



Northam Chamber of Commerce
Working at the Heart of Business in the Avon Region

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The Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
c/- WA Electoral Commission
GPO Box F316
Perth 6841

13th July 2007

Dear Sir or Madam,

**OBJECTION TO THE NAMING OF THE NEW ELECTORATE OF
MERREDIN**

I am writing on behalf of the seventy members of the Northam Chamber of Commerce to express our strong opposition to the naming of the proposed new electorate of Merredin.

We have the following points to make in support of our position in accordance with the criteria listed on your website:

1. Northam as a regional centre is growing rapidly and changing its identity and demographics. Linking Northam with Merredin does not reflect this. In the past there were many common factors but only farming remains.
2. Every Shire in the proposed new electorate is part of the Avon River catchment.
3. A great deal of time effort and money has been spent on promoting the Avon Valley and region as a major tourism destination. This is further enhanced by proximity to Perth. In terms of W.A. overall tourism

2.

marketing the Avon Valley is in the 'Experience Perth' region and is building extensively on the fact of being within easy reach of Perth day tourists. This is not the case for the other places in the proposed Merredin electorate. Toodyay is already cut off from the other Avon Valley communities by being in the electorate of Moore, and this change fragments the hard won Avon Valley identity even further.

4. The recent voluntary merger of the Town and Shire of Northam reflects the consolidation of Northam into a major region with a local government showing initiative and the will to change and grow. Many Shires in the new electorate are struggling due to shrinkage of their local communities as well as environmental factors.

5. Local business people and local government representatives unanimously expressed their concern at the name of Merredin at a recent public meeting held by the Northam Chamber of Commerce.

6. It was also felt that access to the local member would be made difficult for the majority of the electorate if it is centred on Merredin.

7. If the electoral boundaries are ratified we propose that the electorate either remains as Avon or is named Central Wheatbelt. Central Wheatbelt is a name which reflects the historical connection between the towns in the area but completely ignores the emerging identity of the Avon Valley.

Yours faithfully



Rob Tinetti
President

Northam Chamber of Commerce

