



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Comment on Suggestion 02

Dr Ron Edwards

2 pages

NAME OF NEW FEDERAL ELECTORATE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

I humbly submit that the name of the new Federal Electorate should be Farmer after the legendary Aboriginal Footballer Graham (Polly) Farmer MBE. A proud Noongar man.

Much can be made of his extraordinary contribution to Australian Rules Football in which he played 356 games and kicked 277 goals. He played at East Perth Geelong and West Perth and coached at Geelong and West Perth Every team he played in was clearly better because of his presence. He won 3 Sandover Medals and was named in the Australian Rules Team of the Century, Aboriginal Team of the Century and Geelong Team of the Century.

He won 5 WANFL Premierships and a VFL Premiership He was in the best 5 players on the ground in one third of his 356 games. Through his use of handball he revolutionised the game. He is incomparable.

However there is another aspect to Polly that may go unremarked that sets him aside as a person worthy of having a Federal Electorate named after him.

In 1994 at the conclusion of my Federal Parliamentary Career Graham came to me and said I don't want aboriginal kids to not have a future. Football has given me so much but I want to put something back so my people in the future can look forward to having better lives.

I already new him well having worked with Polly and his family and admired his achievements beyond belief. In my eyes he was and still is the best I have seen play the game.

Steven Hawke was involved on behalf of Polly as he was writing a book on him.

I readily agreed to help set up a Foundation in his name and was joined in that enterprise by the Hon Fred Chaney and John Cunningham.

We did as Polly asked and in 2022 celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the formal establishment of his Foundation. I remain involved as an elder having served 28 years on the Board.

Polly set the standard for the Foundation when he told me:

When I lined up on the MCG to kick a goal, they didn't pull the goal posts apart to make it easier to kick a goal; so if you want to see an Aboriginal person get to the MCG or to get a degree from university, the standards have to be the same for everyone – black and white.

The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation has made good on this commitment

With the support of the resources industry we did just that.

With 2200 students in 138 schools across Australia the Students in the Follow The Dream programmes achieve a 93% completion rate to Year 12.

Graham (Polly) Farmer didnt just make the game of AFL better he has made the future outlook for young Aboriginal people across Australia absolutely better

For these reasons he deserves to be honoured with a Federal Electorate named after him especially if it covers the South Eastern area of Metropolitan Perth where it all began at Kenwick and Clontarf

Dr Ron Edwards

Founding Board Member (Graham) Polly Farmer Foundation

24th November 2023