



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Comment on objections 11

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9 pages

Comment on Objections Redistribution of Commonwealth Electoral Divisions

Darren McSweeney



Western Australia 2023

This Public Comment on Objections was lodged 12 July 2024 by
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<http://mcsww.ee>

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters throughout Australia, recognise their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture. I pay my respects to their ancestors and Elders, past and present.

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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.

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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.

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Introduction

I am providing comment on all of the objections submitted for the redistribution of Western Australia electoral divisions.

While I will make mention of each objection, some of them do not contain a lot of detail and therefore do not receive much treatment or mention in the narrative of my comment. There are a small number of objections that I could safely ignore, however for completeness, I have chosen to include a small comment on each objection received – including my own.

To form a consistent flow within the narrative, I will present my comments focussing on the themes I have identified within the objections and reference the individual objections around these themes. My comments will refer to objections made in relation to the proposed redistribution by the Committee.

Themes presented in objections

Donnybrook-Balingup LGA

The six objections **OB6 - Wendy Trow**, **OB11 - Karyn Connor**, **OB12 - Balingup Progress Association**, **OB16 - Anonymous 1**, **OB28 - Iain Massey**, and **OB33 - Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup** to transferring Donnybrook-Balingup LGA from **FORREST** into **O'CONNOR** all provide similar reasons. Indeed, **OB6 - Wendy Trow** and **OB28 - Iain Massey** are identical in their copy and formatting.

These are the same reasons that have been given for objecting to transfers between **FORREST** and **O'CONNOR** the last three redistribution for Western Australia. Starting in 2010 when Manjimup was transferred, then Collie, then Nannup and now Donnybrook.

The reasons are basically that these inland municipalities look to Bunbury for their amenities and services and the communities have little or no connection to Albany or Kalgoorlie. While their argument has some merit, this has been a gradual shift as **FORREST** moves from being a South-West division to a coastal division and all inland divisions move into the larger **O'CONNOR**. I support the changes proposed by the Committee for **FORREST**.

The boundaries of Bullwinkel

Both **OB7 - Connie Saffioti** and **OB9 - Nick** highlight the dangers of the less populated rural areas being ignored when combined with more urban population centres. While most of the proposed **BULLWINKEL** is outer semi urban and wheatbelt, there is a sizeable urban component, so I acknowledge the risk of being unrepresented.

Some objections attempt to rectify this risk, at least to varying degrees. **OB36 - WA Labor** suggests removing Beverley from **BULLWINKEL** because it is less connected to Perth than Toodyay or York. I cannot support the change to arbitrarily excise Beverley from **BULLWINKEL**. At least my objection **OB30 - Darren McSweeney** removed Toodyay for a reason of meeting the numerical thresholds. There is no justification for splitting Beverley from the other three LGAs. I don't believe the suggested changes are warranted. Also, it is worth noting the curiosity that while the objection mentions the connections to Toodyay, York and Beverley, they completely ignore the largest centre in the region of Northam which sits between Toodyay and York.

OB42 - Anonymous 2 provides a solution involving **BURT**, **BULLWINKEL** and the rural divisions, making **BULLWINKEL** more urban in nature, while also making **BURT** more compact. The objection **OB3 - Leon Shinkai** also attempts to make **BULLWINKEL** more urban among putting forward other widespread changes. The suggestion to consolidate **BURT**, and move **BULLWINKEL** into the more urban or semi-urban areas has some merit and I would support this part of the proposal.

I am less inclined to support the changes to include Boddington in **CANNING** however I note that Boddington was part of **CANNING** in the past and it does have some social links to the Peel region. The changes for **HASLUCK** and flow on effects for **DURACK**, **FORREST** and **O'CONNOR** are acceptable if it was deemed necessary by creating the urban **BULLWINKEL**. I think that the additional suggested changes in the northern suburbs of Perth are mostly unnecessary, but would not have too much of an issue if the Augmented Committee decided to adopt them.

I believe of the two suggestions **OB42 - Anonymous 2** is the better proposal, as it is less disruptive to other divisions. I would support the **OB42 - Anonymous 2** proposal if altering **BULLWINKEL** to a more urban focus Augmented Committee decide to pursue this.

The name **Bullwinkel** for the new division

Somewhat surprisingly, at least to me, the selection of the name **BULLWINKEL** seems to be rather contentious here. I had assumed this name would be uncontroversial and there would be few if any, objections to the name. There is one objection **OB5 - Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation - WA Branch**, that supports the name, along with support given from the larger statewide objections **OB3 - Leon Shinkai**, **OB32 - The Liberal Party of Australia (W.A. Division)**, **OB35 - Jeff Waddell**, **OB36 - WA Labor**, **OB42 - Anonymous 2** and **OB30 - Darren McSweeney**, my own objection.

There appears to be somewhat of a campaign mounted against **BULLWINKEL** with seven objections using an identical template¹. These seem to originate with **OB39 - Allan Henshaw**, who maybe provided this text as a letter to a newspaper. Curiously, **OB24 - David Dyson** refers to another newspaper clipping using the same text, which appears to be from the same individual that lodged **OB22 - Suzanne John**, although in their own objection they express themselves differently.

A further three objections present almost the same themes in their objection but have expressed themselves differently². Three separate and quite passionate objections were lodged by one individual. Another twelve object on the same grounds using different approaches, but some provide alternative suggested names³.

The main argument against **BULLWINKEL** seems to be that Vivian Bullwinkel was not a native of Western Australia. Almost all objections emphasise that they do not wish to diminish Vivian Bullwinkel's achievements but feel that a better alternative would be someone else. Maybe not surprisingly, the other suggested names, like Vivian Bullwinkel, are all female medical professionals that were prisoners of war.

I support the name **BULLWINKEL** and feel the Committee has made a suitable and well-reasoned decision to name the division after an Australian that certainly has the credentials and is deserving of the honour. She definitely has a connection to Western Australia, given that following her marriage, she retired to Western Australia and lived there for at least 20 years. I feel as if some of the objections are written from a perspective of state-based parochialism, and this is certainly reflected in the language in a few of the objections.

¹ identical objections lodged by **OB39 - Allan Henshaw**, **OB13 - Patricia Young**, **OB15 - Ray Mills**, **OB17 - Beverly Kate Casey**, **OB25 - Suzanne Jackson**, **OB26 - Maurice Jackson**, and **OB24 - David Dyson**

² different text used in objections by **OB18 - Rosemary Madacsi**, **OB20 - Harold Hitchcock**, and **OB21 - Sharne Brough**

³Alternative proposals or different formats used by **OB8/ OB19/ OB29 - Professor Peter Hancock Ph.D**, **OB10 - John Lyon**, **OB22-Beard Suzanne John**, **OB34 - Marion Beard**, **Peter Beard**, **Anthony Beard**, **Josephine Beard**, **Michael Beard**, **Erica Peet**, **Graham Johnson**, **Janice Mairata**, and **Paul Johnson**, **OB36 - WA Labor**, **OB37 - Rosemary Stewart**, **OB38 - Darren West MLC**, **OB41 - Shire of Toodyay**, **OB43 - Angela Boulter**, **OB45 - Felicity Bowskill**

So, if the augmented Committee does decide to revoke the name **BULLWINKEL**, the question then moves onto what to call the new division.

OB10 - John Lyon proposes **LYON** after his family member Dr Marjorie Jean Lyon OBE MB BS MRCOG FRCS. I cannot support this proposal, as the name would be virtually identical to the existing division named **LYONS** in Tasmania.

The three clearly passionate objections **OB8/ OB19/ OB29 - Professor Peter Hancock Ph.D** eventually propose replacing the name **BULLWINKEL** with **YAGAN** as part of **OB29 - Professor Peter Hancock Ph.D**. I concur that naming a division after Yagan has some merit, however I do not agree with his characterisation of Vivian Bullwinkel or the other commentary. I feel that with the limited reasoning provided in the objection, there is little ground for **YAGAN** to be selected as a new name.

Most suggestions advocate for a division named **BEARD** after Alma May Beard. Notably **OB34 - Marion Beard et al**, suggests this as family members of Alma May Beard. A few objections recommend **HODGSON** after Minnie Ivy Hodgson, including an objection, again, by a family member in **OB43 - Angela Boulter**. I would not be opposed to using either of these names if the Augmented Committee decided that **BULLWINKEL** was too controversial. Both women are highly regarded, and would be just as deserving on merit.

Some recommend joint naming as either **HODGSON-BEARD** or **BEARD-HODGSON** (being alphabetical and thus, the preferred order). I do not support, and would argue strongly against, either of these alternatives. Naming a division after two separate individuals that were unrelated is certainly possible. There is current and past precedent for this⁴. However, in all cases where this occurs, both individuals have the same name. There is absolutely no precedent for a division to be named after unrelated individuals with different names. For a single division to be burdened with such a cumbersome name would, as well as being completely unnecessary, easily cause undue confusion among constituents.

Waroona LGA

OB31 - Shire of Waroona objects to the Waroona LGA being transferred to **FORREST**. I would be inclined to agree with their request to remain in **CANNING**. The reasoning in their objection has merit, however, given the other changes elsewhere, I would prefer that Waroona LGA be transferred to **FORREST** to maintain clearer divisions elsewhere.

⁴ The division of **CANNING** is named for Alfred Wernam Canning and Sadie Miriam Canning MBE. The division of **PATERSON** is named for Col William Paterson and Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson CBE. The division of **COOK** is proposed to be named for Captain James Cook FRS and Rt Hon Sir Joseph Cook GCMG.

Bassendean LGA

I do not support the objection from **OB14 - James McLaughlin** regarding the Bassendean LGA. I believe that the proposed **PERTH** and **HASLUCK** boundary of the Tonkin Highway is a clear, strong boundary and that Bassendean LGA, while having historic links to the division of **PERTH**, does have significant social and transport links to the other communities nearby in **HASLUCK**.

Leeming

The only place where the objection by **OB32 - The Liberal Party of Australia (W.A. Division)** propose changes is between **FREMANTLE** and **TANGNEY** along the section in Leeming. **OB40 Cr Jennifer Spanbroek's** suggestion mimics that proposal, in returning the **TANGNEY** and **FREMANTLE** boundary to the Roe Hwy instead of the LGA boundary. Their reasoning is sound given the Melville LGA boundary traverses a minor road and property boundaries. This reasoning further emphasised where that the same LGA boundary is not adhered to further down the road around Ken Hurst Park.

Other objections

Reading both objections **OB1/OB4 - Benjamin Close** in union read as a public suggestion. There are extensive redrawing of all proposed divisions. There seem to be few, if any, gains of community of interests grounds in the suggestions put forward, over those contained in the proposal by the Committee. Indeed, some of the divisions become unwieldy with awkward twists and dog legs, creating a disjointed electoral map. Notably, the suggested **BURT**, **BULLWINKEL**, and **COWAN** all contain awkward appendages to the main body of their electorates. I cannot support the suggested changes. Likewise, I do not support the suggestion that **BULLWINKEL** be renamed **CURRIE**.

As **OB35 - Jeff Waddell** has no objections, I support his objection, I note that his analysis of the projected electoral numbers is, as always, thorough.

The objection **OB2 - Teodora Mustac** does not seem to contain any thoughts that are within scope of the redistribution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I do not support the objections against placing Donnybrook-Balingup LGA in **O'CONNOR**. While I support the proposed boundaries of **BULLWINKEL**, I would not be opposed to an alternative where **BULLWINKEL** was restricted to the urban outskirts and LGAs of the Darling Range. I support the name of the new division to be **BULLWINKEL**, but would not oppose a rename to **BEARD**, or even **HODGSON**. I could support a rename to **YAGAN**, but not necessarily for the reasons given in the objection. I do not support a rename to **LYON** or a joint naming after both Alma Beard and Minnie Hodgson.

I would support Waroona LGA remaining in **CANNING** if the change was able to be accommodated within the numerical threshold, otherwise I support retaining Waroona LGA as proposed in **FORREST**. I do not support returning Bassendean LGA to **PERTH**. I support realigning the **FREMANTLE** and **TANGNEY** boundary in Leeming along the Roe Highway and Kwinana Freeway instead of following the Melville LGA boundary. I do not support an extensive redrawing of boundaries from those proposed by the Committee.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide objections and comments. I wish the Augmented Commission good luck in their deliberations. I look forward to the redistribution being finalised and the final redistribution report being released.