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From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Thursday, 24 August 2023 1:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: 305 - FW: Response to Suggestions - Boundaries

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From: John Willett [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 16 August 2023 3:27 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Response to Suggestions - Boundaries

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Dear Commissioner,

We wish to respond to electoral boundary suggestions published on your website.

In the publication of the proposed electoral boundary changes the Electoral Commission deems provides all the data to justify the new boundary distribution. In the data there is adequate evidence of such grounds and the Labor Party's long held perspective of "one vote – one value".

Our reasons for objection are as follows:

- An ever-expanding metropolitan electorate whilst catering for a similar number of electors is more accessible to represent due to the geographical spread of the suburbs making up the electorate. Members of Parliament elected as such, have a much simpler and easier tasks of tapping into issues that affect their metropolitan electorate.
 - Electors in metropolitan seats also have easier access to meeting and consultation with their elected member as the electorate office (only one permitted per electorate) is within a smaller travelling distance.
 - The breadth of issues affecting the electorate are more likely to "localised" and "similar" due to the density of population.
- In the current electorate of Moore, the local member is constantly "on the road" tapping into local issues affecting the local communities which make up the electorate. This, constant "communication in person" whilst challenging for the elected member, is always welcome and acknowledged, whether one agrees or disagrees with a stated position.
 - The breadth of issues affecting the electorate are far broader due to the make-up of the region and the industries that provide resources for the Metropolitan area.
 - The capacity to adequately represent the electorate, whilst challenging, is still feasible. (Our current member travels 70,000 – 90,000kms approximately / year)
- In the proposed changes to the electoral boundaries, the representation of electors, whilst meeting the criteria of "one vote – one value", the criteria of adequate representation of the issues, industries and services of communities, towns, including farming and resources is almost impossible.

- Under current legislation, an elected member can only have one electoral office and then that office is central to a region of thousands of kilometres, the “value” and quality of communication is greatly lessened and diminished.
- The capacity of an elected member to adequately represent the issues in an electorate that supports a significant and varied range of regional needs (towns, farming, industries) is almost impossible. This is not “value”. The proposed electorate of Mid West covers mining, pastoral, fishing, manufacturing, tourism and multiple communities of electors.
- The quality of access to government in any locality hinges on the quality of candidates and capability to adequately represent the views of the electorate. Whilst major parties provide the promised agenda for the electorate to focus on when casting their vote, the broader views of the electorate are often not represented in the proposed agenda.
 - Where one regional electorate is almost ten times the size of a metropolitan electorate and a significantly broader agenda to address, the capacity to attract quality candidates who are willing to sacrifice more to represent honestly their electorate agenda is limited.
 - Compare the lifestyle of regional representatives with their metropolitan counterparts and the comparison demonstrates contrasts that would not be within the capacity of metropolitan elected members.

Whilst the legislation to adjust the boundaries has passed parliament, the Electoral Commission needs to consider the justice and fairness of the proposed changes to :

- The capacity of electors in regional areas to have access to their elected member for face-to-face discussions as well as regular attendance at community events.
- The capacity of an elected member to adequately represent a regional electorate which covers a wide range of communities, (including schools, hospitals) and industries (including agriculture, manufacturing, fishing and resources)
- The capacity of attracting quality candidates to put themselves forward to represent regional communities when the task of representation is unfair and unjust when compared to metropolitan electorates. Who would nominate to represent an electorate that is destined to be two times the size of Victoria and half the size of NSW ?

The proposed amalgamation of the District of Moore and North West Central may be politically expedient when based upon “one vote – one value”, however, the quality of representation of electors is neither just nor fair to all communities and industries covered in this proposed change.

Despite consistently suffering worse outcomes than their city cousins, regional West Australians will lose 18 dedicated regional representatives after the next election due to changes to a whole-of-state electorate in the Legislative Council.

It is of utmost importance that this loss of representation in the upper house is not compounded by reduced legislative assembly representation.

Having read the published suggestions, I support the resounding collective sentiment from many submissions that sixteen regional seats must be maintained.

The Labor Party’s suggestion to abolish the North West Central electorate in favour of new metropolitan seats may benefit their political fortunes but it would be a devastating blow for regional communities that clearly need more representation now; not less.

Please consider how this redistribution will ensure democratic equity and The fate of regional West Australians is in your hands.

Sincerely,

John Willett

Linda Jacobsen-Willett

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.

