

Submission – Electoral Boundaries in Western Australia 2013

North West

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ATTA FPNA FTIA AIMM AREI CD

Independent Candidate North West

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Proposed Electoral Boundary

It is proposed that the seat be continue to be known as **North West** to reflect its geographic position.

The proposal is that existing boundaries be kept as the changes adopted in 2011 are being served by the local member in the manner proposed in my previous submission. There does not appear to be a valid reason for alterations to those boundaries.

Community of Interest

Community interests as outlined in the 2007 Electoral distribution remain consistent and no new industries have emerged in that time, nor have any existing ones ceased.

The community consists of the residents of the area known generally as the Murchison, Gascoyne and Ashburton in the lower North West of Western Australia. The area consists of farming, pastoral, fishing and mining industries and their supporting services. With the exception of Exmouth and Paraburdoo and Tom Price the towns in the regions have been settled since the 1880s. The focus is on primary industry from Salt and Iron Ore mining in the north to grain farming in the south with the pastoral and fishing industries in the hinterland and along the coast.

The area has a large Aboriginal population as well as descendants of Colonial Europeans and European and Asian migrants attracted to the regions agricultural and mining industries. It is indeed a very multicultural community bonded together by the remoteness and harshness of the environment in which they live.

Large District Allowance (LDA)

Unfortunately the statistical basis for calculating the LDA, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, has yet to be conducted. Therefore no reliable electoral demographic is available other than the results of the 2008 State Election.

Those results show 15 962 electors on the role, of whom 12 029 voted. The area is shown as 409 083 km².

The Large District Allowance is therefore $1.5\% \times 409\,083 = 6\,136 \text{ LDA} + 12\,029$
 $= 18\,165$

That is within the upper and lower limits of the permissible range. The inclusion of non-voters of 3 933 increases the possible number to 22 098, which remains within the permitted limits. ABS data reveal the population growth within the area to be an average of 1.3%. Therefore assuming a population growth has been achieved in the district since 2008 numerically that is 236 electors. The growth projection does not exceed the permissible limit of electors.

Land Use Patterns

Land use patterns have not altered substantially in the previous four years. The southern section of the region consists of marginal wheat and sheep undulating pasture at the northern edge of Western Australia's agricultural region known as the 'wheat belt'. It is directly south and bounded by the 'rabbit proof fence'. The pastoral region of the Murchison boundaries that farming land from light mallee scrub in the west to hard gibber plain in the east. Mixed mining exists in association with the pastoral industry in the south east from Yalgoo and Mt Magnet to Meekatharra.

The Iron Ore mines and town centres of Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica bound the north with subtropical pastoral areas predominantly former sheep stations converted to beef cattle production. Along the coastline the communities of Onslow, Exmouth, Carnarvon, Denham and Kalbarri are engaged in various fishing activities. The area is referred to as the fruit bowl of WA. Carnarvon also has a large irrigated horticultural industry.

Tourism is a key industry throughout the region and forms an important form of income to all shires.

Means of Communication and Distance from the Capital

Arguably, recent changes to scheduled air service providers has resulted in a lesser service to Carnarvon, Denham and Kalbarri. However, generally communication means are consistent with the 2007 review.

Apart from private charter there are no commercial air services connecting the townships within the region. A commercial air service connects the coastal communities of Kalbarri, Denham, Carnarvon and Exmouth. Paraburdoo also services Tom Price but connecting flights must be routed through Perth. Servicing the region via commercial aircraft is not a viable option.

However the region has very good road connection services, whilst most internal roadways are suitable for 4WD access, particularly the remote Aboriginal communities and pastoral properties. All major towns have all weather highways connecting them via the North West Coastal and Great Northern Highways. The Butchers' track can be used as direct access from the coast to Mt Magnet weather permitting in the south and a sealed highway connects Tom Price to Onslow in the north. Sealed access connects Mt Magnet to Geraldton if the Butchers' track is inaccessible. A sealed road access has been provided between Carnarvon and the Gascoyne Junction in the intervening period.

Daily mail services exist to all major towns and weekly mail runs service the remote pastoral, mining and Aboriginal camps and communities. The entire region is covered by good telephone and fair internet networks.

The major physical features are the Murchison River in the South to the Ashburton River in the north with the Gascoyne River in the central area rising from just west of Meekatharra to Carnarvon on the coast. The southern end of the Hamersley Range dominates the north and large sections of desert land predominate from the stony

plains of the east to coastal scrub from Exmouth to Denham. The proposed seat includes the two major gulfs of Exmouth and Shark Bay so vital to our fishing and tourism industries. The Ningaloo reef borders the coastline from just north of Carnarvon to the top of North West Cape.

Existing Boundaries of Regions and Districts.

The seat is contained entirely within the Mining and Pastoral Region and is consistent with current electoral boundary policy of matching, no changes are recommended

Existing Local Government Boundaries.

The incorporation of entire local authority boundaries of Ashburton, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Meekatharra, Mt Magnet, Murchison, Roebourne, Shark Bay, Upper Gascoyne, and Yalgoo makes for consistent and uniform communication between local government and State parliamentary representation.

The Trend of Demographic Changes.

Despite general population growth of the Western Australian population the proposed seat is relatively stable without any significant demographic changes. Rural/urban drift of the population is a significant problem for the region as well as government and professional services.

Given that this phenomena is common to the entire region it is considered to be a significant demographic binding agent for uniform parliamentary representation. The northern towns of Karratha, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo and Tom Price have the influence of major mining projects but the population generally faces the same social problems of the rest of the proposed seat.

According to ABS data the population growth ranges from -5.00 per cent in the Mt Magnet Shire to 4.5 per cent in the Roebourne Shire. Overall little demographic change has occurred save a drift in population from the pastoral areas of the south to the mining areas of the north.

Recommendation

This submission does not recommend any boundary or name changes to the Legislative Assembly seat of North West for the 2011 electoral distribution. Existing electoral services are being met, land use patterns have not changed nor have demographic trends. Existing elector populations are within the prescribed limits required by the *Electoral Act 1907*. Given that ABS census data for 2011 is yet to be collected and collated this recommendation is given on the most reliable population data available at this date.