

The Secretary
Justin Harboard
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Dear Justin

I would like to suggest two main changes to the draft electorate boundaries released by the Commissioners.

The first is that the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku plus the community of Kiwirrkurra be located into the electorates serviced from Kalgoorlie-Boulder – either in the new seat of Goldfields or new electorate of Eyre, for the following reasons.

1. Transport links to Warburton – the administrative centre for the shire and the Aboriginal lands – is to Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Twice weekly flights between Warburton and Kalgoorlie-Boulder mean all business with the Lands is done from either Kalgoorlie-Boulder or Alice Springs. The road through the Lands is part of the Outback Highway, which goes from Kalgoorlie-Boulder to Leonora and Laverton and onto Alice Springs. There is no road to the Pilbara.
2. Culturally the Lands are linked to the Wongatha people in the North East Goldfields and then to Kalgoorlie-Boulder.
3. Government services to the Lands come from Kalgoorlie-Boulder, not Port Hedland nor Karratha. To force the people in the lands to seek political representation from where there is no traditional link would be seen as a snub to these people.
4. As well as government departments, both Federal and State, local government has Ngaanyatjarraku Shire in the Goldfields zone of the Western Australian Local Government Association.
5. Kiwirrkurra should go with the remainder of the Lands for the same reasons above, and approaches have been made to my office to have this community included in the Ngaanyatjarraku Shire.

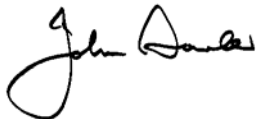
The second is that Esperance and Ravensthorpe should be retained in the Agriculture Region for the following reasons:-

1. The State Parliament's recent electoral law changes never envisaged at any stage, nor was it foreshadowed in any debate, that the Mining and Pastoral Region's boundary would be up for alteration in this way; in fact the Parliament specifically proposed to quarantine the Mining & Pastoral region – the most remote region in the state – from the impact of the “one vote, one value” legislation;
2. The Electoral Boundaries Redistribution Commissioners are encouraged to recognise that the Parliament intended to have particular regard to the particular set of circumstances faced by the people of the most remote region from the state capital and not to enforce the “one vote, one value” on this region; the circumstances taken into account in this decision were not only the geographic remoteness of this entire region, but also the socio-economic demographic of the people of this region;
3. The Mining and Pastoral region has within it, prior to the implementation of any redistribution proposal, a large aboriginal population who on any indicator are the section of the community most in need – health; education; longevity; income; and interface with the justice and corrective services systems;
4. The proposal to have the most vast region (Mining & Pastoral) so dramatically expanded to include for the first time Esperance and Ravensthorpe is to create an artificial link between the people of these towns and include them in a region with towns that go as far north from Esperance through to Kununurra and Wyndham and with remote aboriginal communities like Kalumburu;
5. Taking Esperance and Ravensthorpe away from their natural home in the Agricultural Region creates the absurd situation where there will be in that region alone just four lower house seats in a region with six upper house members! This was never envisaged or contemplated by the Parliament; it was the presumption of the legislation that the Agricultural Region would continue to retain the agricultural areas that include Esperance and Ravensthorpe;
6. Importantly, a serious negative effect by the inclusion of Esperance and Ravensthorpe in Mining and Pastoral Region is to cause unnecessary disadvantage to the people of the Kimberley region by stripping away their second voice in the state parliament and reducing the parliamentary representation of the most remote and the most socially disadvantaged and needy region. This is to adopt an approach that is counterintuitive for the following reasons: a) the Kimberley region is growing so rapidly in population and the profile of that growth amongst the aboriginal people in particular makes it clear that the region is best suited to retain two representative of the state parliament at this redistribution; and not force this region to have to wait another four more years for that representation to be returned; b) the proposal currently put forward for comment would have this region stand out within the Mining & Pastoral region as the only one with a deviation in excess of 5% (i.e. 5.49%) – and this is for a region that is notoriously under enrolled; compare this with what the current proposal does to the seats of the agricultural region which are all comparatively much closer to Perth and with a comparatively

comfortable socio-economic profile, all with significant and well below the median in enrolment, with deviations that include -4.92% and -5.61%. This is manifestly unfair.

It is therefore recommended that the Lands continue to be linked to the Goldfields and Ravensthorpe and Esperance be retained in the Agricultural Region, leaving that natural region intact, and restore to it the opportunity of five lower house seats; and then follow the intent of the decisions of the State Parliament and leave the Mining and Pastoral Region boundary intact without Esperance and Ravensthorpe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Bowler', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Bowler MLA
MEMBER FOR MURCHISON-EYRE

30 July, 2007

APPENDIX 1

About the Wheatbelt region - Population and Demographics

- 116 towns and smaller localities
- 45 local government authorities (LGA)
- Average population per LGA is 1,628
- As at 30 June 2005, estimated resident population of Wheatbelt region was 71,540, around 16% of the WACHS population;
- Projected population trend is contrary to the static/declining historical trend between 2001-2005;
- Population growth is highly variable across the Wheatbelt with the Western coastal strip experiencing relatively large increases and the eastern LGA's stable or declining.

