
THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REDISTRIBUTION 2015 - PUBLIC INQUIRY

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT PERTH ON TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2015, AT 9:00 AM

BEFORE:

THE MEMBERS OF THE AUGMENTED ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR WA

THE HON. DENNIS COWDROY OAM QC (CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION)

MR TOM ROGERS (ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION)

MR DAVID KALISCH (AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN)

MS MARIE NEILSON (ACTING AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL OFFICER FOR WA, AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION)

MR COLIN MURPHY (AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

MR MIKE BRADFORD (SURVEYOR GENERAL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

COWDROY, MR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I now open this hearing into the 2015 Western Australian Redistribution Public Inquiry. I welcome you all and thank you for your attendance. I shall explain shortly the statutory provisions of the Electoral Act 1918 which regulates all stages of the redistribution procedure. Firstly, my name is Dennis Cowdroy. I'm the Chairman of the Commission and I will shortly introduce you to those who are with me.

The Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, or more properly, The Electoral Act 1918 Commonwealth, which I shall refer to as the Act, provides for redistributions once every seven years or in circumstances where there has been a marked shift in population. In Western Australia there has been a vast growth in population, leading to the need for redistribution of electoral divisions. The Act provides for a redistribution committee to consider such a redistribution. The redistribution committee for Western Australia consists of Mr Tom Rogers, as Chairman, who sits on my immediate left, Ms Marie Neilson, the Acting Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia, who sits second on my left, Mr Colin Murphy, the Auditor General for Western Australia, who sits third on my right, the Surveyor General for Western Australia, Mr Mike Bradford, who sits second on my right. The gentleman immediately to my right I will introduce you to shortly.

Can I just outline to you briefly the statutory provisions that leads us to where we are today? Pursuant to section 59 of the Act a redistribution of state or - of a state or the Australian Capital Territory commences whenever the Electoral Commission so directs by notice published in the gazette. In accordance with section 60 of the Act the redistribution committee was appointed on 11 April 2015 to consider this redistribution. On 21 August 2015 the proposed electoral boundaries were released and were advertised. That proposes a redistribution of Western Australia into 16 electoral divisions. Under the Act, because of its relative increase in population, Western Australia's entitlement to members of the House of Representatives increased from 15 to 16. The new seat is proposed to be located around the Armadale and Gosnells local government areas. Subsequent and consequential changes have flowed into all divisions due to the creation of the new division.

The proposal was released on 21 August. Objections were invited and also comments on those objections were invited. Some 28 objections and 10 comments on objections were received. We have to consider all the objections lodged and today is the opportunity for members of the public to make oral submissions concerning those objections.

All stages of the redistribution process is governed by the Act. The Act specifies how this is to be done, but the primary consideration is that each division must come within certain numerical requirements. Basically, the number of electors are divided by the number of seats, that is, 16, so the result is 99,686 persons per division. The Act allows for a variance either way of 3.5 per cent so the result is that each division can't have more than 103,175 or less than 96,197. These figures are based on the projected enrolments as at 8 February 2017.

Subject to a division satisfying those numbers, we have to give regard to communities of interest - that's economic, social and regional interest. We have to have regard to means of communication and travel and physical features and geographic areas. The boundaries of existing electorates are also considered, although that is of somewhat lesser importance. Because boundaries may change, often there has to be compensating adjustments to make sure the divisions are within those numerical tolerances.

The Augmented Commission which is provided by section 70 has had a meeting. The Augmented Commission which sits today is constituted by myself as Chairman, the Electoral Commissioner Mr Rogers who is first on my left, the Australian Statistician Mr David Kalisch who sits immediately on my right, the Surveyor General, Mr Mike Bradford, for Western Australia who I've mentioned, the Auditor General for Western Australia Mr Colin Murphy, who I've mentioned, and the Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia Ms Marie Neilson, who I've mentioned. The constitution of such a Commission is set out in section 70(2) of the Act. The objections which have been received and considered have been so treated under section 72 of the Act.

Today the Electoral Commission meets to have this public hearing. This is provided for by section 72(3) of the Act and, as I've mentioned, the primary purpose of this redistribution is to ensure as far as possible that electoral divisions have an equal number of electors as provided by section 73(4)(a). I should mention that the considerations which it must consider is also expressly laid down by statute, and that is contained in section 73(4)(b). This is a complex process and sophisticated software is used to readily calculate the effects of boundary changes. A full transcript is being taken of this hearing and transcripts of the hearing will be available on the Commission's website.

The Commission by virtue of section 72(8) of the Act may conduct this hearing as it sees fit. Rules of evidence don't apply and accordingly we shall invite anyone who wishes to speak to do so. Following the hearing today the Commission will further consider the matters that have been raised with a view to reaching an appropriate result. The Commission welcomes your participation at this important hearing and with equal importance welcomes your active interest in the Australian electoral system, which is a vital foundation for Australia's democracy and may I say that by your participation you are assisting in maintaining the integrity of the redistribution process.

As to the conduct of the hearing, we propose to let each person who wishes to speak to do so without interruption. Our purpose is to hear your views but not to debate. If any aspect, however, of your testimony requires clarification we may ask you to do this, otherwise we shall not interrupt. The first person who wishes to speak, I understand, is Mr Andrew Cox and also, I'm not sure, with him or following him, Mr Jeremy Buxton. Are they available?

COX, MR: Yes.

COWDROY, MR: Very well. Could you identify yourself please?

COX, MR: I'm the State Director of the Liberal Party - - -

COWDROY, MR: Yes, thank you.

COX, MR: - - - of Western Australia.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you. Mr Buxton?

