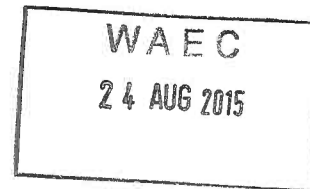


Hon Martin Aldridge MLC

Member for Agricultural Region



24 August 2015

Electoral Distribution Commissioners
Via email: boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au

Dear Commissioners

OBJECTION TO BOUNDARIES

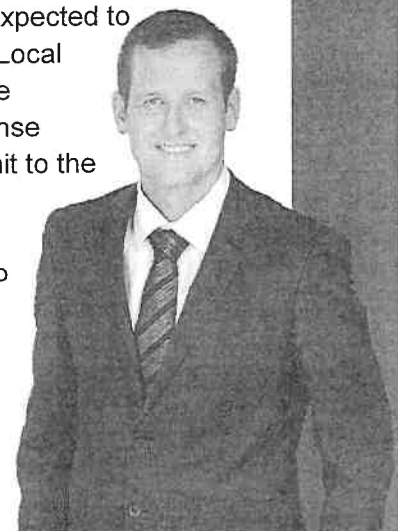
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed electoral boundaries as released by you last month.

I wish to make a short submission with respect to the Agricultural Region in order to make some observations and recommendations.

I would like to preface my submission by objecting to the removal of a district from the Mining and Pastoral Region to create a new district in the southern metropolitan area, and the related impact on the Agricultural Region. Despite the submission from The Nationals articulating an argument and solution for incremental change, you have opted for a fundamental redrawing of electoral boundaries at this time.

It is clear that you have encountered some challenges in proposing the boundaries of the Agricultural Region and the districts therein as a result of the proposed abolition of the district of Eyre and expansion of the region to the east. The districts of Roe, Moore and Central Wheatbelt have all expanded in size with the latter narrowly avoiding status as a 'large district' which would have proposed further challenges for the Commissioners.

I note that the proposed boundaries provide a Variation from ADE (VFADE) of +0.16% (Central Wheatbelt), -6.89% (Geraldton), +5.80% (Moore) and -5.79% (Roe). Having given consideration to historical voter growth and decline across the region, it is my view that the Commissioners have established boundaries that will only further need attention at the next review. For example, the district of Moore is expected to grow at a steady pace, particularly in the southern portion including the Local Government Authorities of Gingin, Chittering and Toodyay. Retaining the proposed boundaries of Moore with a VFADE of +5.80% makes little sense when you contrast it with the proposed district of Roe at -5.79%. I submit to the Commissioners that of the four districts of the Agricultural Region, the districts of Moore and to a lesser extent the Central Wheatbelt are likely to have steady if not increased population growth given their proximity to the Perth metropolitan area and that those projections should be taken into consideration when finalising boundaries.



With consideration of the Commissioners overarching recommendations I submit the following for consideration in preparing the final boundaries:

District of Moore

I submit that the proposed district of Moore exclude the Shires of Koorda, Dowerin and Goomalling whilst retaining the transfer of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

The revised VFADE for the district of Moore would be -0.249% leaving greater scope for expected elector growth in this district and minimising required changes at the next boundary review.

District of Central Wheatbelt

I submit that the proposed district of Central Wheatbelt retain the Shires of Koorda, Dowerin and Goomalling and at the same time keep most of the transfers from the proposed district of Roe with the exception of the Shires of West Arthur, Williams and Cuballing .

The Shires of Koorda, Dowerin and Goomalling are more closely aligned with the regional centre of Northam and more broadly the Central Wheatbelt. These Shires and their related communities have little connection in terms of transport or community to regional centres to the west. Whilst the districts of Moore and Central Wheatbelt share similar land use patterns, it is important to note that political representation in the district of Central Wheatbelt is established from the two major regional centres being Northam in the west and Merredin in the east. The current Member for Central Wheatbelt has electorate offices in both locations and electors would be best served by their retention in the district of Central Wheatbelt.

The revised VFADE for the district of Central Wheatbelt would be around -1.55%.

District of Roe

I submit that the proposed district of Roe retain the Shires of West Arthur, Williams and Cuballing.

These Local Government Authorities are more closely aligned with regional centres to the east including Narrogin and Wagin. Whilst it might not always be the case, the district of Wagin has historically been serviced from Narrogin with close proximity to these three Shires. I thus submit that they remain in the proposed district of Roe. It would not make sense for an elector in these three Shires to have to travel considerably further to access their elected Member in Northam or vice versa. To put that into perspective an elector in Darkan or Williams would additionally be required to travel in excess of 170kms, and in the case of a Cuballing elector an additional 143kms.

The revised VFADE for the district of Roe would be +1.967%.

District of Geraldton

I submit no recommendation and accept the Commissioners view.

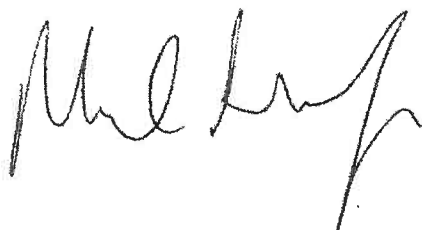
It should be noted that the above suggested changes retain all of the districts within the Agricultural Region below 'large district' status which in time will only become further challenging to do. Introducing a Large District Allowance for the first time into the Agricultural Region could become necessary at a future redistribution and will only further challenge the Commissioners in balancing geography with electors.

The transfer of the Shire of Jerramungup from the Agricultural Region to the district of Albany and the South West Region is also of interest. I note the reference in the Commissioners report to residents in the Shire of Jerramungup regarding Albany as their regional centre and consistent land uses between the Shire and the hinterland of the district of Albany. I also understand that the Shire of Jerramungup have formally considered and support the proposed boundary change. The impetus behind the Commissioners decision to transfer the Shire of Jerramungup from the Agricultural Region to the South West Region is unclear as the additional voters would have little impact on the VFADE of neither the district of Albany nor the proposed district of Roe. The transfer of the Shire of Jerramungup also provides for a rather unusual electorate boundary with the transfer of the Shire of Jerramungup breaking what was a contiguous and natural association between the agricultural dominant Local Government Authorities of Gnowangerup, Kent, and Ravensthorpe.

It should be noted that should the Commissioners accept my recommendations for the district of Roe above while including further consideration for the Shire of Jerramungup the VFADE of the proposed district of Roe would be +4.81%, still within the statutory requirements of the *Electoral Act* and allowing for only modest growth across the electorate.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed boundaries.

Yours sincerely



HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC
Member for Agricultural Region