to express the
23 concern that that is happening.

24 Prior to coming here today I also had a call from
25 Councillor Migdale, who actually is a member of the
26 Jewish community, supporting me in what I was trying to
27 do, and she's a councillor with the City of Stirling, and
28 some of the comments I will make were thoughts that she
29 had passed on to me. So there is precedent to look at
30 this issue; when the draft boundaries were put out in

1 1990 there was a proposal to radically alter the nature
2 of what was then Stirling, but after considering the
3 Jewish community's interests, at the time the head of the
4 Jewish community did put in a proposal, the boundaries
5 were radically changed in the final proposal. And this
6 community of interest is very, very significant.

7 Over half the Jewish community of Western Australia
8 lives in those areas running through Dianella, Yokine,
9 Menora and Coolbinia. Now, in this redistribution,
10 Dianella has been proposed to be - remain split down the
11 middle, and obviously the abolition of the seat of
12 Stirling affords the opportunity to rectify this matter.
13 Morley Drive, or Karrinyup Road, as it continues on, is
14 not a natural boundary in the real sense. Dianella is
15 itself a very natural community. Not just for the Jewish
16 community but for all the residents. And by way of an
17 example, if you live in Dianella, you can't go to the
18 Mount Lawley High School, which is in the seat of Perth.
19 It's a main high school in the Seat of Perth. If you
20 live in Dianella, any part of it, your catchment takes
21 you to Dianella Secondary College, which is in the seat
22 of - in your proposed new seat of Cowan.

23 So that's a very, very sizeable community of interest
24 and so is the Jewish community. You're talking, as I
25 said, thousands of members living in those areas and it
26 far outweighs - and I notice the Labor Party didn't make
27 any mention of that community of interest. They talked
28 about much, much smaller communities, an Indigenous
29 Community around the Beechboro, Lockridge area and so
30 forth, and if that was important to them, then the Jewish

1 community of interest absolutely has to be considered in
2 this.

3 So I won't go into huge detail about all the various
4 organisations that traverse the Jewish community. There
5 are synagogues all the way through from, you know, down
6 to the Menora, Coolbinia area, and the school - the
7 Carmel School is not like in over east where you've got
8 multiple Jewish schools; there's one main Jewish day
9 school, and people come from all across Dianella as well
10 as Yokine, Menora, Coolbinia. And obviously the Maccabi
11 Sports Organisation and so forth.

12 Now, I wasn't originally planning to speak, just as a
13 private individual, because I know the parties, and
14 there's a lot of other people that get involved, but
15 after I read Labor's arguments, I was offended by at
16 least one aspect of the arguments, which is that if you
17 abolish - you know, because Stirling's being abolished,
18 it somehow needs to be completely obliterated off the
19 face of the earth. If we have a redistribution that
20 takes in too much of old Stirling, well, the new Cowan
21 looks like too much of old Stirling. Well, what is wrong
22 with that? What is wrong with the fact if we've actually
23 gotten rid of a seat to try and give as much as possible
24 the people of Stirling some intact result?

25 And that's (indistinct) looking at the - at very much
26 the politics of it, which shows this much, and that is
27 that in the last federal election the Liberal Party did
28 have a relatively lopsided result in Western Australia,
29 which gave them 11 of the 16 seats, but that's pretty
30 normal with that sort of result. With your abolition of

1 Stirling, which is Liberal-held, that brings it to 10 out
2 of 15, but if you take a normalised - you have a
3 situation, with these proposed boundaries, where Labor
4 could still get a minority of the two party preferred
5 vote, but pick up - hold all those seats, and it would
6 hold Cowan comfortably, and also pick up Pearce, Swan and
7 Hasluck. So Labor would have eight out of 15 seats,
8 potentially, in a situation where it still had a minority
9 of the two party preferred vote, and I don't think that
10 passes the fairness test, and it brings me back to the
11 whole question of Cowan. It's always important, where
12 possible, to try and give electoral contestability where
13 people can have a chance to be voting in a marginal seat.

14 Now, that's not always possible. We know some seats
15 are safe one way or the other. But right now the
16 opportunity is there, where you have abolished a Liberal
17 seat, a long-held Liberal seat, at the very least it
18 would seem to pass the pub test to give the Liberals a
19 fighting chance of being able to win the seat of Cowan.
20 There's no reason we need to create what is a relatively
21 safe-ish seat in Cowan, for Labor, when a Liberal seat
22 has been abolished.

