

Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform  
Western Australian Electoral Reform  
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WEST PERTH WA 6005

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Dear Committee Members,

**Council Submission – Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform WA**

On behalf of Council, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform in Western Australia.

The Shire of Bruce Rock is located in the heart of the West Australian Central Wheatbelt, 244km east of Perth. The Shire of Bruce Rock covers 2,724 square kilometres. The Shire comprises of five townsites, Ardath, Babakin, Bruce Rock, Kwolyin and Shackleton. The Shire of Bruce Rock's population on the night of the last census was 930.

With a great community spirit, rich agricultural history and excellent services and facilities on offer, the Shire of Bruce Rock remains committed to ensuring the future of its community and equally that it retains a voice and is fairly represented at a state political level.

Council would have strong concerns of any electoral reform that would reduce the voice of its community, the wider Wheatbelt and regional Western Australia in general. We rely on our Members of Parliament to ensure our voices are heard and reducing our votes and voices purely based on population would be inappropriate and unfair.

Group Ticket Voting

It is agreed that there is concern in the group ticket voting system and the fact that the Daylight Saving Party was elected to the Legislative Council with 98 first preference votes (equating to less than 0.2 percent of valid votes) in the Mining and Pastoral Region.

Electoral Reform in WA should be undertaken to remove the group voting ticket from the Legislative Council voting system similar to the Senate reforms undertaken in 2016.

The aim of removing group ticket voting would be to make it much more difficult for microparties to have candidates successfully elected through "preference harvesting". The 2016 Senate reforms demonstrated that the removal of group voting tickets had this effect at the 2016 full-Senate and 2019 half-Senate elections.

#### The Whole of State Electorate

The Shire of Bruce Rock is not supportive of any proposal that would see the possibility of electing members/representatives of the Legislative Council from an electorate of the whole state of Western Australia. This proposal would see rural and remote political representation diminished, effectively removing our voice.

The Shire of Bruce Rock considers it appropriate that a regional system be retained and any notion of a whole of state electorate be strongly rejected.

#### Regional, Rural and Remote Representation

The Government needs to protect these principles of a system that has served the WA community well for a long time and has ensured that the communities of regional and rural Western Australia have access to basic services and facilities, which contributes to our culture, values and the economy of the vast and great state of Western Australia.

In considering the political representation of the State it is important to acknowledge the economic contribution of Regional, Rural and Remote areas to the wealth and standard of living in our State. Regional Western Australia makes a significant contribution to the State's economy and it is essential that the representation of our communities is protected, and the Government needs to ensure country people retain their voice.

It should be highlighted that the Legislative Council Members for our community, the regions and in the Agricultural sector provide crucial support and political representation. Any reduction in the number of Legislative Council representatives will further increase the pressure on remaining members to cover enormous areas of the State. Services taken for granted in the Metropolitan area are simply not available or not provided to the same extent in rural and remote parts of Western Australia. As a result, political representation and political influence remain critically important for many communities, to advocate for existing services to be improved, or even maintained in some cases.

The Shire of Bruce Rock strongly opposes the reduction of regional, rural and remote political representation, including any loss of members in the Legislative Council.



Darren Mollenoyux  
**Chief Executive Officer**

4<sup>th</sup> June 2021