

THE NATIONALS

Western Australia

Mr Justin Harbord
Secretary to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
Level 11, 111 St Georges Terrace
Perth Western Australia 6000

18th May 2007

Dear Mr Harbord

Western Australian Electoral Commission Boundary Redistribution 2007

The Nationals WA are pleased to offer the following comments for consideration during the Electoral Distribution Commissioners' deliberations on the proposed new State electoral boundaries.

Community consultation

Given that the proposed boundaries will provide a template for State Parliamentary representation for years to come, the party sought advice and input from a wide range of sources including Nationals' Members of Parliament, members of the party organisation, Local Government representatives, and key members of communities throughout Western Australia.

I am pleased to note that an overwhelming number of the submissions received in response to the Electoral Commissioners' call for suggestions are consistent with the main thrust of The Nationals' proposal and would contend this reflects our diligent and thorough consultation with the communities likely to be most impacted by our proposal.

Maintaining a community of interest

The Nationals' primary concern, further to the imperative created by the *Electoral Amendment and Repeal Bill 2005* (one vote one value) is to maintain groupings of Local Government Authorities with genuine and clearly demonstrable social and economic links within each proposed electorate.

During the compilation of our submission every effort was made to ensure that electorates were compact in size and structure. They were constructed to allow residents reasonable access to their parliamentary member. This imperative was raised by a number of Shires and individuals during our consultation process, along with comments that some current boundary configurations have made it difficult for Members of Parliament to adequately service their electorate.

The current Electorate of Roe is a classic example, wherein the communities of Kulin, Lake Grace, Gnowangerup and Kent have advised they have stronger connections to Albany and the central wheatbelt communities rather than be grouped and represented from

Esperance. It is their strong preference to be grouped in a more compact and central electorate with clear communication linkages to Albany and the major towns of the central agricultural regions. These communities look to the wheatbelt and Albany for education needs, health services, commerce, business support and shopping.

Proposed electorate of South East (Mining & Pastoral Region)

A central plank of The Nationals' submission is the incorporation of the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe (currently part of the Agricultural Region) into the Mining and Pastoral Region.

In contrast to the two major political party's submissions, The Nationals' proposal clearly reflects the sentiment put forward by the Shire of Esperance that; "the electorate catchment within which Esperance is included should be aligned to a Goldfields-Esperance model due to the obvious linkages between the two regions...it is considered that the same linkages do not exist with respect to models that propose either a catchment based on a southern coastal region linking Esperance to Albany, or the central / eastern wheatbelt region".

The Nationals' submission provides compelling evidence of the linkages between Esperance, Ravensthorpe and the Goldfields. In addition, provides a compact electorate that enables easy access to their local Member of Parliament.

The Nationals' strongly oppose any proposal to create an electorate that stretches from Esperance to Williams inland, or Esperance to Albany along the coast on the basis that it does not maintain communities of interest or significant land use patterns. Any such proposal does not take into account the significant diversification of land use patterns in Esperance and Ravensthorpe of mining and exploration to complement the agricultural and pastoral activity in the region, and ignores the fact that Shires to the west of Esperance and Ravensthorpe have a regional economy largely based on agriculture, horticulture, viticulture or tourism.

The Goldfields Esperance Development Commission operational boundary is a further example of the economic and community linkage between the Esperance-Ravensthorpe area and the mining and pastoral areas to the north (refer www.gedc.wa.gov.au) and many of the pastoral stations on the Nullabor Plain along the Eyre Highway use Esperance as their regional centre. Esperance and Ravensthorpe primary producers fall into the Esperance Port Zone to further highlight the logical grouping of these Shires together.

Land areas for each Legislative Council region

The Nationals' submit that the Agricultural Region be comprised of the electorates of Central Lakes, Geraldton, Mid West and Wheatbelt. This region consists of complete and contiguous districts that together form an area in which the land use is primarily for agricultural purposes as required by Section 161(1)(c) of the legislation.

We propose that the South West Region consist of eight (8) electoral districts of Albany, Blackwood, Bunbury, Great Southern, Collie, Mandurah, Murray and Vasse. These districts cover coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State, as required by the legislation. The Nationals' submit that Albany should remain in the South West Region as there has been no substantive change in land use patterns in the district to justify any change in its current classification.

The Nationals' submit that the Mining & Pastoral Region be comprised the five (5) electoral districts of Goldfields, Kimberley, Pilbara West, Mid North and South East in which the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes.

In closing, I once again draw the Commissioners' attention to the submissions received supporting The Nationals' proposed boundaries and the consultation documented in our original submission. We have endeavoured to produce a solution that will deliver strong representation for regional Western Australians irrespective of who their local Member of Parliament may be.

I trust these comments provide further clarification with regards to our submission.

Yours sincerely



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