

515 OB

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2023 2:58 PM
To:
Subject: 515 OB
Attachments: Dear Redistribution Commissioners.docx

From:
Sent: Monday, 21 August 2023 2:02 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Response - Boundary changes.

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Dear Commissioner,

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

Please find my letter attached above.

Sincerely,

Narelle Smith.

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.

W.A.E.C. RECORDS	
FILE No.	051 0152
DATE:	21 AUG 2023
ACTION BY:	

Dear Redistribution Commissioners,

I wish to communicate to you my objection to the electoral boundaries you have proposed for the Legislative Assembly.

The decision to replace another regional electorate with a metropolitan one is unacceptable. Doing this will diminish the influence of regional Western Australia where we are already struggling to be heard & represented adequately to confront our various challenges. This proposed reconfiguration seems to undervalue the essential need to preserve shared community interests. It completely overlooks already expressed views from West Australians asking for the retention of 16 regional seats. Additionally, this proposed change also dismisses proposals that present a clear case for preserving the current level of regional representation in compliance with the Electoral Act.

For regional electorates, which already cover larger areas, it will demand regional MLAs to travel greater distances, represent more diverse communities, and judiciously distribute their funding allocations across more expansive areas. The merging of regional seats risks voter exclusion due to the increase in already sizable constituencies. This change threatens to centralise power in metropolitan areas, creating unbalanced representation where urban concerns will dominate & overshadow regional interests. The proposed boundaries neglect the need to preserve the cohesiveness of our communities and dismiss advocacy for the public with the reduction to the current 16 regional seats. This proposed move shows a very concerning trend, that has stripped regional voters of 18 crucial upper house representatives. Since the 1987 redistribution, 12 lower house seats have been removed from regional WA. These facts need to be seriously considered to ensure any future boundary alterations to continue to secure fair representation for all Western Australians.

Of the many changes proposed, I object most strongly to:

1. The removal of the Moore electorate and the Northwest Central electorates to create a new Mid-west electorate, separates areas with a strong community interest from each other such as Exmouth and Carnarvon.
2. The large Moore electorate has maintained connection between communities of interest. The new Mid-West electorate will bring together a very diverse variety of communities. It's hard to see where Commissioners found commonality. The proposed seat would span from Muchea to a few kilometres south of Newman. This is more than 1,000km from top to bottom with no large population centre within this boundary. It would be a difficult & near impossible task for any local member to provide accountable & timely service to the constituents.
3. The separating of regional shires across Western Australia - such as Victoria Plains - for the mere transfer of a few hundred votes between electorates threatens tightly knitted regional communities who depend on shared essential services. These communities, which often operate as interconnected units, may face significant disruption due to such electoral adjustments. It is extremely important that regional local councils remain linked & undivided to ensure the ability to continue serving their community in an effective way. Electoral considerations should be the priority with the view of maintaining unity and integrity of regional communities, not votes.
4. Under the proposed boundary changes, residents of the Shire of Chapman Valley and Mullewa would be included in the electorate of Geraldton, there being no common ground with respect to land use patterns.
5. With the previous dividing of the Shire of Northampton between Mid-west and Geraldton electorates, the communities within this local government area have suffered the challenge & consequences of working with two separate Members of Parliament who represent vast areas.
6. With the creation of a new Oakford electorate - it's clear in the data released by the Commission, that there is no justification for it to be created as this area is already adequately represented.

I stand with thousands of regional West Australians expressing our disappointment at this redistribution, viewing it as a backward step & inequality for communities affected by this change. I implore you to re-evaluate your proposal, ensuring the preservation of the 16 regional seats.

Sincerely,
Narelle Smith.

Terrace Hill, Mullewa, WA, 6632.

