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From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2023 1:05 PM
To: -
Subject: 361 OB
Attachments: Electorate of Moore.docx

From: Heather and Peter Brennan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 17 August 2023 4:42 PM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Objection to Electoral Boundary Changes

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a letter regarding the subject proposed changes to electoral boundaries.

Kind regards

Peter Brennan AM CSM

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:	17 AUG 2023
ACTION BY:	

Western Australia Boundary Commissioner
PO Box F316
PERTH WA 6841

Dear Sir/Madam,

We object to the electoral boundaries you have proposed for the Legislative Assembly.

The decision to replace another regional electorate with a metropolitan one is both alarming and extremely disheartening. This move further diminishes the influence of regional Western Australia, a voice already restrained by government policy and crucially needed as regional communities confront various challenges. This suggested reconfiguration seems to undervalue the essential need to preserve shared community interests. It overlooks countless expressions from regular Western Australians advocating for the retention of 16 regional seats. Disappointingly, it also dismisses thoughtfully crafted proposals that present a clear case for preserving the current level of regional representation in compliance with the Electoral Act.

Regional electorates, which already cover larger areas, demand regional MLAs to navigate 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. It also threatens to centralise power in metropolitan areas, causing an imbalance in representation where urban concerns overshadow regional interests. The proposed boundaries disregard the need to preserve the unity of our communities and dismiss public advocacy for the continued existence of the current 16 regional seats. This move signals the continuation of a worrying trend that has stripped regional voters of 18 crucial upper house representatives. Since the 1987 redistribution, 12 lower house seats have been stripped from regional WA. These considerations necessitate a rethink of these boundary alterations to secure fair representation for all Western Australians.

Of the changes proposed, I object most strongly to:

1. The elimination of both the Moore and North West Central electorates and creation of a new Mid-west electorate. This separates areas with a strong community of interest such as Exmouth and Carnarvon from each other.
2. While the Moore electorate maintained connection between communities of interest in a large electorate, the new Mid-West electorate lumps together such a vast variety of communities, it is difficult to see where Commissioners found commonality. The proposed seat would span from Muchea on the outskirts of Perth to just a few kilometres south of Newman in the north. More than 1,000km from top to tail and no large population centre within its boundaries. This is a remarkably difficult electorate for any local member to service and all but impossible for any local member to be held to account by their constituents.
3. The partitioning of regional shires across Western Australia - such as Victoria Plains - for the mere transfer of a few hundred votes between electorates threatens to rupture tightly knit 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 of utmost importance that regional local councils remain undivided, ensuring their ability to continue serving their constituents effectively. Electoral considerations should not override the necessity of maintaining the unity and integrity of these regional communities for a modest shift in votes.
4. The creation of a new Oakford electorate. As is clear in the data released by the Commission, there is no justification for the creation of a new electorate within the metropolitan area as the metropolitan area is already well within acceptable limits of representation.

We stand with thousands of regional West Australians expressing their disappointment at this redistribution. We strongly urge you to re-evaluate your proposal, ensuring the preservation of the 16 regional seats so that we can have our voices heard on issues such as health, aged care, the environment, education, childcare, housing, communications and power supplies.

We are tired of being ignored when our concerns are overridden by a metropolitan weighted political system. A prime example was the case of granting of a licence to Opalvale some years ago, to transport thousands of tons of metropolitan garbage annually and dump it in our backyard. With each case that our concerns are ignored, the less faith we have in the political system and fair representation.

Yours Faithfully
Peter and Heather Brennan