BUXTON, MR: I'm a member of the Liberal Party State Executive.

COWDROY, MR: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr Buxton. Well, according to the sheet which has been prepared, I think, Mr Cox, you would like to speak first, and we are happy to hear what you'd like to say.

COX, MR: Can I just introduce myself and say that I officially started as State Director of the Liberal Party about nine days ago.

COWDROY, MR: I see.

COX, MR: So I've invited Mr Buxton along as well who helped put together the Liberal Party submission. So I may defer to him in what we're going to say here today.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you.

COX, MR: So, Jeremy, I might - - -

BUXTON, MR: Thank you.

COX, MR: - - - ask you to speak.

BUXTON, MR: Sure.

COWDROY, MR: Yes, Mr Buxton?

BUXTON, MR: Yes, the points that you have - we have listed here, the most important to us is the first one, boundaries of Cowan, Moore and Pearce, and if I could, I'd like to take this opportunity to clear up some points that were made in the comments to our objections by the Australian Labor Party regarding the community - alleged community of interest of Kingsley and Woodvale which we strongly submit has a very longstanding affiliation to the division of Cowan, and I might say at this juncture that the Honourable Cheryl Edwardes, who is not able to appear before you, wanted to make the point that the freeway is a far more valid boundary - she represented that area for 16 years - on the west side of those suburbs than is the local government boundary on the east side. The Labor Party has in alleging that they have a community of interest with areas to their west don't include, of course, the suburbs of Warwick and Greenwood that are proposed to stay within Cowan, which brings us back to our concern, that an area of four suburbs with an organic unity will be split between two divisions rather than staying in the one division of Cowan.

There is an allegation that Mater Dei College in Edgewater mainly doesn't take so many students from - or takes a lot of students from this area, but the majority of students in year 7 at this college actually come from Wanneroo and the Cowan division so it is not relevant that a smaller number of students from Kingsley and Woodvale also attend there.

There's comments about the frequency of bus services alleged to be taking people mainly north-westward out of Kingsley and Woodvale. In fact, the 447 route, which is most significant, leaves Warwick Station and in fact goes northward through these suburbs and binds them very much in a north-south direction.

The Yellagonga Regional Park which it was alleged is part of the division of Moore and part of the City of Joondalup is in fact tied very much to the City of Wanneroo and it is in fact within Kingsley and Woodvale and not in areas further north.

The Little Athletics Club in a - is - binds Woodvale to Kingsway and it's alleged that most sport in this area is just played within local suburbs. In fact, netball is the most widely - has the greatest number of active participants, some 4,000, and the

Wanneroo District Netball Association draws over 600 of these 4,000 from schools and clubs in Woodvale and Kingsley.

So I do think we have a fairly strong case to say that the communities of interest in these suburbs tend northward and eastward as well as, of course, southward to those closely linked suburbs and do not and in fact have never, of course, been part of the division of Moore. We also note the Labor Party didn't advance any argument as to why Lockridge and Beechboro should be taken from the division of Perth into the division of Cowan and here we'd perhaps come back to our point, that a local government boundary is of far less significance than a longstanding association that these suburbs have had with the division of Perth for some 30 to 40 years and no one has - in all this process has argued that it would be - their representation would be better within Cowan rather than within Perth.

As regard to Perth, Curtin and Stirling, I guess we'd just like to reiterate that we simply see no good reason for this clockwise movement between the three electorates and we do think the fact that Alannah MacTiernan MP and Honourable Melissa Parke MP have made some objection to this boundary is just another reason why it needs to be reviewed, that although a small amount - Perth will need to take some electors from perhaps Stirling or Curtin, there is absolutely no need for longstanding areas like Mount Hawthorn and parts - and Leederville to move out of Curtin into Perth just because they are in the City of Vincent, and we've made our point that if you try and arrange electoral boundaries around local government boundaries, in Vincent you end up having to cross them somewhere else.

In regards to North Fremantle, we're not hugely concerned about where it is. We've - if it stayed within Fremantle, I think, but it would not unbalance either Fremantle or Curtin, because our objection didn't include Fremantle. We just wanted to confine it rather than have, shall we say, a shopping list of everything we might think of, but really we think - we do think some of the objections to North Fremantle coming out of the division of Fremantle are somewhat overblown when they've been part of - when it's been part of the same state electorate with suburbs like Cottesloe and Mosman Park for some 50 years, but again, this is not, perhaps, central to the redistribution.

In regard to other boundaries, of course, we would be satisfied with the first proposals. We again think there's something somewhat a bit too - something a little bit too heavy and orchestrated about the objections from - with respect, from the Shire of Collie. Although they might well prefer to be in a seat linked to Bunbury, they have in the last 20 years, for some 10 years, been in either the division of Brand or indeed the division of O'Connor and none of the objections pointed to any great detriment that Collie suffered in that period. We appreciate it's never easy for commissioners, that there are going to be areas on the periphery of large rural seats, but the proposals that have been advanced seem as logical as any and some of the suggestions that Donnybrook and Augusta go into O'Connor in place of Collie would be extremely problematic. Those areas have been - have a far more consistent relationship with Busselton and Bunbury and Forrest than does the Shire of Collie.

I think the other - perhaps the only other matters is the name of the division. There was concern that there has been a proposed state division of Burt. In the objections and comments to the state redistribution there was a very consistent rejection of all the historical names and a great preference for geographic names. So there might be a reasonable prospect that the state commissioners might be taking those objections into account. And the fact that they have suggested a name Burt for an unrelated area I submit shouldn't influence the decisions of this - your committee as to the most appropriate name.

