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Western Australian Distribution Commissioners
Electoral Boundaries WA
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Via email: boundaries@waec.wa.gov.au

Dear Commissioners

2023 BOUNDARY REDISTRIBUTION: COMMENT ON BOUNDARY SUBMISSIONS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on submissions made by interested parties regarding the 2023 boundary redistribution. Please find my comments below in relation to those submissions received and shared online.

1. There is clear support to retain the existing sixteen regional seats.

The majority of the submissions by local governments support the retention of the existing sixteen seats in the Legislative Assembly. I support and endorse these submissions. This number of seats is reflective of the State's population and where they are geographically based, with 73% of Assembly districts bound by the Perth Metropolitan Boundary.

WA's regions are well defined, with Peel being the only contentious region due to colonial history and disparity between coastal and inland areas. However, communities in Peel have unique challenges due to their proximity to Perth and there has been historical support from all political persuasions to improve the social, economic and health outcomes of residents living across Peel.

While some submissions have put to abolish a regional seat, these submissions have resulted in regional seats at or above quota and metropolitan seats vastly below quota.

Abolition of a regional seat would only serve to create larger areas which are more difficult for members of Parliament to service equitably. North West Central, for example, is already the size of New South Wales at 800,000km². WA Labor's suggestion to move half North West Central into Kalgoorlie would create a seat roughly half the size of WA.

Two submissions suggest simply reuniting the Shire of Northampton into North West Central would add real voters and bring North West Central within the allowable limit. One goes further and adds in Leonora and Chapman Valley to better future proof the seat. These suggestions should be strongly considered by the Commissioners.

2. Many submissions support the creation of a seat within the metropolitan region and centred on Ellenbrook.

With local discussions and community support to split Ellenbrook and Aveley into their own local government separate from the City of Swan, this redistribution could be an appropriate time to create an Ellenbrook-based district.

An Ellenbrook based seat could incorporate Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook, Aveley and Melaleuca and be generally to the west of the West Swan Road but north of Gnangara

Road. Residents in Baskerville, Brigadoon, Gidgegannup, Darlington, Pickering Brook, and Wooroloo could then be united in a rural-focused seat centred on the Shire of Mundaring and primarily to the east of the Roe and Reid Highways.

There would be flow on effects for Midland, Forrestfield, Bassendean, West Swan, and Kalamunda – likely seeing one of those seats abolished to acknowledge changing demographics and green fields development. New seats centred on established low-rise suburbs such as Guildford incorporating Bassendean, Eden Hill, Guildford, South Guildford, Woodbridge, and Viveash; and a High Wycombe / Midland / Hazelmere seat would in my opinion better align with Section 16 of the Electoral Act.

Similarly, a North Wanneroo seat for Two Rocks, Yanchep, Carabooda, and Pinjar would unite similar communities both within the Perth Metro boundary and within the City of Wanneroo. This seat should also be at or under the average district allowance which would allow further green fields growth.

Significant change to metropolitan seats is common sense and would mean minimal change at future redistributions by keeping clear communities of interest within the decades long agreed to and well-defined Metropolitan boundary.

3. Some suggestions have failed to acknowledge legislation and precedence.

WA Labor's suggestion to create three 'hybrid' seats struggles to meet section 16 of the Act. It's challenging to agree that a seat stretching roughly 1200 kilometres from Two Rocks in the City of Wanneroo to the tourist town of Exmouth at the edge of the Gascoyne region is appropriate. I am also not convinced by WA Labor's proposal that the residents of Roleystone have any shared interests with the Shire of Chittering.

The Perth Metropolitan Boundary is well defined and has existed since at least the 1960s within legislation. It may be in breach of the Electoral Act – specifically section 16 – to suggest crossing this boundary outside of the Peel region. Many well-known planning documents have sought to remain completely within the boundary and over time this has developed strong communities of interest within the Perth Metropolitan Region.

In comment to the WA Liberals resubmission of 2019, Collie is clearly in the Greater Bunbury region and should be considered to form a district in context with other local governments in that area such as Bunbury, Harvey, Capel, Donnybrook-Balingup and Dardanup. Communities in the Southern Wheatbelt tend to gravitate business and undertakings to Albany and not north towards Northam. Narrogin and Williams should remain firmly in Roe or in a seat like the old Wagin seat. Ideas to suggest otherwise should be rejected for failing to meet the requirements of the Electoral Act.

Kind regards,

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