

**Objection – Electoral Boundaries in Western Australia 2025**

**Moore/North West Central (“Mid West”)**

**Dr Alexander R Fullarton**

**And**

**Dr Brett K Davies**

**28 July 2023**

## **General Comment**

The authors support and agree with the proposed re-distribution, however the only method to make further comment is by way of this objection process. Therefore, this comment has taken the form of an objection although it is not.

The authors acknowledge and thank the Commissioners for their due diligence and ethical contribution to this report and proposal of electoral boundary changes for the State of Western Australia for the 2025 election.

They note that while there may be some political adverse criticism from ‘aggrieved’ parties they form the opinion that the re-distribution is generally fair and equitable. The Commissioners appear to have taken great pains to work within the statistical scope required of them while considering other social and environmental challenges that the broad physical landscape of Western Australia and sparsely populated regions place before them.

## **Proposed Electoral Boundary Changes**

The central focus of this objection is to the removal of one seat from the regions and the addition of one seat in the urban areas – namely the creation of the electorate of Mid West and the abolition of the electorates of Moore and North West Central. For reader convenience the commentary is reproduced below.

*With the district of Moore currently 11.36 per cent below the ADE and the district of North West Central (including LDA) 23.45 per cent below the ADE, the Commissioners are legally bound to amend the boundaries of both districts. After considering all suggestions, comments and relevant information, the Commissioners are of the view that the coastal and adjacent inland portions of Moore and North West Central that are predominantly involved in primary production should be combined into a single district to be known as (sic) Mid West.*

*To ensure Mid West’s variation from ADE is minimised, and to preserve a cohesive community of interest within the district, the Commissioners propose that the wheatbelt shires of Toodyay, Goomalling, Dowerin, Wongan-Ballidu and part of the Shire of Victoria Plains be transferred to the district of Central Wheatbelt, and that the northern shires of Ashburton and Exmouth be transferred to the neighbouring district of Pilbara. Lastly, as noted above, the Commissioners propose to transfer electors residing in the shires of Wiluna and Ngaanyatjaraku to the district of Kalgoorlie and allocate the residual geographic area of these shires to the district of Kimberley.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commission Proposed Boundaries July 2023  
<[http://www.boundaries.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/documents/2023\\_proposed/Electoral%20Distribution%20Commissioners%20Explanatory%20Statement.pdf](http://www.boundaries.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/documents/2023_proposed/Electoral%20Distribution%20Commissioners%20Explanatory%20Statement.pdf)>14.

## **Objection**

This objection notes a critical constraint placed on the Commissioners – that of:

### *LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS*

*The Act requires that Western Australia be divided into 59 electoral districts, with each district electing one member to serve in the Legislative Assembly. The Commissioners do not have the power to change the number of electoral districts in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>2</sup>*

The Commissioners were further confined in their scope by the legislative requirements of the

### *PRESCRIBED ENROLMENT[S] IN EACH DISTRICT*

*The Act requires the Commissioners to calculate the Average District Enrolment (ADE) across all Legislative Assembly seats as at the “relevant day” by dividing the number of electors in Western Australia by the number of Legislative Assembly districts. The total number of electors on the State electoral roll as at 13 March 2023 was 1,795,461. Divided by the total number of electoral districts (59), this results in an ADE of 30,432 electors.<sup>3</sup>*

The outcome, and the desire to keep ‘like with like’ as in the case of residents in the shires of Wiluna and Ngaanyatjarraku to be incorporated into the district of Kalgoorlie, is that the Commissioners have reconfigured almost the entire state, with some exceptions where electorates have remained unchanged.

This objection notes and agrees with the outcome. However, the authors re-iterate their earlier comment

What was not found in the suggestions was reference to the general increase in the population of Western Australia from just over 2 million persons (ABS data) in 2005 to nearly 3 million persons in 2023, and certainly 3 million by 2025. The 59 Legislative Assembly members are trying to represent and service 50 per cent more people in 2023 than the 57 members had to in 2005. That may go some way to explain what appears to be a lack of public services generally in Western Australia.

It is recognised that an amendment to the Western Australian Constitution is beyond the scope of this review but it is suggested that the difficulties faced by the people of Ellenbrook and similar communities might be better addressed by increasing the number of members by at least two and leave the electorate of North West Central (suggested to be Central in our previous suggestion) as it stands.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander R Fullarton and Brett K Davies ‘Comment on Suggestions – Electoral Boundaries in Western Australia 2025

## **Recommendations**

- This objection acknowledges the constraint of the scope of the review and submits that the proposed increase in the size of the Legislative Assembly be increased by two seats to acknowledge the growing population of Western Australia and the need for competent parliamentary representation of both the urban and regional areas should be considered by Parliament.
- It also suggests that the name Mid West should be hyphenated as in ‘Collie-Preston’ ‘Warren-Blackwood’ and others in accordance with the Macquarie Dictionary and uniformity. That omission may have been an oversight.