

YOUR REF:

OUR REF: OCR2110500-14.1.1

ENQUIRIES: Dale Stewart



89 Earl Street, Narrogin

Correspondence to:

PO Box 1145, Narrogin WA 6312

T (08) 9890 0900

E enquiries@narrogin.wa.gov.au

W www.narrogin.wa.gov.au

4 June 2021

Via email to:

Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform

Western Australian Electoral Reform

Email: submissions@waelectoralreform.wa.gov.au

Dear Committee Members

COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO MINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REFORM.

Please treat this letter as a submission on behalf of the elected members of the duly elected Shire of Narrogin to the current Review of the WA State Electoral System.

Any electoral reform that reduces the voice of regional people is a concern for not just Narrogin and its electors, but also the electors of the wider district. Narrogin, as a sub-regional centre, services not just the 5,200 residents of this Shire, but also the immediate hinterland of over 11,000 people.

These are people that rely on the Members of Parliament of metropolitan areas appreciating and recognising that one vote one value and equal representation between voting districts, based purely on population, would be totally inappropriate and indeed unjust.

In a State as diverse, large and indeed in many instances remote, Governments need to consider the voices and issues of the minority, as well as the voters that have the largest voice (or power). The only way that this has been able to be 'somewhat' achieved for many decades in the Western Australian context, is through the proportional voting system that has allowed greater participation in Parliament, through a long held agreed positive (beneficial) distortion to the one vote one value system.

The extreme and rare anomaly of the election of a candidate from The Daylight Saving Party winning a seat in the Mining and Pastoral Region with only primary 98 votes, has indeed highlighted an anomaly that needs to be looked at in terms of votes harvesting. This could be easily fixed with, for example, a minimum quota that a candidate requires for primary votes to proceed to the next 'count'. Let us say 2,000 votes, might be reasonable to avoid this agreed absurd anomaly into the future.

The risk that we see on behalf of our constituents and regional constituents across this region and vast State, is that the State Government (with Lower and Upper House control) might go further, and erode the voting representation of the regions. This simply should not and cannot occur.

2.

Put simply, if the Government of today, does not protect the country people of today, tomorrow there might be no people in the country to govern .

We urge two things:

1. For the Government to protect the principles of a system that has served well for decades and has enabled country people to have access to basic services and facilities, which in turn has enabled the regions to enormously contribute to our culture, our values and our economy, of this great and diverse State; and
2. For the Government and Expert Committee to recognise that the time it has allotted to invite and receive submissions is woefully inadequate and gives rise to suspicions that there is a preconceived and deliberative agenda.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and should you require further information or clarification on the above, please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dale Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

cc Elected Members Shire of Narrogin
 Peter Rundle MLA
 Mia Davies MLA
 Martin Aldridge MLC
 Darren West MLC