Burt wasn't the name the Liberal Party put forward. We accept the argument that when you have names like Court and Beasley, with prominent family members still very much alive there can be reservations about using those names. I think the other name that had a great deal of merit was Holman, but we would submit Burt was a good choice and hope that the Commission stays with it.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Well, Mr Buxton, thank you for your expression of your views.

BUXTON, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: They'll be considered - - -

BUXTON, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: - - - together with all other information received today.

BUXTON, MR: Yes.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Thank you, Mr Cox, also for your attendance.

COX, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: I think we can move on to the next speaker, who is Mr Grahame Bowland, the Co-Convenor of Greens Western Australia.

Would you like to come forward, Mr Bowland.

BOWLAND, MR: Sure. Thanks.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Yes, Mr Bowland, just for the record I understand your full name is Grahame with a G-r-a-h-a-m-e, Bowland, B-o-w-l-a-n-d. You're the Co-Convenor for the Greens Western Australia.

BOWLAND, MR: Yeah, that's correct.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. And we have the Greens WA objection in front of us and I'd invite you to speak.

BOWLAND, MR: Thanks very much. I'll first speak to the proposed Curtin, Perth and Stirling boundaries if that's okay. We note the points raised in the comments upon the objections and in regard to those points we continue to strongly support the proposed boundaries for the division of Perth. One of the minor areas of contention was the small number of electors in Crawley and around the Swan Brewery who will be moved - proposed to be moved to the division of Curtin. And we note that there's a consensus there between the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the Greens that those electors should remain within Curtin.

More broadly, it was raised in some of the comments upon the objections that the changes to the divisions of Perth, Curtin and Stirling moved more voters than are absolutely necessary. We don't view this as an objection in itself. Creating a 16th West Australian electorate is inherently a major change to the boundaries. We think this should be seen as an opportunity to correct the boundaries of divisions so as to maximise community of interest, and we see that as an opportunity that's fairly unusually available.

The development of inner city locations such as Leederville is one such change in the city that can be adjusted for in this redistribution. Historically Leederville may have had more alignment with the Subiaco area and thus with the rest of Curtin. However, if you look at the development of public transport links and the increased urban infill in the area, you can see that now the area is strongly aligned with the CBD and with the Federal division of Perth. We'd also like to emphasise that we see the inclusion of the local government area of Vincent in the Federal division of Perth as an opportunity that should be taken.

Moving on to the proposed O'Connor, Burt, Canning and Hasluck divisional boundaries. We've got little to say other than that we are very happy with the proposed boundaries and we note the consensus in general in support of the boundaries of the new division of Perth - of Burt, sorry.

On the boundary between Curtin and Fremantle we note that there's continuing broad support for maintaining North Fremantle within the division of Fremantle. We also note in particular that the Liberal Party of Western Australia have conceded that there are valid arguments for North Fremantle remaining in the division. So on that basis we continue to suggest that North Fremantle remain in the division of Fremantle.

On this point we note that one of the main areas of debate is whether the river is a strong natural boundary that should be respected, or whether there's an argument that there's a more social and local government oriented boundary there. We would put it that residents of North Fremantle would consider themselves residents of the Fremantle area and have a strong interest in the shared infrastructure in the region, including the port and the commercial, industrial and social aspects of the Fremantle area. So we would suggest that North Fremantle should naturally stay in that area.

Just finally on the division of Burt we'd like to note that while we don't object to the name, there is already some confusion being caused in the community by the clash between the proposed division of Burt and the proposed electoral district of Burt in the south metropolitan region as a result of the West Australian redistribution of state electorates. At present there is actually a media story unfolding which relates to this proposed district - proposed district of Burt in the state lower house. I've already seen media coverage of the district of Burt and it's not being clearly qualified whether it relates to the state or Federal proposed division.

So we're not objecting to the name of Burt, but if the - if this redistribution process is not able to align with the redistribution process at the state level and ensure that there won't be a clash in the naming, we would suggest that the proposed alternative name of Holman be considered. We understand that this proposal is to name the division after Mary Holman, who was the first Labor - the first female Labor parliamentarian in Australia. So we would - and also note that Mary Holman had a association with the area that would be represented. So we see this as a strong alternative suggestion.

So while we don't object to the name Burt, we're somewhat concerned that there may be logistical obstacles to coordinating the two redistributions and if there's a significant risk of two electorates being created with the same name, we would like that to be avoided.

Other than I'd just like to add my thanks to the committee for its work and we're very pleased with the process as it's been conducted. We think it's looking like it'll be a solid result for West Australians and for Federal democracy. Thanks very much.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr Bowland, for your comments and also for your participation here today.

BOWLAND, MR: Thanks very much.

COWDROY, MR: The next speaker is Mr Bulloch.

Is Mr Bulloch here?

BULLOCH, MR: Coming, sir.

COWDROY, MR: Come and have a seat wherever's comfortable for you, Mr Bulloch.

BULLOCH, MR: Thank you very much.

COWDROY, MR: And just for the record I'll note that your full name is Donald Ian Bulloch.

BULLOCH, MR: Correct.

COWDROY, MR: Do I understand, Mr Bulloch, you appear here today as a citizen wishing to express your views?

BULLOCH, MR: Yes, as a citizen and a voter of Cowan.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Thank you.

BULLOCH, MR: Thank you, Mr Chairman, for this opportunity to address the Commission on our objections to the proposed move of our suburb and most of Kingsley into the electorate of Moore. We arrived in Australia with resident status in April 1989 and from memory became citizens in late 1991. We bought our house in Woodvale in June of 1989 and have lived there ever since, some 26 years. We are not members of any political party, but do take a keen interest in the election of our Federal member of Parliament and of our state member. Both of those members have done an excellent job of looking after the interests of our suburb and the area.

We object to and can see no good reason at all why the present boundaries of Cowan need to be changed other than for political reasons, to change the present voting balance of our electorate. The exclusion of Woodvale and Kingsley to Moore, to be replaced by the inclusion of Beechboro, Lockridge and Kiara can only be for political reasons as these suburbs are strong Labor supporters and will most certainly change the composition of the electorate of Cowan. These three suburbs with some 9,500 voters are south of the Reid Highway and have no interest or connection to the Joondalup, Wanneroo area and should remain in the Perth electorate, their natural area.

In the map of the proposed new Cowan boundary the inclusion of the area of Whiteman Park, which I think has less than 20 voters, is being done as window dressing to that new boundary to make it appear that those three suburbs are naturally part of Cowan, which they are not and never have been. Without the Whiteman Park area these suburbs would only be connected by a narrow strip of land. We think and hope that Whiteman Park should remain in Pearce or Swan and be a natural part of those electorates as before.

The proposed move of Woodvale and Kingsley, which I understand has some 15,000 voters, will make a profound difference to Cowan, which in my opinion the main reason behind the proposed boundary changes. Cowan presently has some 95,000 voters according to the Wikipedia results of the last election. All the proposed boundary changes to Moore, Cowan, Pearce, Stirling, Curtin and Perth are like moving the deckchairs on the beach for no good reason. The growth of the population in these electorates since the last election does not warrant the large cost of the proposed changes to the electoral rolls and most certainly is not a valid reason to do so.

We wish to remain in Cowan and not be evicted to join Moore. All our facilities are within Cowan and we have no wish at all to move to Moore. It should be up to the voters within the present boundaries of Cowan to decide who they wish to have as their elected member of Parliament. I've always thought of the Electoral Commission as an impartial government body charged with running free and fair elections. I do not see the proposed changes to the boundaries of Cowan as being impartial, but a manipulation. Thank you for allowing me to address the Commission and speak to our objections, Mr Chairman. I'm prepared to answer any questions.

COWDROY, MR: Yes, thank you, Mr Bulloch. I think for my own part I understand very clearly what you say and your wishes will be considered.

BULLOCH, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you for your testimony this morning.

The next speaker is the Honourable Allannah MacTiernan MP, member for Perth.

MacTIERNAN, MS: Thank you very much. I just want to make a few simple submissions. One is that in your proposal you have brought the whole area of Vincent back into the boundaries and I just wanted to say that I strongly support that. I think as - Perth, those areas of Mount Hawthorn and Leederville were previously in the Federal seat of Perth, which has gradually been eroded as - because of the lack of growth in Curtin in the western suburbs. But historically that area has been part of the City of Perth. Its zeitgeist is very much inner city. You have the City of Vincent covering that area as well as North Perth.

So to me it makes a lot of sense in terms of the integrity of the concept of Perth to have - to bring all of that area of Vincent back into the seat of Perth, in the Federal seat of Perth. That entire area is included in the state seat of Perth. So I think there's - I just want to ensure that some of the submissions that may be made to put that back into Curtin not take place.

I note that there is a - and I support the submission that was put in by the member for Fremantle to bring North Fremantle back into Fremantle. Which would mean that there would need to be some consequential changes, or changes to the proposed boundaries. And in particular, Menora and Coolbinia remaining - which are in the seat - in the Federal - sorry, in the local government area of Stirling, remaining in, I believe, Stirling so that Curtin can - Curtin - sorry, I think that's right. And I think the proposal is that Scarborough go into - the entire area of Scarborough go into Curtin.

Two real points. I mean, I note that Mr Bulloch before said before Lockridge and Kiara should stay within Perth. I must say I very much enjoy representing those areas and I guess I would personally not be unhappy if they were - remained in my area. But I think in terms of creating the - you know, my understanding of the desire

to have some of those foundations seats, like the seats as we see around Melbourne and around Sydney and around Adelaide have them very much picking up that inner city core, I think it makes sense to put those areas back in to ensure that Vincent remains in Perth.

And I do note and I think obviously this needs to be taken into account in drawing these boundaries, that it makes sense to have Curtin and Stirling with higher numbers than in Perth. Because there is no doubt that with the zonings that have taken place - in the re-zonings that have taken place in the City of Vincent, in Inglewood, in those inner suburbs that we are seeing and have seen, the trajectory has been that the growth rates within the Federal seat of Perth, particularly the inner city areas in the Federal seat of Perth, are considerably higher, certainly than those in Curtin and in Stirling.

So the proposals that we have put in that would see North Fremantle remain with Fremantle and then a cascading series of changes with Coolbinia and Menora remaining within Stirling would see Curtin with one thousand - sorry, 101,700, Stirling with 101,352 and Perth with 98,000.

Now, given our growth rate is double of those adjoining seats, so I think that - and given that we're not likely now - with our reduced growth rate across Western Australia we're not likely have another redistribution within the next three terms, a redistribution based on a new seat coming into Western Australia, then I think it is appropriate and least disruptive if we ensure that Perth's numbers are set a little below that of those adjoining areas. The City of Vincent, for example, is growing at around 17 per cent with the amount of infill development that is going on.

So that's really it.

COWDROY, MR: Yes, thank you very much, Ms MacTiernan.

MacTIERNAN, MS: Okay.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you for your assistance and for your testimony.

MacTIERNAN, MS: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: The next speaker is Mr Patrick Gorman, the State Secretary of - sorry? I see - well, oh, well, 10 o'clock, very well. I'm just wondering is anyone else here - - -

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indistinct) Sally Talbot's actually flying in from Albany this morning so her flight got in about 10 past 9 so she's on her way.

COWDROY, MR: Well, there's no one - there's no one here now who, is available to speak? All right. We may have to adjourn the proceedings now until - the next speaker is flying from Albany and will be here at 10 am. And so we will take a short adjournment until 10 o'clock this morning.

(SHORT ADJOURNMENT)

COWDROY, MR: Dr Talbot, good morning. I understand your correct title is The Honourable Dr Sally Talbot MLC, and you're a member - you are a member of the Western Australian Legislative Council.

TALBOT, DR: I am, indeed, and I'm very impressed with your pronunciation of my surname.

COWDROY, MR: Well, how else would you pronounce it?

TALBOT, DR: It's absolutely correct.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Well, we'd be very interested to hear your - your testimony.

TALBOT, DR: Thank you very much. In my submission I noted that we were looking at a statutory requirement to remove somewhere between 1500 and eight and a half thousand people from the seat of Forrest, and I made a note of the fact that there were a number of ways to do that in an area the size of Forrest which, of course, is one of our very big non-metropolitan electorates.

So I think there are a few alternatives to the Collie option that are open to the Commissions, and I just made that point about, you know, the fact that we're not as tightly constrained as we are in some of the metropolitan seats when it comes to the range of options open to us.

The reason I wanted to come and appear before you today is that I think that there are a number of particular factors relating to the community of interest that I perhaps wasn't able to capture in the context of the submissions. So just in the weeks that have elapsed before these hearings being called, I thought it was worth perhaps making a hopefully fairly succinct point to you about what's captured in the case of the Shire of Collie by that community of interest consideration. So I'll just work through those for you, and I'm happy to take questions along the way if that's the way that suits the way you're proceeding.

So the point that we're making, I think, and this was a point made by a number of submissions that were arguing the same case that I'm arguing, that Collie should - the Shire of Collie should remain within the federal seat of Forrest, there are a range of ways of breaking that down.

So the economic links between Collie, the town site and the shire, and that south-west region around Bunbury I think are compelling. 25 per cent of the economy of the Bunbury/Wellington region is drawn from the Shire of Collie. Collie, of course, focuses very extensively on heavy industry so we've got coal mining, we've got power generation, we've got Alumina. That overall net contribution, 25 per cent, I think is very significant.

I can also point out just by way of almost in parentheses at that point, that that heavy industry focus of the Shire of Collie has nothing in common with the agricultural and the food focus of the areas of O'Connor with which we would be looking for a community of interest, were Collie to migrate east. Those areas of O'Connor, of course, are primarily agricultural and food. Even the type of agriculture is different to the small agricultural areas of the Shire of Collie being predominantly beef and wheat.

So the economic links, I think, are very significant. You'll notice - I'm sure it hasn't escaped you - that both local government, state government and federal government

administrations operate in a way that puts Collie in with Bunbury and the surrounding shires.

So let's just take the third tier of government, local government, as a starting point. So we've got that Bunbury/Wellington group of councils, that is, the local government organisation that sees Collie put into a group along with Bunbury, Capel, Donnybrook-Balingup, Dardanup and Harvey, as one of the six councils that comprises the Bunbury/Wellington group of councils. We've also got the Bunbury/Wellington economic alliance which is, I guess, more of a - it's almost like a CCI focus which brings Collie into alliance with Bunbury.

We've got the Regional Tourism Strategy that operates on that basis. We've got the Bunbury/Wellington Waste Project, waste and recycling, a major focus of local organisation, and that all focus is in, as far as Collie is concerned, down the hill. And then, of course, we've got the South-West WALGA zone which puts Collie in the same zone as Bunbury, and there's other shires that make up the Bunbury/Wellington group of councils.

I think it's important to note that we're not just making a positive comment here about the synergies between Collie and those other five shires. We're also making a negative comment, because there are no regional organisations with shires or, indeed, town sites, that are currently within the O'Connor federal division.

Looking at state and federal government administrative divisions, we've got the South-West Development Commission, we've got - as far as the state government is concerned we've got the RDA setup, the Regional Development Australia setup at a Commonwealth level, we've got the WA Planning Commission, we've got the Department of Health, and we've got the Police Regional Districts, all of which have Bunbury - have Collie looking down the hill to the Bunbury/Dardanup/Harvey area, rather than east to the places that are currently in the shire - in the federal electorate of O'Connor. So I think that's pretty compelling when you look at the way that local government, state government and federal government organises their administrative divisions.

Let's turn now to local services and, of course, I'm sure you're aware from having read other submissions, there are a whole range of these. In my submission I talked about Collie basically looking down the hill for some of the services that don't exist in Collie any more. Those would be services like Centrelink and Medicare but, of course, it also includes retail. People go shopping in Eaton and Treendale, we've got big regional shopping centres there. By big I mean they've got the iconic indicators of a big regional shopping centre like Bunnings, Target, Woolworths, Kmart, that sort of thing. So they looked at those regional centres in Treendale and Eaton as well the bigger commercial centre of Bunbury.

People go down the hill for their medical services, medical and aged care. We've got big cancer services, St John of God. They go down the hill for entertainment so we've got the BREC - the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre and, of course, sporting, education and training services.

The sporting connections I won't elaborate too much, simply because it's not a field that I have an enormous amount of practical involvement in, but I'm told that if you play football, cricket or anything in between you play in a league that includes those towns like Bunbury, Capel, Collie, Donnybrook, Dardanup and Harvey rather than the towns to the east.

