



Hon Dave Grills MLC
MEMBER FOR MINING AND PASTORAL REGION

W A E C
24 AUG 2015

THE NATIONALS
for Regional WA

August 24, 2015

WA Electoral Commission
GPO Box F316
PERTH WA 6841

To whom it may concern

SUBMISSION - PROPOSED ELECTORAL BOUNDARY CHANGES

I am writing to express my objection to the Western Australian Electoral Commission's recommendation to abolish the Legislative Assembly seat of Eyre and split the Shire of Esperance between the seats of Wagin (to be renamed Roe) and Kalgoorlie.

As Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region and a Goldfields-Esperance district resident, I am extremely disappointed by the proposed changes as I believe they are unnecessary and will dilute the voice of the Esperance region.

Realistically, it is difficult to see how Esperance could be adequately represented in a reconstituted and enlarged Roe electorate. The Esperance region is unique and does not fit well politically or economically with the Wheatbelt. Most of the population in the proposed Roe electorate would be concentrated in the Wheatbelt and it is reasonable to assume that the local MP would be based in a Wheatbelt town. This would make it exceptionally difficult for people in Esperance and surrounding areas to access their local MP.

Including Esperance with the Wheatbelt in Roe also risks fragmenting the existing economic, social, people-to-people, services and governmental links between Esperance and the Goldfields.

Furthermore, splitting the Shire of Esperance between the seats of Roe and Kalgoorlie, in the lower house, and between the Mining and Pastoral Region and Agricultural Region electorates, in the upper house, is highly impractical and would create a series of governance problems.

I believe there needs to be some consideration of communities of interest rather than just population distribution when determining electoral boundaries. An electorate with strong shared communities of interest allows for more effective and consistent political representation.

Many government departments and agencies servicing Esperance are either based in the town itself or in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. These include the regional offices of a number of State Government departments in addition to the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission (GEDC). The GEDC is in the process of developing an investment blueprint to shape the long-term economic direction of the Goldfields-Esperance region. The success of the

Goldfields-Esperance Regional Investment Blueprint will be contingent on strong political support at the State level and local State parliamentarians who understand the Goldfields-Esperance region. The proposed electoral boundary changes risk de-coupling development commission boundaries from electoral boundaries and fragmenting the region's political representation. I have grave fears about the blueprint process as a region-wide initiative if the Esperance region is separated politically from the Goldfields.

State-wide, abolishing Eyre in favour a new seat in the Perth metropolitan area would only further marginalise country people and undermine regional development efforts. From a regional perspective, reducing the number of country seats and enlarging the size of country electorates exacerbates the city-country imbalance and creates greater political inequality.

The Nationals WA made a submission to the WA Electoral Commission that would have allowed the Electoral Commissioners to meet the requirements of the Act that involved minimal change. I ask the Commission to re-examine this submission and ensure that the current number of country seats (17) is maintained. The Nationals WA propose that the district of Eyre should retain its current boundaries as drawn in the 2011 Distribution. This proposal is consistent with The Nationals WA overall approach to make only minimal changes to balance the Average District Enrolment (ADE) between electoral districts and to maintain the connection of the current communities of interest. The Nationals WA believes that in their current form, the communities within these districts have clear and identifiable binding characteristics; that they are provided with the means of effective parliamentary representation and that their ADE is within the permissible limits as defined by the Act. As a district entitled to a Large District Allowance (LDA), Eyre's current ADE of -12.99% falls within permissible limits and does not require adjustment.

If significant boundary changes are to be made, I request that the Shire of Esperance not be split between different electorates. The Shire of Esperance should remain as a single unit within both Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council electorates to reflect communities of interest and ensure effective governance.

I thank you for taking the time to consider this matter.

Yours sincerely



HON DAVE GRILLS MLC
MEMBER FOR THE MINING AND PASTORAL REGION