

Our Ref: O25312
Your Ref:
Enquiries: Rob Stewart

6 July 2011

Mr Warwick Gately AM
Electoral Commission
Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
GPO Box F316
PERTH WA 6841

Dear Warwick

**Subject: Submission – New Western Australian Electoral Boundaries –
Government Gazette 10 June 2011**

I write in response to WA Government Gazette Special Issue 10 June 2011 received on 15 June 2011 regarding the Electoral Act 1907 and Proposals of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners for the Division of the State into Electoral Districts and Regions.

The Shire of Plantagenet wishes to make a submission relating to the proposed changes.

We emphasise the following points:

Community of Interest

The Shire of Plantagenet is within the South West Region of the State and shares many common interests with other communities (predominantly Albany and Denmark) within this region for the delivery of services, recreation, social and cultural for example health, education, road services, port and airport, sporting affiliations, shopping, art and cultural activities and industry (wood chipping). There is a commuting workforce travelling either to Albany or Mount Barker each working day.

Land Use Patterns

The Shire consists of a diverse range of land uses. While agriculture has been a traditional activity other uses include tourism, viticulture, silviculture, aquaculture, olives, sheep and poultry abattoirs, and wildflower production. Over the past 20 years there has been a significant increase in the use of freehold land for timber production and intensive horticulture.

Means of Communication and Distance from the Capital Mount Barker, the administrative centre of the Shire of Plantagenet, is located 50 km north of Albany. Its residents normally communicate through the systems provided in the South West area and by the road 'network' in this and the Agricultural regions.

Physical Features

The Shire is located close to the picturesque south coast and contains the splendid Porongurup Range and the southern portion of the Stirling Range and has a varied topography. The natural environment is in keeping with the many areas within the south west and Great Southern and we share similar concerns about the needs of this area when addressing issues concerning the environment.

Existing Regions and Districts

The Shire currently is located in the Legislative Assembly district of 'Blackwood Stirling' which includes Cranbrook, Denmark, Walpole, Pemberton, Manjimup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown/Greenbushes and part of Augusta-Margaret River. The Shire is located in the Legislative Council 'South West' region which includes the area from Mandurah to Albany. The proposal will result in two significant changes for Plantagenet, removing the Shire from the 'Blackwood Stirling' district and also the 'South West' Region and place it in the 'Wagin' District and the 'Agricultural' Region.

Representation by Members of Parliament

Currently the Member for 'Blackwood Stirling' has his electorate office located in Mount Barker which affords the Shire and neighbouring communities, the ability to visit the office and communicate with staff. The location of the office has enabled the community within the electorate a recognition and understanding of its Electoral District. We currently have two representatives of the South West Region with offices in Albany – only 50 kms away however the closest Agricultural Region is currently 368 kms away in Perth. The member for 'Wagin' District is 174 kms away.

The Shire believes it is extremely important that its electoral area provides reasonable access to parliamentary members and has a focus on the region in which it is geographically situated in and serviced by.

Existing Local Government Boundaries

The Department of Local Government encourages Local Governments to work closely together and Plantagenet is no exception. The Shire maintains good communication with Albany and Denmark and is part of a VROC (Voluntary Region Organisation of Councils) with Cranbrook, Broomehill-Tambellup and Kojonup however has little contact with other northern Shires.

The Trend of Demographic Changes

The Shire's population is increasing as more people decide to live here for many reasons including lifestyle, environment, proximity to Albany as the regional centre, available facilities and services.

Outcome

Physical distance of Representation

Distance of representation to local issues Separation from communities of like (Albany and Denmark) where there are a delivery of services that this community uses.



Rob Stewart
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER