

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
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To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ob25 - FW: Proposed Boundary Changes 2023
Attachments: Submission on Proposed Electoral Boundary Changes 2023.pdf
Categories: EXEC

Objection 25 (ob25)

From: Mayor Shane <Mayor@cgg.wa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 25 July 2023 2:18 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Proposed Boundary Changes 2023

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Good afternoon

Please find attached my submission on the proposed electoral boundaries for the next State election in 2025.

As stated in my submission this is a personal submission and is not endorsed by Council or any other organisation.

Regards

Shane Van Styn FCPA
MAYOR



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Acknowledgement of Country: The Western Australian Electoral Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our electoral activities take place. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Submission on Proposed State Electoral Boundary Changes 2023

Submitter: Shane Van Styn

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Address: 58 Fitzgerald Street, Geraldton WA 6530

Submitter

I am the current Mayor of City of Greater Geraldton, a role I have served for almost 8 years. I have served on the Midwest Development Commission, Chaired Regional Capitals Australia and Western Australia, serve as Chair of the Batavia Emergency Management Committee and have been the delegate for Greater Geraldton at WALGA zone meetings. I am however making this submission on behalf of myself and this is not an endorsed position of any of the above mentioned entities.

The current seat of Geraldton's population is dominated by its urban centre, however there is a large rural cohort out to Eradu, and across to Walkaway. The City of Greater Geraldton (CGG) serves as the Regional Capital to the Midwest and to Mullewa (which is part of the CGG Local Government Area (LGA)), Chapman Valley and Northampton, providing a great deal of the services and facilities to sustain their existence.

Greater Geraldton, Chapman Valley and Northampton are uniquely positioned in the State in that they are very remote of the next major population centres of Perth (414km) and Carnarvon (482km) and their topography lend to them being considered as a singular seat.

Agreed Points

The position put forward to expand the seat of Geraldton as proposed is strongly supported with one objection, being the exclusion of Kalbarri from the seat of Geraldton.

Former Shire of Mullewa

The expansion of the current seat of Geraldton to include the entire City of Greater Geraldton is a very positive outcome. Splitting a local government area should be avoided wherever possible when dealing with such small populations. The Mullewa portion of the seat comprises a population roughly split between the urban centre of the small township and the larger farming areas that surround it. Mullewa is heavily reliant on Greater Geraldton for most of the services the population requires to be sustained. There can be no denying this is a community of interest worthy of inclusion, after all Mullewa is already a part of the CGG LGA.

Shire of Chapman Valley

In an almost verbatim rationale as Mullewa, the expansion of the current seat of Geraldton to include the Shire of Chapman Valley is a very positive outcome. The Chapman Valley portion of the proposed seat comprises a population split equally between a peri urban suburb right on the border of Geraldton, that looks like a standard urban residential development (belonging to Greater Geraldton), known as Park Falls and the larger farming areas that surround it. Chapman Valley is heavily reliant on Greater Geraldton for many of the services the population requires to be sustained. There can be no denying this is a community of interest worthy of inclusion.

Shire of Northampton

Again, in an almost verbatim rationale as Mullewa, the expansion of the current seat of Geraldton to include the Shire of Northampton is a very positive outcome. I believe however the entirety of the Shire should be included but I will address that later. The Northampton portion of the proposed seat again comprises a population split equally between a small urban township and the larger farming areas that surround it. Northampton is heavily reliant on Greater Geraldton for many of the services the population requires to be sustained. There can be no denying this is a community of interest worthy of inclusion.

The Case for expansion to include all of the Shire of Northampton

Kalbarri

The proposed boundary draws a line at the Murchison River that splits the Shire of Northampton in half, placing Kalbarri into the seat of the Midwest (The objection). Kalbarri could best be described as the biggest urban population of the Shire of Northampton so excluding them from the ultimate seat of Geraldton is peculiar. There are significant commonalities of urban Kalbarri and Geraldton and also the Northampton township. The next urban centre is Carnarvon, some 442km to the north which by itself should warrant a reconsideration.

Kalbarri is a coastal hamlet with significant landholdings held by rural people of the neighbouring shires that form part of the proposed seat of Geraldton, so including Kalbarri would prevent people from having multiple MP's representing them and the common interest is self-evident.

Whilst it is appreciated that the proposed seat of the Midwest is expansive it is worth noting that Kalbarri is not conveniently located on the way between Northampton and Carnarvon with a significant detour inland and then back out again required for an MP servicing the area. Having one small, isolated piece of the Shire of Northampton separated from the seat of Geraldton and included with the expansive seat of the Midwest seems counterproductive and inefficient given especially it is serviced from the seat of Geraldton.

There would be a much higher incentive for an MP to invest time in Kalbarri when it is part of the Geraldton seat due to proximity and similarity and the fact that Geraldton by itself makes for an efficient representation process, freeing up time to travel. The seat of the Midwest as proposed already has a massive range of towns to cover.

Commonalities

The 3 Shires already in recent times came together for cyclone Seroja which affected us all, but particularly Kalbarri and demonstrated a clear common interest and bond. CGG delivers many municipal services for the other 2 shires such as building and health approval services, payroll, planning, waste and more. We jointly market our tourism product and even our Chamber of Commerce has all these 3 shires included. We share the same local paper, we sit at the same local forums, we transit each other's shires daily be it for work, shopping, export or recreation. It just exudes commonality and commonsense. There can be no rational way of aligning the interests of Kalbarri to those of say Carnarvon or the wheat belt or the mining regions of the Mid west seat. A small change to include them in the seat of Geraldton achieves a great alignment of interests. The shires by their location away from Perth and Carnarvon are easily seen as one.

Population Quota

It is acknowledged that the proposed boundary gets to the ~30,000 elector quota almost exactly. I however argue that the approximately 1,000 electors of Kalbarri should be included into the seat making it only ~3% over weight, well within the +/-10% tolerance. This would also somewhat future proof the seat from a further redistribution in the future (likely to include Kalbarri) as population growth continues on trend across WA.

The shift of only 1,000 or so electors into Geraldton would also have no material effect on the surrounding seat of the Midwest however this does open up the opportunity to reinclude Wongan Hills or Toodyay into the Midwest seat which are already a part of Moore. It would also slightly lessen the workload for the Midwest MP.

Closing

The need to expand the seat to get to the electoral quota of ~30,000 is agreed. The proposed boundary for the seat of Geraldton is almost fully agreeable save the need to go further and include Kalbarri, thus including the full three Shires of City of Greater Geraldton, Shire of Chapman Valley and Shire of Northampton who already are almost inseparable in their operations today. The efficiency gains are obvious.

I therefore object to the exclusion of Kalbarri from the proposed expanded seat of Geraldton and request it be included into the seat of Geraldton.

Thankyou for considering my submission.



Shane Van Styn

25 July 2023

