

**Comment on Suggestions – Electoral Boundaries in Western
Australia 2025**

North West Central

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The authors note the suggestions made to the Commission and in particular the WA Labor submission which looks to abolish the electorate of North West Central and substitute the electorate in its place.

Generally, most suggestions point to the distinct community interests and difficulties of inter-electorate communications and transport. The WA Labor suggestion acknowledges the

lower elector numbers in districts in northern Western Australia must be addressed. It is our view that it is not possible to remedy this by moving significant numbers of electors around Western Australia into under-populated districts. We note that the Kimberley has a distinct community of interest with a unique history, rich Aboriginal culture and unique challenges; Pilbara is characterised by its central industry, mining and resources, and its boundaries should recognise and acknowledge the mining-focus of its communities; Central Wheatbelt communities have a proud 100+ year history of wool and wheat production and these communities should remain at the heart of the district; and Kalgoorlie has a strong gold mining identity, history and culture that sets these communities apart from other areas in regional WA.¹

However, it then recommends the abolition of North West Central and the electors absorbed into the surrounding electorates.

It is on that basis that we argue communities currently in the district of North West Central are most appropriate to be redistributed into neighbouring districts of Kimberley, Pilbara, Kalgoorlie, Moore and Central Wheatbelt.²

We are at a loss to understand what ‘that basis’ is. On the one hand it is the uniqueness of the electorates and on the other that there is a relatively small number of registered electors. Either equity is considered (different circumstances) or equality is the preferred factor (all persons have the same concerns and needs).

It appears the suggestion is trying to establish equity but then is caught by the statistical imperative that there are only 59 members to be distributed and that population increases around the Perth Metropolitan Area have given rise to the need to increase their parliamentary representation.

The suggestion has a conundrum – it recognises and needs another electorate, but at the same time it simply does not have another to create. Therefore, it is obliged to remove one from elsewhere and North West Central is the most convenient (or least difficult). Unfortunately, that alternative imposes further difficulties of the tyranny of distance on its already overstretched neighbours.

1 W A Labor ‘2023 Review of Western Australian State Electoral Boundaries WA Labor Submission’ <<https://www.boundaries.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/submissions/wa%20labor%20-%20s27-23.pdf>>

1.

2 Ibid.

What was not found in the suggestions was reference to the general increase in the population of Western Australia from just over 2 million persons (ABS data) in 2005 to nearly 3 million persons in 2023, and certainly 3 million by 2025. The 59 Legislative Assembly members are trying to represent and service 50 per cent more people in 2023 than the 57 members had to in 2005. That may go some way to explain what appears to be a lack of public services generally in Western Australia.

It is recognised that an amendment to the Western Australian Constitution is beyond the scope of this review but it is suggested that the difficulties faced by the people of Ellenbrook and similar communities might be better addressed by increasing the number of members by at least two and leave the electorate of North West Central (suggested to be Central in our previous suggestion) as it stands.