

WAEC
12 MAY 2023

C69

From: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2023 12:25 PM
To: [Redacted]
Subject: FW: Submission to the Electoral Boundary Commissioners
Attachments: Submission to The Electoral Boundary Commissioner.docx

Comment 69 (C69)

From: juliefreeman [Redacted] >
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2023 8:30 AM
To: Electoral Boundaries Review Mailbox <boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Submission to the Electoral Boundary Commissioners

[External Email] This email was sent from outside the organisation. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.
SPAM emails must be reported to the Helpdesk.

Please find attached to this email, my comments on the suggestions for district boundary redistribution.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

Julie Freeman
[Redacted]

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. _____
DATE: 12 MAY 2023
ACTION BY: _____

Dear Commissioner,

I wish to respond to electoral boundary suggestions published on your website.

On every measure of prosperity and well-being, regional Western Australians have worse outcomes than people who live in the metropolitan area. Representation in parliament has always been critical to the slow but vital task of improving the quality of life, infrastructure and access to services which are so necessary to redressing the balance between metropolitan and regional. Due to changes to Legislative Council representation at the next election, regional West Australians will lose 18 dedicated regional representatives as a whole-of-state electorate is established, leading to the very real possibility that every member of the Legislative Council could be based in the metropolitan area with little or no knowledge or interest in regional matters.

It is of utmost importance that this loss of representation in the upper house is not made worse by reduced Legislative Assembly representation. I therefore urge you to maintain the current number of regional Legislative Assembly seats in the coming boundary redistribution.

Having read the published suggestions, I support the resounding collective sentiment from many submissions that sixteen regional seats must be preserved.

Ultimately, the best way to increase the number of regional elected members is to arrest and reverse regional population decline and bring growth rates more in line with regional growth rates in the eastern states. This requires a significant shift in policy and a commitment to investing in service provision, infrastructure, and economic development. Until that happens, I would like to submit that the suggestion to abolish the North West Central electorate in favour of new metropolitan seats may benefit their political fortunes but it would be a devastating blow for regional communities that clearly need more representation not less.

It is too simplistic to discuss electoral equality without also considering electoral equity. Australians accept that achieving equality in many areas of society means actively removing the barriers which create disadvantage and protecting the conditions which make access and participation fair. We do not apply equality in a numerical sense, that is, 'giving everyone the same', when it comes to addressing disadvantage in disability inclusion, gender diversity, educational outcomes or cultural diversity because we know that applying a one-size-fits-all formula to disadvantaged groups will only create further disadvantage. In these circumstances we recognise that achieving equality means recognising the unique challenges of each group or individual and applying supports or removing barriers. In non-metropolitan Western Australia, the greatest barrier to participation in parliamentary process is low population.

Please consider how this redistribution will ensure democratic equity for all West Australians and maintain 16 regional electorates.

Your sincerely

Julie Freeman

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12th May 2023