The most recent data on population trends explodes the myth that the Wheatbelt is either stable or declining in population. While this is true for most of the inland areas, the coastal strip and those communities closest to Perth are growing at an extraordinary rate as indicated in Figure 1.

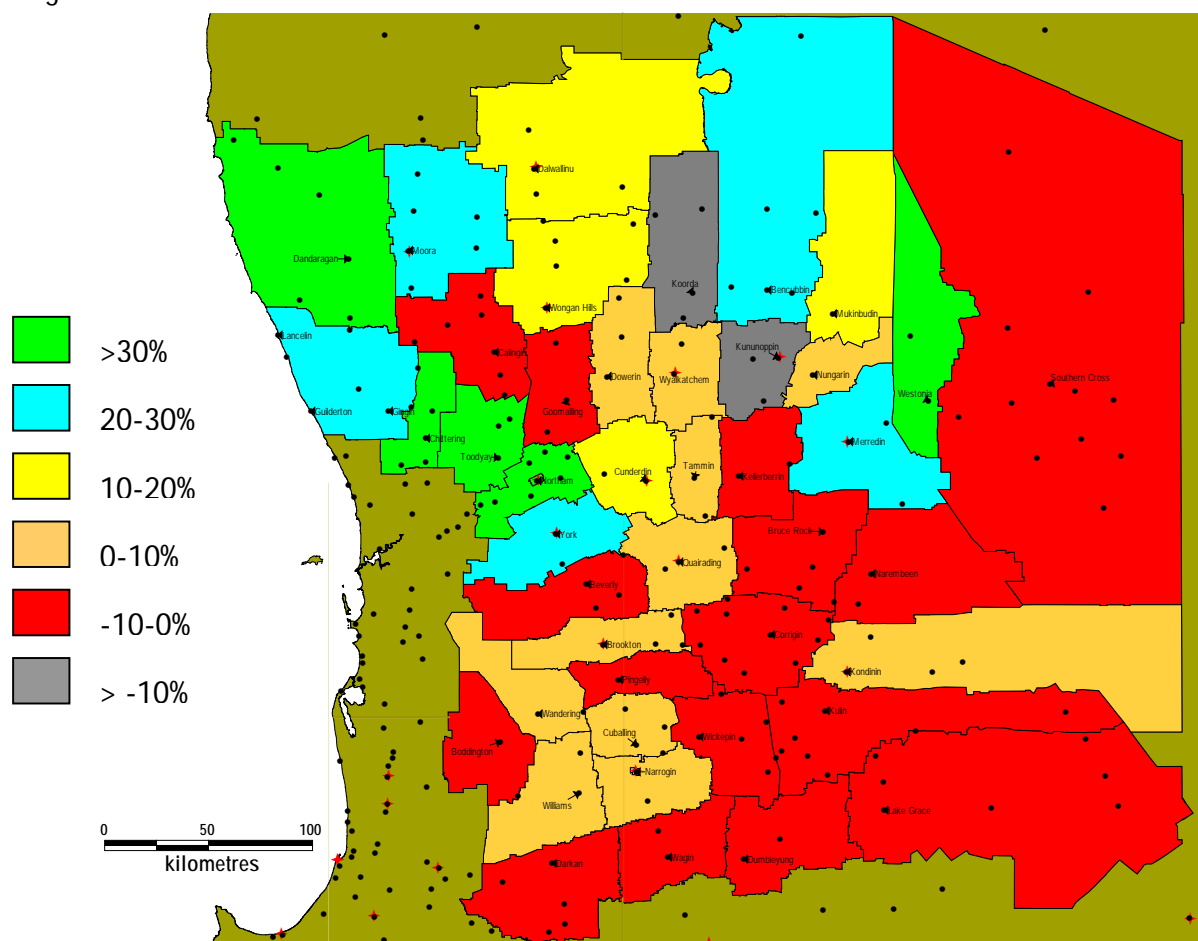


Figure 1 Population Change 2001 - 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat No. 3235.0.55.001 Population Estimates by Age and Sex, Australia and States, 2001 Western Australia Tomorrow. Population projections for planning regions 2004 to 2031 and local government areas 2004 to 2021. Population Report No. 6. November 2005

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