

Office of the Chief Executive

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27 July 2007

The Secretary
Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners
GPO Box F316
PERTH WA 6841

Dear Commissioners

PROPOSED NEW ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES AFFECTING THE SHIRE OF MUNDARING

I write to raise the Shire's concerns about the proposed new State electoral boundaries, specifically as they affect the Shire of Mundaring.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed redistribution, which we believe will have a significant detrimental effect on our community. Already the Shire of Mundaring is in the difficult position of falling into three electorates: Swan Hills, Midland and Darling Range. The latest proposal would increase this to five electorates (adding the proposed seats of Kalamunda and Forrestfield).

Effect of 2003 Redistribution

It is worth noting that prior to the 2003 redistribution the majority of Perth Hills localities were represented by one member, known as the seat of Mundaring and later renamed the seat of Swan Hills. It is true that for some time Darlington fell within the seat of Darling Range, however, at least that township fell into one electorate in its entirety.

However, in the 2003 redistribution the locality of Darlington was divided in two. On election day, residents were confused and angry at the Darlington booth when they found that they were forced to vote for a candidate in the Midland electorate, which holds little relevance to them. The fact that such a small and geographically sequestered area like Darlington was split between electorates made no sense to residents.

We are concerned that the current proposal will further confuse, anger and reduce effective representation for the residents of the Shire of Mundaring. We request that communities of interest be taken into greater account in your considerations.

Anticipated Effect of 2007 Redistribution

Under the 2007 proposed redistribution, we are faced with being represented by five MPs representing different parts of the Shire. The Member for Midland will retain part of Darlington, which has little in common with the largely urban remainder of Midland; the new seat of Forrestfield will have a part of Helena Valley; the new seat of Kalamunda will have the other half of Darlington and a portion of Glen Forrest, and the altered seat of Darling Range will collect Mundaring and Sawyers Valley, while Swan Hills will retain the localities to the north of the Great Eastern Highway.

This is an unacceptable proposal. Not only does it make an already confusing situation worse, it reduces the effectiveness of representation for Shire residents by virtue of its confusing and illogical boundaries, which cross well known local government boundaries and various communities of interest. For example, residents may find themselves bounced from one MP to another in an attempt to engage the 'correct' political representative. Alternatively we may find ourselves tripping over too many MPs purporting to assist but in reality adding to the confusion.

The Shire itself will be faced with having to keep five MPs briefed on issues or to engage in their assistance to seek representation to other parts of Government. Given the relatively small proportion of the Shire within the overall seat for each of those five members, it is not unreasonable to suggest that an MP will spend less time within and responding to concerns from residents in those areas, or from the Shire of Mundaring. Should the MPs be from different political parties, this issue will be even harder to manage.

The proposed expansion of the seat of Darling Range is also of concern. The seat is proposed to traverse the metropolitan region from Sawyer's Valley in the north east to Serpentine-Jarrahdale in the south and then across towards Kwinana in the east. We are of the view that a member will be hard pressed to represent a large metropolitan seat with such enormous diversity of community interest. As such it is reasonable to expect that effective representation will be diminished.

Naming of Seats

At the very least it is suggested that the names of the proposed seats of Kalamunda and Forrestfield be reviewed. Both names reflect suburbs within the Shire of Kalamunda and this will be confusing for Shire of Mundaring residents. For the seat of Darling Range to include much of the low lying 'lakes' areas of the south east metropolitan region is also a misnomer.

Conclusion

The division of the Shire of Mundaring into five separate electoral districts is a retrograde step which will leave our residents worse off in relation to our metropolitan counterparts. Not only will this cause extensive confusion among residents, but the ability to efficiently address Shire issues and affect all Shire residents will be impeded.

The Shire is aware of the difficulties associated with the task of electoral boundary redistribution. Nevertheless, the proposal for the East Metropolitan region and its particular detrimental effects on the Shire of Mundaring necessitates a review to rationalise the proposed boundaries in line with the strong communities of interest that exist in the Shire and thereby to reduce the number of seats within one local government's boundary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Throssell', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Throssell
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER