



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Objection 36

WA Labor

3 pages



WA Labor Submission

Objections to Proposed Redistribution Report

Introductory Comments

WA Labor thanks the Redistribution Committee for the opportunity to submit objections to the proposed Redistribution Report, released 31st May 2024.

In doing so, we note that the WA Labor broadly agrees with the Committee's approach to this redistribution, which recognises and responds to areas of high population growth across the Perth region, particularly in the north-east.

Naming of New WA Electoral Division

WA Labor welcomes the decision by the Redistribution Committee to retain the names of existing WA divisions, a decision that will provide stability to the majority of WA electors.

The Redistribution Committee has proposed to call WA's new division 'Bullwinkel', with the reasoning detailed in the Committee's Report. Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel's story of service and sacrifice is powerful and significant, and as such, the name 'Bullwinkel' is a very fitting name for a Federal Electoral Division and WA Labor supports this choice.

We have however been contacted by several electors from the proposed new division, who favour the name 'Beard', given its local connections. The name Beard would recognise Alma May Beard, one of the 22 Australian nurses who lost her life in the Bangka Island massacre which Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel miraculously survived.

Beard was born in Toodyay in 1913, a Western Australian wheatbelt township located within the proposed new electoral division. Beard attended Toodyay State School and trained as a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital. In 1941 she enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service and was sent to Malaya. She never returned to her home in the Western Australian wheatbelt – she was just 29 years old when she was killed by Japanese soldiers on Radji Beach.

Beard remains a much celebrated hero in her hometown of Toodyay and throughout the wheatbelt region. The local medical centre is named the 'Alma Beard Medical Centre', and the Toodyay RSL has commemorated Beard with a memorial on the town's main street. The memorial depicts a World War II nurse and a plaque detailing Beard's story of determination and bravery. A representative from the Toodyay RSL said of her, "*Alma is still very much seen as one of ours.*"

WA Labor would also support a decision by the Committee to name the new electoral division 'Beard'.

Suggested Boundary Adjustments

Proposed Division of Bullwinkel

The proposed Division of Bullwinkel is not dissimilar to WA Labor's original submission regarding the location of a new Western Australian electoral division. We agree with the Committee's general approach to the creation of the division in this area, noting that some adjustments may be worthwhile to better unite communities of interest in and around the proposed new division.

In providing comments in the redistribution process earlier this year, WA Labor noted the significant difference in communities of interest between metropolitan localities like Forresterfield (approximately 20km from the CBD) and wheatbelt localities such as York, Toodyay and Beverley (up to 140km from the CBD).

While maintaining the view that there are significant differences between metropolitan and wheatbelt communities, we recognise that it's not viable on elector numbers to remove the entirety of the Toodyay, York and Beverley shires from the new division. Transferring only the Shire of Beverley from proposed Bullwinkel to the O'Connor Division however, would not significantly disrupt elector numbers and would more appropriately unite communities of interest.

We note that it is not uncommon for electors in the Shires of Toodyay and York to regularly travel to the city for work, leisure and to access services, given transit routes such as Great Eastern Highway, Toodyay Road and the Avon-Link train line provide straightforward access. The Shire of Beverley however, is more disconnected from the Perth CBD.

The Shire of Beverley comprises several wheatbelt communities which are most appropriately located within the regional division of O'Connor, alongside other Shires with similar demographics, land uses and historical connections (eg. neighbouring Quairading, Brookton and Corrigin).