

Ob 68

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 11 August 2023 12:25 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ob68 - FW: Objection to reducing regional representation in the new electoral boundaries
Attachments: Objection to reducing regional representation in the new electoral boundaries..pdf

Objection 68.

W.A.E.C. RECORDS	
FILE No.	DST 0152
DATE:	10 AUG 2023
ACTION BY:	

From: J [REDACTED] Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2023 2:41 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Objection to reducing regional representation in the new electoral boundaries

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To WA Electoral Commission

Please find attached my submission to object to the proposed reduction of regional seats, by merging two already very large electorates into one.

Thank you

J [REDACTED] Kelly

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.

Doc - 003649

WA Electoral Commission
Level 2
111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

10 August 2023

J [REDACTED] Kelly
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] WA 6510

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Opposition to the merging of the Moore Electorate with Northwest Central, including some with Central Wheatbelt and Geraldton.

I object to the merging of the regional seats (as indicated above) which will ultimately result in the regional areas having even less representation, support and advocacy for a necessary and important voice in parliament for WA regions.

Every voice matters to the regions and one should not be taken away based solely on electoral numbers across a specific area.

Retaining a distinction between metropolitan and non-metropolitan electoral districts is imperative to provide a meaningful voice for the WA country regions.

- Retaining our regional numbers in parliament is an essential ingredient towards achieving this.
- Reducing our regional representation in parliament will just further erode the confidence and opinion of rural and mining people that they are being marginalised and that the regions don't matter.
- Adding an additional seat in the city will do little to assist in the understanding by city electors of how the people in the regions exist and what their needs and circumstances are. City voters and members of parliament will certainly only look to 'their own backyard' requirements in the first instance.

Merging of electoral boundaries in the regions listed above should not be made by elector numbers over a given area alone or statistics on a page calculated by a computer. Western Australia is an extremely large state.

There is a huge gap between city and country regions in terms of understanding and meeting the needs of city and regional communities. The lack of essential services available (already challenging) and the ability to improve the services relies heavily on political representation and advocacy. Something as simple as IT communications is not necessarily a readily available service or is a very poor service in many regions. If more people leave the rural areas because they feel disenfranchised through inadequate representation in the parliament, will we end up with just one seat for the regions, based on statistics/electoral numbers?

In addition, there are specific and diverse demographic activities pertaining to each regional district which must be considered to provide adequate parliamentary representation.
Eg mining vs pastoral vs farming vs fishing vs tourism/small businesses.

Government representation for the needs of these mining, fishing, pastoral, agricultural and small rural business activities are quite different and whilst some can be combined within the same voice, they cannot all be put in one bucket and receive adequate representation

Further centralisation of the voting population by taking a representative voice away from the regions and giving Perth an additional voice is a travesty. The electoral commission's 'one size fits all approach,' by numbers and statistics alone, to further diminish 'fair play' for regional areas, presents a total lack of understanding of the diversity in regional areas, the size of Western Australia as a state and the centralization that has occurred. In our democracy, fair representation of the voices of the people both country and city is essential. This 'one size fits all' approach threatens our democracy and a 'fair go' for all, which is part of our national identity.

The regions already feel severely disadvantaged based purely on numbers and seats in the parliament. The regions have always 'done their bit and more' towards the state's economy but it seems as though there is a thought process by 'city armchair' public servants that being even more unrepresented is OK.

As part of your calculations, please consider the huge area of land and towns which will be encompassed by one voice and the inability of that voice to advocate for all the regional people in that seat and the many diverse industries and businesses. Without adequate representation the ongoing production of much needed resources to support this state will flounder.

It is hard to imagine how a single representative could cover a proposed "Mid West" area in a year to speak to constituents, let alone attend several events in one day. This puts those in metropolitan seats covering only several suburbs at a greater advantage by being able to spend minimal time away from family, be seen more within their electorate, have less travel time and expenses, more availability of travel options, less fatigue, have greater ability to care for their health and wellbeing, and a great ability to be part of and contribute to community and family life. From this perspective 'the numbers just don't add up'.

Additionally, a desktop study which looks at figures alone does not provide for those communities which are hosting and supporting migrants. For example, the Shire of Dalwallinu has undertaken the Dalwallinu Repopulation Program which has attracted hundreds of visa workers, who are transitioning to citizens and bringing their wives and children to Dalwallinu to establish their future there. As a result the Dalwallinu District High school has grown and attracted several more teachers. The Shire is well known for its significant booming manufacturing hub providing vital service to the agricultural and mining sectors and this is evidenced by their large employment figures. Can you explain how this scenario has been included in your study? Can you explain how these migrants will get their unique voice heard when elected representatives may only get to their location once a year if lucky?

In looking at the Electoral Districts Proposed several northern districts stand out with a much higher variance of 6.14% (Joondalup) and 6.41% (Kalgoorlie), followed closely by Hillary's at (5.79%). This rings alarm bells, and questions as to what configurations might have been on offer to assist maintaining 16 non-metropolitan seats if the entire 59 Electoral Districts (instead of 53) were totally reconfigured.

Please find another way and maintain the current 16 rural seats in the parliament.

Regards

J

[REDACTED]