



*London Bridge, Sandstone ---350 Million Years Old*

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: E/25/6

21<sup>st</sup> January 2003

Ms L Auld  
Electoral Commissioner  
GPO Box F316  
PERTH WA 6841

Dear Ms Auld

Thank you for your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2002 providing the opportunity to comment on the review of the state electoral boundaries. We do not have the resources to undertake an extensive analysis of the review criteria listed however there is a fundamental underlying issue that needs to be addressed.

When our forefathers drafted the federal constitution it was with considerable foresight regarding the protection of the smaller states. They knew that the states were geographically different and sparse and would have varying populations and densities. With this knowledge they protected the small states with an equal number of Senators for each state, regardless of all other factors. This system has stood the test of time to ensure that all states have a reasonably equal opportunity within the federation.

Western Australia can to some extent be described as a scaled-down version of Australia. That is a concentration of population in a small geographic area (ie southeast of the nation c/f southwest of the state) with dispersed population cells (ie Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin c/f Albany, Kalgoorlie, Karratha) and then a scattering of people in the remainder.

Although the state elector quotient gives the country areas a two to one weighting this is somewhat less than the Senate when we compare Western Australia with New South Wales where the quotient is more like three to one and if we bring Tasmania into the picture then the quotient goes off the scale.

With the growing dominance of the metropolitan area as a proportion of the states population, even with a two to one weighting in favour of the country areas of the state the ability for the country areas to maintain decision making relevance will continue to decline.

No doubt the existing elector quotient (and number of elected members) is enshrined in some regulation however if logic, a reasonable chance for all and morality are the victims of legislation then it is the legislation that needs to be changed, particularly in a democracy.

The thrust of our comments is that the elector quotient weighting to the country areas of the state needs to be increased to ensure that those who are either involved in or supporting the industries upon which this state survives are afforded a reasonable degree of political say.

If you require clarification or any further comment please contact me.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Hastie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kim Hastie

**Chief Executive Officer**