

12 May 2023

Electoral Distribution Commissioners
Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commission
Email: boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au

Dear Commissioners

REVIEW OF STATE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES 2023 -COMMENT ON SUGGESTIONS

The Shire of Carnarvon offers the following comment on suggestions made regarding the review of Western Australian State electoral boundaries.

The Shire of Carnarvon notes and supports the suggestion made by the Shire of Shark Bay that the North West Central Seat be retained as is. This suggestion reflects the suggestion submitted by the Shire of Carnarvon, dated 28 April 2023.

The Shire of Carnarvon's suggestion was based on the consideration that, while current numbers in this seat are lower than the State (-23.45% variation from the average district enrolment, inclusive of the Large District Allowance), the current enrolment figures do not consider the future growth expected in the region from a significant number of new ventures, including green Hydrogen projects, Rare Earth and other mining projects and significant tourism developments across the region.

The Shire of Carnarvon commissioned Acil Allen to conduct an economic analysis of a small number of projects that are at a high degree of confidence. The modelling demonstrates that, even taking a very conservative approach, population growth of approx. 2% per annum is anticipated for the Shire of Carnarvon with similar growth for the Region.

The total number of Electors for the North West Central of 23,296 (inclusive of the Large District Allowance) would be better measured against the minimum number of enrolled electors required for a Legislative Assembly District of 27,389. This would then represent a variance of 15%, well under the 20% variance threshold.

The current tolerance level of -20% in relation to deviation from the state average be reviewed in recognition of the vast distances in the North West Central seat, and indeed throughout the North West of Australia, which cannot be overstated. It is essential to note that the area within the current North West Central seat boundary presents challenges for the local Member in being able to visit each community on a regular basis. If the area within a seat was to increase as a result of a review of the boundary, the impact would be felt at a



community level and make it even more difficult for constituents to meet with their elected representative, and for their representative to travel to meet with them.

Travel in the North West involves long-distance driving as there is little option for other transport options such as bus or air travel between communities. Given the distances, travel is not always possible within a day or two, road travel between communities in the North West can take several days. Examples of travel/drive time and distance between communities within the North West Central seat are shown below:

- Denham to Tom Price: 980kms / 10 hours
- Wiluna to Exmouth: 1500kms / 15 hours
- Sandstone to Tom Price: 1045kms / 10.5hours
- Carnarvon to Mt Magnet: 779kms / 8hours

Increasing the size of a seat in the North West of Australia will only increase the impracticality for the local member and for constituents to travel to meet in person. This would also present significant challenges for the local member to travel to communities within the seat to experience and get a sound understanding of the unique issues, opportunities, and challenges facing each community.

It should be noted that communication in the remote North West is also problematic, therefore it is not a simple matter to rely on alternative means of communication between constituents and their local member.

Increasing the size of any seat in the North West will further disempower residents in those seats. Local representation for rural, regional, and remote residents is critical to ensure that their unique circumstances are adequately understood and represented in decision-making. The officer's recommendation is that Council advocates for the retention of the North West Central seat.

The Council at the Shire of Carnarvon considered these issues and at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 April 2023 resolved as follows:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION OCM 06/04/23

Moved: Cr Luke Skender

Seconded: Cr Luke Vandeleur

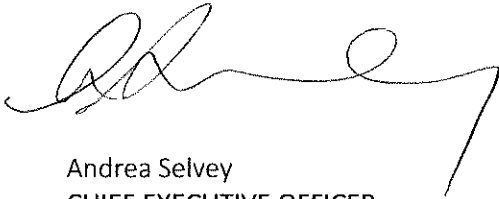
That Council, by Simple Majority pursuant to Section 3.18 of the Local Government Act, 1995, resolves to lodge a suggestion to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners considering the 2023 WA Electoral Boundaries that:

1. *The total number of Electors for the North West Central of 23,296 (inclusive of the Large District Allowance) be measured against the minimum number of enrolled electors for a Legislative Assembly District of 27,389, representing a variance of 15%, under the 20% variance threshold; and*
2. *The Large District Allowance (LDA) be reviewed to increase the tolerance levels in recognition of the geographical size, remoteness, and large distances in the north of Western Australia; and*
3. *The North West Central seat is retained as is.*

CARRIED BY SIMPLE MAJORITY 8/0

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on suggestions made on the review of the electoral boundaries. Should you wish to discuss these concerns and the Shire of Carnarvon position in further detail you are invited to contact me via selvey.a@carnarvon.wa.gov.au

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Selvey', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a vertical line at the end.

Andrea Selvey
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER