

427 OB

S

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 25 August 2023 1:56 PM
To:
Subject: 427 OB
Attachments: Objection to reducing regional representation as proposed by the new electoral boundaries BN.PDF

From: <...@...com>
Sent: Sunday, 20 August 2023 11:51 AM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Objection to reducing regional representation as proposed by the new electoral boundaries

[External Email] This email was sent from outside the organisation. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.
 All SPAM emails must be reported using the instructions on the intranet.

Objection letter attached for the attention of the Redistribution Commissioners of the WA Electoral Commission. I am objecting to the reduced representation created by the proposed new electoral boundaries. My objection is included in the attached objection letter.
 Please advise if there is no attachment to this email. Please also confirm receipt of this email.

Thank you in advance,
 N B



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.	<u>DST 0152</u>
DATE:	10 AUG 2023
ACTION BY:	_____

iManage

187831

DOC-004016

WA Electoral Commission
boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au
GPO Box F316
PERTH
WA 6841

N. B.

WA 6510

20 August 2023

Opposition to Moore Electorate merging with Northwest Central, including part of Central Wheatbelt and Geraldton.

I write to the Redistribution Commissioners and the Electoral Commission to object to the merging of the regional seats (as indicated above) which will ultimately result in the regional areas having even less representation, support and advocacy for a necessary and important voice in parliament for WA regions.

Every voice matters to the regions and representation should not be taken away based solely on electoral numbers across a specific area. 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. Such a trend has over the years stripped regional voters of 18 crucial upper house representatives. Since the 1987 redistribution, 12 lower house seats have been stripped from regional WA. This does not support fair representation.

Retaining a distinction between metropolitan and non-metropolitan electoral districts is imperative to provide a meaningful voice for the WA country regions.

- Retaining our regional numbers in parliament is an essential ingredient towards achieving this.
- Reducing our regional representation in parliament will just further erode the confidence and opinion of rural and mining people that they are being marginalised and that the regions don't matter.
- Adding an additional seat in the city will do little to assist in the understanding by city electors of how the people in the regions exist and what their needs and circumstances are. City voters and members of parliament will certainly only look to 'their own backyard' requirements in the first instance.

Merging of electoral boundaries in the regions listed above should not be made by elector numbers over a given area alone or statistics on a page calculated by a computer. Western Australia is an extremely large state.

There is a huge gap between city and country regions in terms of understanding and meeting the needs of city and regional communities. The lack of essential services available (already challenging) and the ability to improve the services relies heavily on political representation and advocacy. Something as simple as IT communications is not necessarily a readily available service or is a very poor service in many regions. If more people leave the rural areas because they feel disenfranchised through

inadequate representation in the parliament, will we end up with just one seat for the regions, based on statistics/electoral numbers?

In addition, there are specific and diverse demographic activities pertaining to each regional district which must be considered to provide adequate parliamentary representation. Eg mining vs pastoral vs farming vs fishing vs tourism/small businesses.

Government representation for the needs of these mining, fishing, pastoral, agricultural and small rural business activities are quite different and whilst some can be combined within the same voice, they cannot all be put in one bucket and receive adequate representation

Further centralisation of the voting population by taking a representative voice away from the regions and giving Perth an additional voice is a travesty. The electoral commission's 'one size fits all approach,' by numbers and statistics alone, to further diminish 'fair play' for regional areas, presents a total lack of understanding of the diversity in regional areas, the size of Western Australia as a state and the centralization that has occurred. In our democracy, fair representation of the voices of the people both country and city is essential. This 'one size fits all' approach threatens our democracy and a 'fair go' for all, which is part of our national identity.

The regions already feel severely disadvantaged based purely on numbers and seats in the parliament. The regions have always 'done their bit and more' towards the state's economy but it seems as though there is a thought process by 'city armchair' public servants that being even more unrepresented is OK.

As part of your calculations, please consider the huge area of land and towns which will be encompassed by one voice and the inability of that voice to advocate for all the regional people in that seat and the many diverse industries and businesses. Without adequate representation the ongoing production of much needed resources to support this state will flounder.

It is hard to imagine how a single representative could cover a proposed "Mid West" area in a year to speak to constituents, let alone attend several events in one day. This puts those in metropolitan seats covering only several suburbs at a greater advantage by being able to spend minimal time away from family, be seen more within their electorate, have less travel time and expenses, more availability of travel options, less fatigue, have greater ability to care for their health and wellbeing, and a great ability to be part of and contribute to community and family life. From this perspective 'the numbers just don't add up'.

Additionally, a desktop study which looks at figures alone does not provide for those communities which are hosting and supporting migrants. For example, the Shire of Dalwallinu has undertaken the Dalwallinu Repopulation Program which has attracted hundreds of visa workers, who are transitioning to citizens and bringing their wives and children to Dalwallinu to establish their future there. As a result the Dalwallinu District High school has grown and attracted several more teachers. The Shire is well known for its significant booming manufacturing hub providing vital service to the agricultural and mining sectors and this is evidenced by their large employment figures. Can you explain how this scenario has been included in your study? Can you explain how these

migrants will get their unique voice heard when elected representatives may only get to their location once a year - if lucky?

Additionally, splitting shires like Victoria Plains where I live and work - for the mere transfer of a few hundred votes between electorates is a threat to shared essential services and can only encourage buck passing between political representatives, which lessens regional voices even further. It is of utmost importance that regional local councils remain undivided, ensuring their ability to continue serving their constituents effectively. This has not worked well with the Shire of Northampton being split in a previous configuration, and important lessons should have been learnt.

In looking at the Electoral Districts Proposed several northern districts stand out with a much higher variance of 6.14% (Joondalup) and 6.41% (Kalgoorlie), followed closely by Hillary's at (5.79%). This rings alarm bells, and questions as to what configurations might have been on offer to assist maintaining 16 non-metropolitan seats if the entire 59 Electoral Districts (instead of 53) were totally reconfigured. There is no justification for the creation of a new electorate within the metropolitan, which is an area well within acceptable limits of representation. There is a 'bad smell' about the inconsistent justification for what has occurred, which has produced unfair and un-Australian outcomes for our hard working, honest regional communities.

Please find another way and maintain the current 16 rural seats in the parliament.

Sincerely,

N B.

I request my name, address and personal details to be withheld from published information.