23 Now, I think that then helps the interests of the
24 people in communities like Menora, Coolbinia, Yokine,
25 Dianella, because, you know, it's a fact that when you've
26 got a marginal seat, you do get a little bit more say in
27 the electoral process. I know Menora and Coolbinia is
28 currently in Perth anyway, but this redistribution
29 represents an opportunity for it to actually go into a
30 contestable marginal seat, which historically it has, in

1 the distant past, been, in Stirling.

2 I'll say about the City of Stirling generally, it's
3 the largest municipality in Western Australia, and it
4 represents a very strong, longstanding community of
5 interest, and it already has been carved up dramatically
6 by this redistribution, and if there's any opportunity to
7 keep more of that intact, I don't see why we wouldn't do
8 that. We've done that for the City of Wanneroo, which is
9 heavily in Pearce; we've done it for the City of
10 Joondalup, which is heavily in Moore. They're the next
11 two largest shires, but Stirling is the largest, and I
12 think should be able to, to where possible, you know,
13 have a contestable role in the process going forward.
14 Thank you very much.

15 CHAIR: Thank you very much indeed. Now, Mr Connelly. Mr
16 Connelly.

17 MR CONNELLY: Good morning, Commissioners, ladies and
18 gentlemen. It's very sombre in here for a Friday
19 morning. I haven't been present - some of you might have
20 been present at the birth of a division, which is, I'm
21 sure, a much happier time than the death of a division.
22 Commissioners, I'd like to share some thoughts as the
23 current elected Member for Stirling. I have gained some
24 wonderful insights into communities of interest in what
25 is currently the federal electorate of Stirling, so I'd
26 like to share some of those in support of the Liberal
27 Party's Objection 27, and then I'd like to close by
28 refuting a specific point in Objection 22 from Labor.
29 One of the most positive things - and I've commented on
30 this really frequently in my time as the Member for

1 Stirling - has been the incredibly close alignment
2 between the federal Division of Stirling and the City of
3 Stirling boundaries. There's only really the southern
4 area that sort of differs.

5 What that translates to, is that it amplifies, it
6 magnifies the benefits that our constituents, our shared
7 constituents can achieve. The Mayor Mark Irwin, the
8 councillors and I work hand in glove, almost seamlessly.
9 We communicate at least on a weekly basis and sometimes
10 daily. When an issue around local government arises,
11 it's very easy for us to support that being actioned
12 through those lines of communication.

13 But it also means any financial investments that are
14 made, can be far more targeted and we communicate about
15 what we hear from sporting, religious, cultural groups,
16 volunteer organisations. We compare those notes so that
17 we understand what the community really wants and can be
18 targeted and I could give countless examples about those
19 benefits. I'll stick to just a handful. So one of the
20 positive points that Mr Buxton raises is about local
21 government's homogeneity, trying to retain at least some
22 of it and I note that in the Liberal's submission that
23 the entire Bayswater LGA would fall within the Division
24 of Perth along with Bassendean and Vincent, while the
25 major part of the Stirling LGA would be contained within
26 the same division, which is the proposed Division of
27 Cowan.

28 Still with the theme of communities of interest, I'd
29 like to echo what Mr Ehrenfeld has pointed out about our
30 Jewish community. It is in my now pretty long

1 observation, a very united and coordinated group,
2 achieving wonderful things for the local community.
3 Places like the Maurice Zeffert Aged Care Facility,
4 Carmel School, the Maccabi Centre including the sporting
5 grounds, Perth Hebrew congregation in Menora just to name
6 a few of the very active community groups. I feel
7 compelled to point out and to remind everyone about the
8 investment, the recent investment which has been agreed
9 between the State and Federal Governments. So the
10 Federal Government has chipped in \$6 million for a
11 complete rebuild of the Jewish Community Centre and
12 Holocaust Museum. The State Government has very kindly
13 come along with another \$6 million and the very active
14 Jewish community are going to raise another \$3 million.
15 So there's a \$15 million complete re-build of the Jewish
16 community and Holocaust Museum. This is obviously of
17 State significance but I point it out because it really
18 just echoes and I hope strengthens what Mr Ehrenfeld has
19 already touched on about the continuity, of we're looking
20 at communities of interest of our Jewish community,
21 particularly in the suburbs of Yokine, Dianella,
22 Coolbinia and Menora. In fact statistically we see this
23 borne out as well, where in the SA2 of Yokine, Coolbinia
24 and Menora, in the latest census, affiliation with
25 Judaism was at 6.5 per cent. That compares to 0.2 per
26 cent in WA and 0.4 per cent nationally.

