

Good morning

On behalf of the residents and ratepayers of the Shire of Lake Grace, enclosed is our submission on the current investigation into the WA Electoral Reform.

We trust you will find our submission in order and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you and have a fantastic day.

Kind Regards,

Racelis Rose

Executive Assistant

Shire of Lake Grace

Shire of Lake Grace

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Please address all correspondence to the Chief Executive Officer

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A George

Submission to: **MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM INVESTIGATING THE WA PARLIAMENT UPPER HOUSE (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL) REPRESENTATION AND ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES**

The Committee invites submissions on:

- (a) Which model (whole-of-state electorate or region-based) is preferable to achieve electoral equality;
- (b) The strengths and drawbacks of each model;
- (c) Whether any other electoral model, not covered in this Discussion Paper is better suited to achieve electoral equality, with reasons; and
- (d) What changes (if any) should be made to the distribution of preferences in the Legislative Council's proportional representation system, including group voting tickets.

The Shire of Lake Grace is concerned that changes to the weighted representation of the upper house (Legislative Council "LC") in the Agricultural Region of Western Australia will impact on our ability to have an adequate voice for our citizens.

We feel that as the Agricultural Region currently serviced by six (6) members, it is necessary to adequately represent the region which extends from Kalbarri in the mid-West to Israelite Bay in the South East, encompassing most of the traditional grain and livestock primary production area of the state.

The issues of health, education, roads and transport have always been the concerns of the shire in the constant battle to be recognised for our contribution to the state's economy.

Our shire is one of the largest by area within the boundaries of the Ag Region extending from West of the town of Lake Grace to the Rabbit Proof Fence east of Lake King, a distance of some 160 kilometers. We also have one of the longest road networks in the Ag region.

We are also located in the largest by area lower house electorate of Roe so our local member is stretched to represent an electorate of some 650 kilometers from east of Collie to Israelite Bay to the east of Esperance. This was a result of the "One Vote – One Value" changes to the Legislative Assembly (LA) which came into effect in 2005. Therefore, any further erosion of our access to elected members would seem unfair to the residents within our shire.

One of your terms of reference is **"which model (whole-of-state electorate or region-based) is preferable to achieve electoral equality"**

What does *"electoral equality"* mean? Is it the numeric calculation of the one vote one value definition as used in 2005 to modify the "LA" electorates or is it the reasonable access by both the elected members and the constituents to fair and equal political representation as is currently the case.

The “*whole of state electorate*” model as used in NSW we believe would disenfranchise regional and remote electors given that the majority of the state’s electors reside in the greater metropolitan area of Perth so one would assume that most of the LC elected members would reside in the metro area so who is going to go out into the bush to service those regional and remote electors who produce the lions share of the state’s wealth?

The mining and pastoral region will be even more disadvantaged with the greater distances and travel time required by those members of the LC who make the effort to travel out there. The mining and pastoral region is also home to the vast majority of our Aboriginal electors and in particular the remote Aboriginal communities whom we believe deserve special consideration.

Traditionally, the upper house parliamentary regime had had a weighted representation so that any region in a state or country had equal representation by equal number of representatives regardless of numbers of electors within those regions, states or countries. There was a valid reason for doing this historically and we feel that those reasons still apply.

The notion that because other states have used differing models of LC that we should follow suit should be resisted as we all know that WA is a unique situation with the disparity of our concentrated population center around Perth in relation to the vast low population regions.

“What changes (if any) should be made to the distribution of preference in the Legislative Council’s proportional representation system, including group voting tickets”

We do not have a particular view on the so called ‘vote harvesting’ other than that simple declared plateau of primary votes which if not reached would eliminate those candidates who failed to reach the plateau along with any preferences lodged against that candidate.

We ask you to consider these arguments in your recommendations to government.

On behalf of the residents and ratepayers of the Shire of Lake Grace.



Alan George
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

28 May 2021