

S.11



The Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commission
The Hon. Eric Heenan
Mr Robert Kennedy
Mr Tom Joseph
Level 2, 111 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

29 April 2023

Dear Commission Members

**SUBMISSION TO THE WA DISTRIBUTION COMMISSION REGARDING THE
ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR THE RETENTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY ELECTORATE OF NORTH WEST CENTRAL - SHIRE OF
MEEKATHARRA**

Thank you for the opportunity of providing the Shire of Meekatharra's submission to the Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commission regarding the future electoral boundaries review for the State and in particular where the Shire of Meekatharra's suggestion relates specifically to the North West Central Electorate.

Introduction and Background

The Shire of Meekatharra (Council) recognises the underlying principles of the redistribution of electoral boundaries as required by the relevant legislation that requires the independent Distribution Commission undertake a review of all district boundaries once during each electoral cycle and where the objectives are for an equalisation of the number of voters in each electoral district. That is, where the overriding determinant in all cases is elector numbers and the total enrolment in each district (inclusive of the LDA in large districts) must be within the permissible limits.

Council recognizes that the Legislative Assembly electorate of North West Central has experienced declining demographic (voter) numbers over many years. That is, where the variation from Average District Enrolments is -23.45% from the 2019 electoral review¹.

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Notwithstanding the above, the basis of Councils submission (suggestion) will address the factors to be taken into account in the review of boundaries for the electorate of North West Central, and specifically the Community Interest and existing Local Government Boundary factors.

Community Interest Factor

Community of Interest can be defined as it applies to regional and remote WA as a population that shares common social and/or economic interests that should be included within a single supervisory district for the purposes of its effective and fair representation. In the context of representative democracy, where the franchise of representative democracy is central to the idea of representational outcomes. That is, the Community Interest Factor is intended to reinforce the principles of representative democracy. Furthermore, the 'community' of North West Central have a strong affinity and representation from their Legislative Assembly member. This is especially given the recent changes to the WA Legislative Council where the abolition of the Legislative Regions will further diminish regional representation for the community in regional and rural WA.

Local Government Factor

Electoral districts in rural and regional WA tend to be of such a size as to encompass more than one (LGA). For example, the electorate of North West Central and dividing LGAs between electoral districts may cause administrative complexities. Therefore, in applying the community of interest criterion the Commission is requested to consider giving particular consideration to local government boundaries in rural and regional WA as a desirable approach.

In the event that the Distribution Commission determine that the electorate of North West Central final electoral boundaries will be adjusted that may result in the electorate of North West Central being 'absorbed' into surrounding electorates (ie Pilbara, Kalgoorlie and Moore), this submission requests that consideration be given to ensuring the local government area's (LGA) already within the current electorate remain fully within a single State electorate. That is, no division of a single LGA into other State electorates.

Thank you for considering Councils submission

References

1. *Enrolment Levels at 13 March 2023 and Variation from Average District Enrolment Country Districts Map - Electoral Boundaries WA.*