27 Next door in the SA2 of Dianella we see affiliation
28 with Judaism at 5.4 per cent, again against 0.2 in the
29 state, 0.4 nationally. I'll move now to make some
30 comments about other communities of interest. As I said

1 I could mention a great many but just looking at the map
2 I've picked a couple. One is the wonderful Coolbinia
3 Bombers, a junior football club. They have been the well
4 deserving beneficiaries of about a half a million
5 dollars' worth of 100 lux lighting facilities enabling
6 the girls in particular, the girls' teams were having to
7 travel sometimes for half a day to other places around
8 the state to play. But it means that all of those young
9 girls can now play under lights at the field that
10 Coolbinia Bombers call home.

11 That catchment area obviously has a great deal of
12 community spirit, really well led by the committee there
13 and they've grown to 600 registered players, that's just
14 one example. Another is our veteran community. So we
15 have the Yokine-Joondanna RSL, based also at the Yokine
16 Bowling Club. Their catchment area is also drawn from
17 that southern area of what is currently within Stirling,
18 and the Liberal Party proposed to be in the new Division
19 of Cowan, and I know that there's been a good deal of
20 both federal and local government investment in the
21 Yokine-Joondanna RSL, and that bowls club as well. I'll
22 make now a final point regarding Labor's submission
23 No.22, their objection, regarding the parts of Stirling
24 to the south of Karrinyup Road, under the suggestion that
25 they be moved across into Curtin. I just - I can't see
26 how this makes any sense.

27 There's a couple of key reasons why. Firstly, this
28 would - this stems back to my argument - I completely
29 respect that it's impossible to keep the City of Stirling
30 matching the boundaries of what will become Cowan, but

1 there's a great deal - there is a very large chunk of
2 that southern boundary that can be retained, and I think
3 with very positive effect. It would also push, in fact,
4 the local government headquarters itself, which is on
5 Cedric Street, south into Curtin. Again, diluting and
6 adding complexity to the relationship between federal and
7 local government.

8 Further, it would break down what is surely the most
9 significant geographical demarcation line in the proposed
10 Divisions of Cowan, Curtin, Perth, Moore, which is, of
11 course, the Mitchell Freeway. It would see the Mitchell
12 Freeway transversed for the sake of half a suburb. So
13 that concludes the comments that I'd like to make this
14 morning. Thank you, Commissioners and ladies and
15 gentlemen.

16 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Now, this is the opportunity for
17 anyone who hasn't let us know they'd like to speak to
18 come forward if they would like to speak. Is there
19 anyone here - as I understand it there is at least one
20 person who will have their contribution read in by
21 Ms Taylor now.

22 MS TAYLOR: I'm Nicole Taylor, the National Redistributions
23 Manager. I have one submission to read in. Western
24 Australian Redistribution Secretariat, thank you for your
25 email of 14 May 2021. I will not be available to take up
26 the opportunity to present at the proposed public
27 hearings. As well, the added risk of an unexpected and
28 prolonged delay in Western Australia if the state again
29 is subject to lockdown is an unattractive possibility.

30 I would just reiterate my points regarding minimising

1 the boundary changes with Cowan, which can be reduced by
2 not making some of the proposed changes. The benefits of
3 my alternative boundaries are that: All existing
4 electors in the Division of Perth remain in the same
5 division, i.e. Morley and Noranda not removed; the
6 suburbs of Beechboro, Lockridge and Kiara that were in
7 Perth are restored; and the Reid Highway is used as
8 continuous boundary, as it was until comparatively
9 recently for Perth. Fewer electors are moved to new
10 divisions as a result of these changes. The vast bulk of
11 the City of Stirling will lie in Cowan, and a
12 comparatively small portion in Perth as now, plus a small
13 additional component east of Light Street and south of
14 Morley Drive. All of the City of Bayswater will be
15 included in the one Division of Perth, rather than be
16 split as proposed between Perth and Cowan.

17 The proposed boundaries rely to a greater degree on
18 local government boundaries. Stirling, Bayswater, in
19 addition to Bassendean, Perth. Cowan will be a more
20 compact division than proposed. Both divisions remain
21 well within tolerance, and the community of interest in
22 both divisions is sound. I wish the Committee all the
23 best in the final stages of their work. Martin Gordon,
24 14 May 2021.

25 CHAIR: Thank you very much. Is there any further contribution
26 anyone wants to make at this point? Well, it's been very
27 interesting for us, and we're very grateful to each of
28 you who've spoken, for speaking. We will consider very
29 carefully what you've said. I think, though, if there
30 are no more speakers, we've come to the point where we'll

1 conclude this part of our process, and therefore conclude
2 this hearing. I reiterate my thanks for everyone
3 attending, and for giving their time and their thoughts,
4 as they've done, and we will continue with our
5 deliberations. Thank you very much indeed.

6 END OF PROCEEDINGS

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