Now, when it comes to particularly the medical services, entertainment and sport, I think it's worth drawing your attention to the fact that the Shire of Collie puts considerable financial resources into promoting those links. So my understanding is that there's something like \$10,000 per year is donated by the Shire of Collie to the St John of God Cancer Centre, a much lesser amount to sport, but I'm told it's in the region of \$1,500 a year goes to the South-West - I think it's the Sports Academy. And a very significant amount goes from the Shire of Collie as a donation to BREC, the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre, about \$6,000 a year. That's not an insignificant amount for a shire the size of Collie.

So I've talked about the economic links, the local government links, the local services. I should also mention an area that perhaps I don't have direct involvement in but I'm told that both the Catholics and the Anglicans organise on a Dioceses basis to include Collie along with their Bunbury operation, so that is far from insignificant.

And, again, I point out the negative links to the east. So in all those categories of activity we don't, in Collie, look towards Narrogin and the likes.

Transport links are - there's a huge amount of government money gone into the improvement, maintenance and establishment of transport links between Collie and Bunbury so you'll be aware, for example, of the Coalfields Highway which is still the recipient of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in terms of upgrading that road. It's not perfect yet, but it's - certainly in the last 10 years we've seen a lot of money spent on the Coalfields Highway, but it's not just the highway, it's the rail links and, of course, the Port of Collie is a major industrial link for the heavy industry - the Port of Bunbury is a major link with the heavy industry that comes out of the Collie Shire. So transport link is very significant.

Tourism, and I think I've already drawn your attention to the fact that the Bunbury/Wellington Regional Tourism Strategy is very much the driver of local tourism and recreation as well. There's a lot of traffic up the hill, not just people going to work in Collie. You'll be aware that something of the region - nearly 80 per cent of people who work in the Collie Shire either live in Collie or live down the hill in areas that are in - currently in the federal electorate of Forrest. It's about 78 per cent, so nearly 80 per cent.

They also go up the hill for recreation, so we've got some very attractive local recreation spots in Collie that are well utilised by people from down the hill. So those links are alive and well as well.

I should also point out, just by way of closing, that as a local state Member of Parliament I'm very much aware of the exigencies of representing a large area. My Upper House region of the South-West goes in the north from Mandurah right down to Albany. So I've got about 180,000 electors. That's about twice the size - it's about two federal electorates.

So I do my best to service that area, but I'm very conscious of the fact that the more hundreds of miles - hundreds of kilometres you are from an area you're trying to service the less effectively you're able to service them.

I notice that the current federal member for O'Connor has his primary office in Kalgoorlie which is 700 kilometres away from Collie. He has a secondary office in Albany so in that regard he would be pretty much in the same position that I'm in, trying to service my - my electorate office is in Eaton in North Bunbury. So you've

got about the same amount of distance there. It is not easy. It is very, very hard at a distance of even 400 kilometres to provide a regular presence in the place.

I'd like to make the observation to you that in the case of Collie it would be even more complicated because the federal member for O'Connor will actually effectively have to establish those relationships with the Bunbury region in order to properly represent Collie. That is a huge undertaking which I think is really - you'd be stretching it to say that that was doable with resources a federal member has. So I think you're actually asking the federal member for O'Connor to take on an enormous extra responsibility were they to try and represent the Shire of Collie because of those Bunbury/South-West links.

So can I just, as a concluding remark, say that the claim that the Commissioners are making - that you're making to look for a community of interest between Collie and those eastern shires simply does not exist. And my observation would be it would be an extremely difficult task to manufacture a community of interest between Collie and Narrogin, Wagin, Katanning, Kojonup, Bridgetown and Manjimup.

It's a very, very big ask, and I can see how compelling it looks if you just do a desktop exercise looking at the map of the region. But I can tell you when you actually inhabit those areas, it is almost not doable, I suggest. So that's the basis of the comments I'd like to make to you this morning.

COWDROY, MR: Dr Talbot, thank you very much for your views. They've all been heard, recorded and they will be considered.

TALBOT, DR: I appreciate the chance to talk to you in person this morning.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you.

TALBOT, DR: Thank you very much.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you, Dr Talbot.

I think the next speakers are Patrick O'Gorman - sorry, Patrick Gorman and Lenda Oshalem.

COWDROY, MR: Mr Gorman, just for the record, I think your correct name is Patrick Gorman and you are the State Secretary of WA - West Australian Labor.

GORMAN, MR: That's correct.

COWDROY, MR: Yes.

GORMAN, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: Lenda Oshalem, Assistant State Secretary, good morning. Do you also wish to speak or is it one or both of you?

OSHALEM, MS: Mostly Patrick. I'll - - -

COWDROY, MR: All right. Well, would you like to go first?

GORMAN, MR: We'll present as one.

COWDROY, MR: Yes.

GORMAN, MR: Go through the separate topics and I'll commence on each of the different areas of the proposed redistributions and then Lenda may wish to add to those comments.

COWDROY, MR: Yes, I understand.

GORMAN, MR: But we both speak on behalf of the West Australian Branch of the Australian Labor Party in this capacity.

COWDROY, MR: Yes. Yes, thank you, Mr Gorman. Well, you commence whenever you're ready and then we'll look forward to having the involvement of Mr Oshalem. Thank you.

GORMAN, MR: Thank you.

Thank you all for your time and having us come and speak to you today and thank you for providing the opportunity for us to speak in person to you about the proposed redistribution for Western Australia. We intend to speak on just a few of the proposed redistributions from the Commission. That's the proposed Cowan, Moore and Pearce divisional boundaries in Perth's northern suburbs, specifically around Woodvale and Kingsley, the proposed O'Connor, Burt, Canning, Hasluck divisional boundaries in Perth's eastern suburbs, specifically looking at the proposed division of Hasluck and the proposed Curtin and Fremantle boundary with regards to North Fremantle.

