

# Submission to the Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform



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### **CONTACT**

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**Introduction**

The WA Grains Group (Inc) (WAGG) is a grower financed, and grower driven group, focused on delivering economic gain to growers.



W.A. Grains Group Inc. Putting Western Australian Grain Grower First

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The objects of WA Grains Group are:

- i) To represent the Western Australian grain industry in the areas of production, marketing, plant breeding, agronomic development, storage and handling, processing, bio-security, transport and any other issues in order to promote, sustain and safe-guard the Western Australian grain industry in the longer term.
- ii) To encourage profitable and sustainable production and marketing of the Western Australian grain crop.
- iii) To carry out, promote or assist in activities of any kind associated with the development, production, handling, processing, promotion and competitive services of Western Australian grain and its derivatives.

**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.**

In keeping with the objects of the group we wish to make a submission to represent the interests of grain growers, the majority of which fall into the Agricultural Region of the upper house (or Legislative Assembly) and some fall into the South West Region.

- (a) which model (whole-of-state electorate or region-based) is preferable to achieve electoral equality;**

We feel that the only way there can be electoral equality is with regional based weighted voting as we currently have. Should there be a change to this system the Agricultural and South West Regions (which are responsible for a large part of the Nations agricultural exports) would be more disadvantaged, by losing their democratic voice and representation.

When people talk of equality, we think that it should mean;

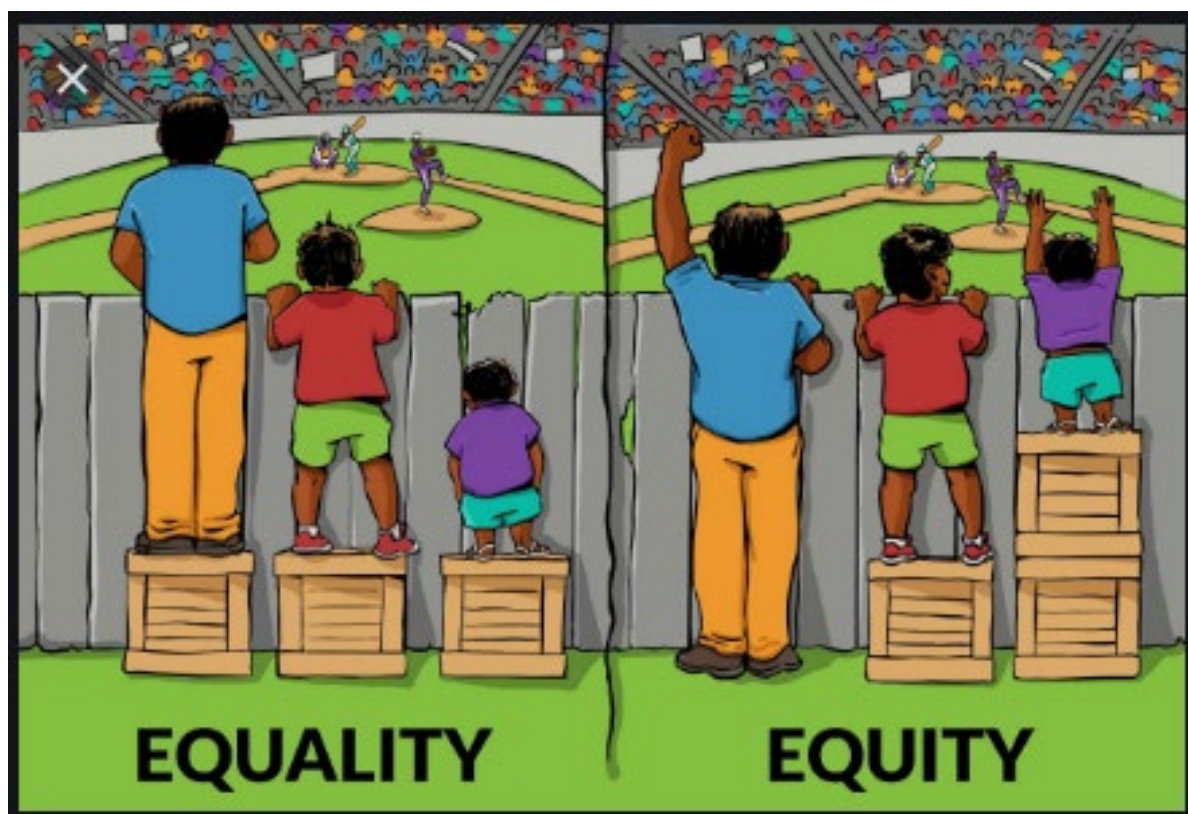
- 1) Equality of Education, being able to live in a family unit while attending school to year 12 and not having to travel for any more than an hour to your local school.
- 2) Equality of Health Care, where you do not need to travel for any more than an hour to visit your local GP, or receive attention at an accredited Hospital, or to have access to mental health facilities, or to visit a specialist.



- 3) Equality of access to your local politician that lives in your area and understands what your business has to deal with.
- 4) Equality of facilities and services at prices that are comparable to those that the people in the urban areas have.

Equality has never meant one vote one value per person, if it did, no one would ever be disenfranchised, feel neglected or excluded. Equality means equal opportunity. Western Australia, due to its size cannot be compared to other states. With continued centralisation and the removal of Government Departments by successive Governments from rural towns the population in Perth continues to grow and the rural population decreases, with little recognition or appreciation that the majority of the wealth of the state is being generated by those citizens in the rural and pastoral areas who, at times, feel as though they are second class citizens.

We feel that the real issue is the need for clarification between equality and equity.



Western Australian system is more unstable due to the whole of the Legislative Council being elected every three years as is the Legislative Assembly. The alternative of half of the Legislative Council being elected at each election allows for more stability in the house.

Also should the decision be made for the Legislative Council go to one vote one value, is this something that the State would want the Federal Government to adopt? Currently each state has the same number of politicians in the Senate, twelve per state. The senate is the house of review, the equivalent of the Western Australian Legislative Council. If this changed to



representation based on population, Western Australia representation would be reduced from twelve to eight senators.

Representation needs to be based on population, as in the current Legislative Assembly and area as in the current Legislative Council.

**(b) the strengths and drawbacks of each model;**

We have chosen not to address this dot point.

**(c) whether any other electoral model, not covered in this Discussion Paper, is better suited to achieve electoral equality, with reasons; and**

We have chosen not to address this dot point.

**(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.**

It is the opinion of the members of the WA Grains Group that group voting slips should not be allowed and that preferences should not be allowed. Each person should number their preferred candidates, at least the first 12 or so.

Wilson Tucker the successful Daylight Saving candidate is allowed into parliament by receiving 98 votes primary votes. The fact that this system has allowed many politicians to gain entry to the parliament has suited the larger parties and this most recent example is conveniently being used to bring about the changes the Labor party has long wanted. A question to the panel is how will they maintain and guarantee "adequate" (equity) representation in the upper house for people outside the metropolitan area?

**Reference**

What's the Difference Between Equity and Equality? BY ELLEN GUTOSKEY

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/625404/equity-vs-equality-what-is-the-difference>

