

532 OB

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**From:** Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox  
**Sent:** Friday, 25 August 2023 3:11 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** 532 OB  
**Attachments:** Submission\_A Cooke\_21Aug23.docx

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 21 August 2023 5:04 PM  
**To:** Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** proposed boundary changes

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Good afternoon  
Pls find attached  
Alison Cooke

*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.	DST 0152
DATE:	21 AUG 2023
ACTION BY:	_____

imanager 187936

mc - 004105



Dear Redistribution Commissioners

### **Proposed electoral boundary changes**

I write to object to the proposed boundary changes that would see the seats of **Moore** and **North West Central** amalgamated to form Mid West, with the loss of a regional electorate. My objection is on the following grounds:

- Community of interest
  - The new proposed seat of Mid West would span more than 430,000km<sup>2</sup>, a six-fold increase in the size of the current seat of Moore and an area twice that of Victoria and half that of New South Wales. It would stretch from Muchea on the outskirts of Perth to Meekatharra in the Murchison and to Carnarvon on the Gascoyne coast.
  - Regional communities suffer a great deal of disadvantage compared to Metropolitan areas. Health, aged care, education, childcare, housing, communications, road safety and power supplies all need greater investment in the regions. Labor's attempts to shut down School of the Air, the Moora Residential College, the Live Export trade and impose the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 and do away with the Legislative Council districts and abolish another regional seat in the Legislative Assembly all leave regional communities feeling helpless and as though they are constantly under attack and being undermined. Everything in the regions seems to be a struggle and there are not the availability of mental health services to cope.
  - There is little commonality between the peri-urban community of Muchea and Meekatharra. Muchea residents can travel 37km to visit one of two tertiary hospitals at Midland or Joondalup while Meekatharra residents are still waiting for upgrades to their hospital that were axed by the Labor government in 2017. Likewise, Geraldton residents await the upgrade of that hospital – on 2 December 2022, the ABC reported that upgrades to the Geraldton hospital were unlikely to be complete 10 years after they were announced. Similarly upgrades to the Mullewa Hospital announced in 2016 still remain at the design stage and local residents face a 100km trip to Geraldton. Regional residents having to visit health specialists in the metro area receive a paltry amount under the PATS scheme, putting them at further financial disadvantage.
  - The absence of hospitals on the Turquoise and Mid West Coasts between Joondalup and Geraldton is an issue for residents and tourists. These are communities that many retirees favour in old age and come the summer months, populations swell during the holiday season.
  - The Bindoon bypass is an example of a transport project that is desperately needed but has been delayed for years. Meanwhile truckloads of ammonium nitrate travel through the community of Bindoon enroute to the state's mines in the Pilbara. A recent incident near New Norcia saw the need for a 4km exclusion zone when a truck carrying ammonium nitrate did a wheel

bearing. Billions has been spent on Metronet projects whilst regional projects are overlooked or delayed.

- Land use patterns

- Aside from the enormous geographical area, this area covers an incredibly diverse range of land uses – from rural peri-urban blocks, to horticulture, intensive animal production, broadacre mixed farming, grazing enterprises, mining, coastal communities involved in fishing, tourism, manufacturing industry and pastoral leases. Such a diversity of land use and industry has vastly different needs, be that regulatory or demand for staff. The intensive pork or chicken production systems in the Chittering, Gingin or Victoria Plains Shires are vastly different to the low input pastoral stations that may have diversified into carbon farming activities found in the Murchison.

- Means of communication, travel, distance from the capital

- The Legislative Assembly sitting calendar covers 20 weeks per year. It is very difficult to see how a Member can adequately service such a vast area in the weeks remaining with so much time lost to travel. Given that telecommunications in the regions are unreliable with frequent blackspots encountered whilst travelling by car, there is limited ability to be in communication with constituents and staff whilst travelling.
- It is really not practical to fly within the electorate of Moore, aside from meetings in Geraldton and trips to Northampton given the need for a vehicle whilst on the ground. Currently the Member for Moore travels between 70,000 to 90,000km per annum in an electorate of 71,817km<sup>2</sup>.
- The distance from Perth to Meekatharra is 756km and from Perth to Carnarvon is 890km.

- Existing Local Government boundaries

- Mid West would see two Local Government areas – Victoria Plains and Northampton – split between different electorates, being Central Wheatbelt and Geraldton respectively. It is difficult for a Local Government to deal with two different MPs.
- Mid West would span four WALGA Country zones – Northern, Avon-Midland, Murchison and Gascoyne.

- Political impacts

- Moore and North West Central residents need easy access to their Member of Parliament. They face a far greater degree of disadvantage and need compared to Metropolitan residents.
- The current workload of regional MPs who hold shadow portfolios is immense because there is so few of them. This places further pressures on the time they are available to meet with constituents who are spread over vast geographical areas.

Yours sincerely

**Alison Cooke**

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