Before we head into those matters in detail, there are just a few things we'd like to add our support to. The first is that, you know, there is other evidence that's been provided to this committee with regards to the proposed Forrest and O'Connor divisional boundary. As we've just heard, I think we've heard a very compelling case on the historic, cultural, economic, community safety, community of interests, employment and industry reasons as to why it would be wise to object to the transfer of the Shire of Collie from Forrest into the division of O'Connor, so again, we add our support to the comments that have just been made by the Honourable Sally Talbot, MLC, in that regard.

And secondly, the proposed redistribution that would place the City of Vincent into the division of Perth we add our support to. I think if nothing else, as you look out to your right, you can see the City of Vincent is very clearly within the Perth electorate so we add our support to that matter as well.

Commissioners, we would now like to speak about the proposed Cowan, Moore, Pearce divisional boundaries, particularly looking at the area of Woodvale and Kingsley. The first point which we have made in our submission before I go onto other points is that WA Labor supports the transfer of Woodvale and Kingsley into the division of Moore from the electorate of Cowan. It's very clear that the AEC in doing that is looking at where the future growth will come in that northern corridor of greater metropolitan Perth.

It's very clear that that that will provide the greatest capacity for those two electorates, Moore and Cowan, to accommodate the growth that's expected in both of those areas and having – obviously I worked there myself for a number of years, I think it's a very wise move knowing the sort of population pressures that start – are starting to occur on both sides of the freeway. It of course also provides some – you

know, the best way forward for the electorates of Curtin and Perth and Stirling as we look at the growth that's about to occur in those areas.

In terms of electors into the future and the work that the Commission will have to do at the next redistribution, of course by making that change, placing Woodvale and Kingsley into the electorate of Moore as proposed, will mean that there'll be fewer disruptions, in our view, down the track when we get to that point in time. Again, on the other side, you look at what would be required should the Commission not proceed with this, i.e. reverse the proposed boundary. We think that you will then have to make more radical changes in the sort of six to 12 years as we look at future redistributions.

One of the strongest and clearest points is obviously that Kingsley and Woodvale sit within the City of Joondalup's strategic plans so if you look at trying to build the community of interest, that's of course – and I assume what was behind some of your thinking in providing that particular redistribution. If you look at where those two suburbs face with their community of interest, they look towards the ocean. They look towards that side of the population area for their schools, their shops, their public transport.

I think at this point we have one piece of information we'd like to provide the Commission with. This is the bus routes which specifically demonstrate the service for Woodvale and Kingsley in terms of where people are easily able to access community services. Can we have permission to provide that to - - -

COWDROY, MR: Yes, yes, thank you.

GORMAN, MR: Thank you. Now, I don't intend – speak on this map I'll leave you to look in further detail at these matters if you want to add it to your consideration down the track, but again, clearly the corridor of public transport feeds north and it feeds west. There is far fewer regularity of service or convenient services to move east, and again, this sort of shows that both in all of the planning and the issues that people face, there is more of a commonality of interest on questions of public transport, infrastructure by placing those two divisions – sorry, those two suburbs into Moore.

Compounding that is the fact that those transport links and those communities of interest are also reflected in where people from these two suburbs are active in sporting and community clubs. The other piece of evidence we'd like to provide to you today is from the Department of Sport, so with your permission, we'd like to provide two maps from the Department of Sport covering Woodvale and Kingsley.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you.

GORMAN, MR: Just to explain the origin of these two maps, they're from the Department of Sport and they are generated when you say, "I would like to know which sporting clubs are available for either myself or my children in Woodvale", and similarly, the second map covers Kingsley, so that's how they are generated. You'll see again very significantly, they fall quite heavily within the division or the proposed division of Moore and for that reason I think the Commission's plans to include those within that not only the Local Government area but that community of interest holds very solid ground.

Just to sort of take some examples which I know you've had many of but with your agreement I'll continue on this matter for a little bit more before we pass on to the

others that I've commented on. For example, Mater Dei College in Edgewater has catchment areas which covers Woodvale. Whitfords Avenue as a major thoroughfare has a high frequency of bus services as shown on the first map which was provided. The recreation centres beyond the City of Joondalup would very obviously be Hillarys Boat Harbour. That's the sort of major commercial and recreational centre on the ocean that people in both Woodvale and Kingsley would identify with, and again, that just comes back to the strong community of interest between Woodvale and Kingsley and the Joondalup west coast area.

Beyond the local council boundaries, the administrative centre for residents in both suburbs is the City of Joondalup and I don't mean administrative just in regards to local council matters but with regards to Centrelink, State Government licensing matters and that broad range of services which people have to access on a regular basis and I think the other compelling argument is that students in Woodvale and Kingsley would, of course, go to Edith Cowan University if they were looking at their local university, and again, that's positioned in Joondalup.

I know there were some comments from others who submitted to you saying that the boundary should be the freeway. It is our view that the freeway is a secondary consideration after you take in that matter of the Local Government area and those community of interests which we've just discussed and the services available to residents in those two suburbs. I think again if you look at the historical nature of that area, Wanneroo Road has generally provided a more natural community of interest boundary for that part of metropolitan Perth.

I think finally it's well known that the current member for Moore of course takes on in his public commentary a general view that he does represent the City of Joondalup in his work and, as we, you know, hedge towards looking what I assume the Commission may be thinking in the future, having the entirety of the City of Joondalup within the division of Moore may have been part of where the Commission was trying to head. I don't want to second-guess the reasons but if that was the intention then of course this proposed boundary gets us very close to delivering on that.

