

488 Ob

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ACTION BY:	

**From:** Sandie Spencer  
**Sent:** Monday, 21 August 2023 9:11 AM  
**To:** Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Proposed Boundaries for 2025 State General Election

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Good morning,

Please find attached correspondence from the Shire of Brookton's objection to the Proposed Boundaries for the 2025 State General Election.

Thank you

Kind regards  
Sandie



**Sandie Spencer**  
**Executive Governance Officer**  
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OUR REF: GOV029A  
ENQUIRIES/CONTACT: GARY SHERRY



Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners  
Electoral Boundaries WA  
boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au

Dear Sirs

**SHIRE OF BROOKTON - OBJECTION - PROPOSED BOUNDARIES FOR THE 2025 STATE GENERAL ELECTION**

I enclose the objection of the Shire of Brookton to the proposed boundaries for the 2025 state general election.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Shire of Brookton or 0427 421 032.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "GSR", written over a light blue background.

Gary Sherry  
Chief Executive Officer

18<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Enc



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## **OBJECTION**

### **Proposed Boundaries for the 2025 State General Election**

#### **Overview**

The Shire of Brookton objects to the proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one as the reduction in political representation will negatively impact rural and regional communities.

#### **Basis of Objection**

##### **Diminished political representation**

The Shire of Brookton recognises the importance of political representation. With demographic and other forces pulling people and resources away from some regions towards the metropolitan area, political representation becomes increasingly important.

The Commissioners' proposal to reduce the number of non-metropolitan districts by one, will significantly reduce the political representation of regional communities, including the Shire of Brookton. This reduction in representation is compounded by the 2021 change to the Legislative Council regions to create a whole of state electorate.

The Shire of Brookton's opposes the 'one vote, one value' reform on the basis that the voice of regional, rural, and remote communities would be overwhelmed by the relative number of voters in metropolitan Perth.

Regional communities need effective representation to ensure that the unique needs and challenges of people living outside the metropolitan area are adequately addressed at a State level.

##### **Increased pressure on regional Local Governments**

As political representation of non-metropolitan communities at the State level is diminished, the political representation provided by rural Local Governments will become even more important. This additional responsibility will be challenging for Shire of Brookton, where the current capacity and resourcing is stretched.

The service provision expectations and requirements of Local Governments have increased considerably, rarely with commensurate increases in funding and resourcing. This has led to Local Governments, particularly in rural and remote parts of Western Australia, providing services previously the responsibility of other spheres



of government. The Shire of Brookton currently provides aged and social housing services and has previously provided residential aged care services. Diminished political representation, requiring Shire of Brookton to fill another gap, will further stretch capacity and resources.

#### **The contributions of non-metropolitan regions**

In considering political representation it is important to acknowledge the economic contribution of non-metropolitan districts to the wealth and standard of living in Western Australia.

Regional Western Australia makes a significant contribution to the WA economy. As of July 2023, the regions accounted for 35 percent of Gross State Product. Regional WA is also a significant employer, with more than 300,000 jobs located in regional WA – around 25% of the state's total workforce. Many of these jobs are located in the agriculture and mining industries.

Regional WA is home to many of the state's key export industries, including the mining and agriculture sectors. WA is an exports-based economy, and accounts for around half of the national goods exports total each year. Goods exports currently account for 61 percent (\$247 billion) of Western Australia's gross state product. As the prevalence of fly-in-fly-out has increased, it is crucial that the permanent residents of communities that host the bulk of WA's export industries remain politically represented.

#### **Resourcing of electorate offices in the regions**

Even before the proposed reduction of non-metropolitan Legislative Assembly districts, there was a need for additional resourcing in the regions to improve the capacity of State representatives to service their electorate. This is particularly true for those electorates that cover a large geographical area. Any reduction in overall regional representation will only exacerbate this problem.

Resourcing for electorate offices in the regions needs to be significantly increased to improve the capacity of representatives to engage with communities within their electorate. The ability for a State Member to effectively represent the interests of their electorate is reliant upon their ability to effectively communicate with and hear from their constituents. An increase in resources, including staff, is needed for electorate offices in non-metropolitan districts, particularly those covering vast distances.

#### **Conclusion**

The Shire of Brookton acknowledges the challenges and limited scope inherent to the Commissioners' task to propose electoral boundary changes. Nevertheless, the Shire of Brookton supports strong and effective political representation for the non-

metropolitan districts to ensure that regional WA is supported to continue to generate export and employment opportunities that benefit us all.

Any further reduction in political representation at the State level will necessarily lead to an expectation that regional Local Governments will expand to fill this gap, a role that may stretch Local Governments beyond their capacity and resources.

Representation for non-metropolitan districts (especially those covering large geographical areas) also needs bolstering by increased resources for electorate offices.

**The Shire of Brookton's objection to the proposed boundaries are on the basis that the reduction of non-metropolitan districts will:**

- 1. Further diminish political representation for regional communities;**
- 2. Increase pressure on regional Local Governments; and**
- 3. Fail to recognise the contributions of non-metropolitan districts to the WA economy.**

**The Shire of Brookton supports increased resourcing for electorate offices in non-metropolitan districts, particularly those that cover a large geographical area, to ensure effective political representation at the State level.**