

510 OB

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2023 2:54 PM
To:
Subject: 510 OB
Attachments: GECZ Objection Boundary Proposals - Aug 2023 (ID 660592).pdf

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 August 2023 1:26 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Cc: James McGovern <walga.asn.au>
Subject: Great Eastern Country Zone | Objection to Proposed Boundaries

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Good Afternoon,

Please find **attached** an objection to the Commissioners' proposed boundaries for the 2025 State General Election on behalf of the Great Eastern Country Zone of WALGA.

The Zone consists of 16 Local Governments in the Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia.

If you have any queries about the objection or require more information, please refer to the contact details on page 2 of the document.

Kind regards,
Naoimh Donaghy

For James McGovern, Zone Executive Officer

James McGovern | Manager Governance and Procurement | WALGA
(p) (08) 9213 2093 | (m) [REDACTED] (e) jmccgovern@walga.asn.au

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WALGA acknowledges the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, culture and community. We embrace the vast Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia, including Boorloo (Perth), on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar People, where WALGA is located and we acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past and present.

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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.

GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE

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WEST PERTH 6872

Ph: (08) 9213 2093
email: [REDACTED]

ABN 96 022 769 145



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Shires of:

Bruce Rock
Cunderdin
Dowerin
Kellerberrin
Kondinin
Koorda
Merredin Mt
Marshall
Mukinbudin
Narembeen
Nungarin
Tammin
Trayning
Westonia
Wyalkatchem
Yilgam

Objection

Proposed Boundaries for the 2025 State General Election

August 2023

GREAT EASTERN COUNTRY ZONE

About the Great Eastern Country Zone

The Great Eastern Country Zone consists of President's, Councillors and CEOs of 16 Local Governments in the eastern wheatbelt region of WA. The Zone meets to consider regional issues and provide input to WALGA's Advocacy positions.

The Local Governments in the Zone are as follows:

Shire of Bruce Rock
Shire of Cunderdin
Shire of Dowerin
Shire of Kellerberrin
Shire of Kondinin
Shire of Koorda
Shire of Merredin
Shire of Mt Marshall

Shire of Mukinbudin
Shire of Narembeen
Shire of Nungarin
Shire of Tammin
Shire of Trayning
Shire of Westonia
Shire of Wyalkatchem
Shire of Yilgarn

Contacts

James McGovern
Executive Officer to the Great Eastern
Country Zone
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WALGA
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Leederville, WA, 6007
PO Box 1544, West Perth, WA, 6872
(p) (08) 9213 2000 | (e) info@walga.asn.au

Basis of Objection

Diminished Political Representation

As a representation of the 16 Local Government communities within the Zone, the Great Eastern Country Zone 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. This reduction in representation is compounded by the 2021 change to the Legislative Council regions to create a whole of state electorate. The Great Eastern Country Zone also made a submission at the time of the 2021 review opposing 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 and more populous regional centres.

The perspective of many regional communities is that, without sufficient political representation, their concerns will be "out of sight, out of mind", swamped by the sheer weight of voters in metropolitan Perth and large regional centres. 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.

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Increased pressure on regional Local Governments

As political representation of non-metropolitan communities at the State level is diminished, the political representation provided by Local Governments will become even more important. This additional responsibility will be challenging for many non-metropolitan Local Governments such as those within the Great Eastern Country Zone, already stretched beyond their current capacity and resourcing.

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. Contemporary examples include the provision of primary health care; aged care; housing; and economic development. Diminished political representation, requiring Local Government 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.¹

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.

¹ WA Economic Profile – July 2023, [Western Australia's economy and international trade \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au)

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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 Great Eastern Country Zone acknowledges the challenges and limited scope inherent to the Commissioners' task to propose electoral boundary changes. Nevertheless, the Great Eastern Country Zone 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 Great Eastern Country Zone's objection to the proposed boundaries is 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 Great Eastern Country Zone and its Members support 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.