I might pause there as we're talking about that particular area and ask Lenda if she had any other matters she wanted to raise.

OSHALEM, MS: Only the one point that the division of Stirling already crosses the Mitchell Freeway so there is a sort of set precedence and also further up north, we cross the Mitchell Freeway in divisions further up as well. I think, sorry, the northern part of Moore, yes, that's sort of what I was thinking. Other than that, I think you really covered all those points.

GORMAN, MR: Then we may move on to the O'Connor, Burt, Canning, Hasluck divisional boundaries in Perth's eastern suburbs but specifically with regards to the proposed division of Hasluck. We've objected to the creation of a third peri-urban division. Canning and Pearce already provide that for, you know, both metropolitan and regional Western Australia. You have chosen to create a third which we think would be better served if we looked to have just the two across that urban boundary and instead then made Hasluck simply an urban division.

The proposal to achieve that would be to move Hasluck into Ellenbrook, so that's moved north rather than east, and this would, I guess, minimise the future disruption to electors and ensure that a representative for that area could focus on those growth corridor and outer metropolitan area issues as one distinct community of interest.

You'd also then avoid having the electorate of Pearce having sort of competing population centres in the north and then in – and that similar growth in Ellenbrook.

Again, similar to our argument we've just made around the proposed division of Moore, you look at the people who live in Ellenbrook. They face down to Midland as their administrative centre. There is again increased growth expected in that corridor which will provide – which will cause a large number of constituency issues and new electors heading to that area and for that reason, shifting Hasluck up may be a better way to protect the – or to remove the disruption of electors in future redistribution cycles.

Looking at those community of interests between Ellenbrook and Midland in the potential of an Ellenbrook/Midland-based Hasluck, there is, of course, the travel that people would do. As I mentioned it's almost entirely Ellenbrook to Midland. You would then, of course, have similar issues around professional services, State Government services, Federal Government services which are provided out of that Midland hub. I think when you look at the proposed Midland Public Hospital, you also say that is the major – and we're talking about the most essential services the people need, the most essential service that we provide to people of Ellenbrook in the Midland Public Hospital will be based in Midland so having that within one electorate could provide a greater community of interests.

They're the main issues that I think are proposed, the problems that are potentially caused by choosing to create a third peri-urban division.

OSHALEM, MS: Surely an ideal outcome would be to, you know, work towards the future having urban seats and non-urban seats. What we've got now is the need for two peri-urban seats because of the shape of Western Australia. Starting at the Swan River working our way up, that's just the layering that needs to occur. With this proposed Hasluck, we seek to add a third peri-urban. With the growth that's expected in Ellenbrook, you know, I'm sure you've read the articles just like we have, the very small blocks, the half-acre and even less smaller blocks that are all going into Ellenbrook and the slow pace in which services are being built within Ellenbrook, they're going to rely a lot on Midland, as they already do.

We have a Midland Public Hospital, a new one that's opening, that young families in Ellenbrook will need to access. Having them all covered within one division sets it up right for the future and it also means that future growth can be accommodated within the seat of Hasluck without causing major disruption. As Patrick pointed out, are future redistributions when the two population centres will be competing because of the growth that occurs in Ellenbrook so setting it up right now means you would have, you know, minimum disruption in the future. Could have.

GORMAN, MR: And the final matter we want to comment to you on today was the proposed Curtin Fremantle division boundary specifically regarding North Fremantle. We add our support to the comments submitted by the member for Fremantle of maintaining that community of interest between the south side of Fremantle and North Fremantle which has, since Federation, sat united as one electorate within the division of Fremantle. There is a strong community of interest, a strong historic link. It is my view that that link is so strong I do not need to go into it in any detail today but I'm happy to if asked at the end of this submission.

It is not ideal to split that Local Government area. It is a very effective, well-regarded council. The port itself operates on both sides of the river. It does not make sense to unnecessarily split that and, of course, there's been strong community support for maintaining North Fremantle as part of the electorate of Fremantle and I think when

you have electors engage in these processes which can be sometimes dry and technical, I think it's actually a really good thing for our democracy. It shows that they actually care about where their electorate is based and it just goes back to that strong historical link that's been there since Federation. I think if there's a way that the Commission, taking into account all of the other matters which you have to consider, can avoid having to make that change, it would be worth doing.

So if I can just finish by saying thank you not only for all of the opportunities we've had to comment formally but for the opportunity to comment in person today. We're really happy to elaborate on any of those matters or to answer any questions or queries where we may have been unclear. Otherwise we just thank you for your time.

COWDROY, MR: Now, Mr Gorman, thank you for your participation and to Ms Oshalem as well. Your views will be taken into consideration, as will all the people who have come here today and spoken, and I think now we do have time – in case anyone wants to raise any other matter, we do have some time to consider the issues arising out of this redistribution. So if I can ask if there's anyone on my side who wants to ask any questions of those who are here, please do so, and if there's any question you want to ask, now is the time. Otherwise if there's nothing to be said, we will adjourn and we will consider, I should say, all the matters which have been put before us.

Mr Gorman and Ms Oshalem, I just mention to you because you were not in the room at the time that the whole of our process is going by the Act. At each stage it is governed by the Act and so we work within that framework and they are the considerations which must guide us in the final deliberations, whatever they may be, but I know I speak for myself particularly and for all the other members on this panel, to thank you for your participation here today and for coming forward and giving us your views.

GORMAN, MR: Thank you.

COWDROY, MR: Thank you indeed. I think the Commission will now adjourn and conclude the public hearing and we will meet to consider what has been said today. Thank you for your participation.

AT 10.21 AM THE HEARING WAS ADJOURNED