



**SHIRE OF  
TRAYNING**

*Rock Solid*

The Ministerial Expert Committee  
Review of the WA Electoral system for the election of WA Legislative Council  
Government of Western Australia

[submissions@waelectoralreform.wa.gov.au](mailto:submissions@waelectoralreform.wa.gov.au)

**Dear Members,**

The Shire of Trayning makes the following submission in relation to Electoral Reform:

**Group Ticket Voting**

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 micro-parties 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.

In addition, given the familiarity of the method of voting for the Senate, adopting electoral reform of this nature would be unlikely to significantly increase the rate of informal voting.

**Submission 1**

**Group Ticket Voting should be removed from the Legislative Council electoral system, and reforms be adopted modelled on the Senate reforms of 2016.**

**Whole State Electorate**

The Shire of Trayning does not support the option of electing members of the Legislative Council from an electorate consisting of the entire state of Western Australia.

We are concerned with reduced political representation of rural and remote communities, this applies equally to a scenario where members of the Legislative Council are elected by the entire state. There is concern, that under such arrangements, the voice of rural and remote communities would be smothered by the relative number of voters in metropolitan Perth and more populous towns.



08 9683 1001



08 9683 1040



[ceo@trayning.wa.gov.au](mailto:ceo@trayning.wa.gov.au)



[www.trayning.wa.gov.au](http://www.trayning.wa.gov.au)



Po Box 95, Trayning WA 6488



Railway Street, Trayning WA 6488



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## Submission 2

**The regional system needs to be retained, and the whole state electorate option should be rejected.**

### **Regional, Rural and Remote Representation**

The Shire of Trayning recognises the importance of political representation. As demographic and other forces pull people away from some regions towards the metropolitan area, political representation becomes increasingly important.

The terms of reference – demanding electoral equality – are contestable. It is this Local Government's experience that equality has many facets. Different levels of State Government services provided to different communities exemplify inequality, as does the varying distance to be travelled to access services and elected representatives. Focusing on equality only in terms of the number of electors in a Legislative Council region neglects to recognise the social, societal, economic, and geographic reality among Western Australian communities.

Electoral equality, established on the basis of the number of electors, in the Legislative Council will reduce political representation of rural and remote communities. Consequently, the political representation provided by Local Government will become even more important. This additional responsibility will be very challenging for many non-metropolitan Local Governments which are already stretched beyond their current capacity and resourcing.

Over many years, the service provision expectations and requirements of Local Governments have increased considerably, rarely with commensurate increases in funding. This has led to Local Governments, particularly in rural and remote parts of Western Australia, providing services previously provided by other spheres of government. Examples abound in relation to primary health care, aged care, and economic development, including support for business. Diminished political representation, requiring Local Government to fill another gap, will further stretch limited capacity and resources.

In considering political representation it is important to acknowledge the economic contribution of non-metropolitan regions to the wealth and standard of living in Western Australia.



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Regional Western Australia makes a significant contribution to the WA economy. In 2019, the regions accounted for 40 percent of Gross State Product, with the largest contributions coming from the Pilbara, Goldfields-Esperance and the South West. Regional WA is also a significant employer, with more than 300,000 jobs located in regional WA – around 25% of the state's total workforce. Many of these jobs are located in the agriculture and mining industries.

Regional WA is home to many of the state's key export industries, including the mining and agriculture sectors. WA is an exports-based economy, and accounts for around half of the national goods exports total each year. Goods exports accounted for 59 percent (\$187.1 billion) of Western Australia's gross state product in 2019-2020.

It should also be acknowledged that Legislative Council Members in the Mining and Pastoral and Agricultural Regions provide crucial political representation for rural and remote communities. Reducing the number of Legislative Council representatives will further increase the pressure on remaining members to cover vast ground. Services taken for granted in Metropolitan Perth, 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 including Aboriginal communities, to advocate for existing services to be improved or even maintained.

In addition, a reduction in the number of Legislative Council representatives will further increase the pressure on remaining representatives to cover vast ground to appropriately service the region they represent. The Mining and Pastoral region is over 2.2 million square kilometres, which is four times the area of France.<sup>1</sup>

It is the view of the Local Government sector that Legislative Council Members representing non-metropolitan Western Australia are hard-working and cover a lot of territory to be present in the communities they represent. Since non-metropolitan Western Australia is represented by comparably few members of the Legislative Assembly (16 compared to 43 in metropolitan Perth), regional members of the Legislative Council play a critical role in political representation.

The perspective of many rural and remote communities is that, without sufficient political representation, their concerns will be swamped by the sheer weight of votes from metropolitan Perth and large regional centres.



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### Submission 3

***The Ministerial Expert Committee on Electoral Reform needs to consider the importance of political representation for rural and regional Western Australia.***

#### **Conclusion**

The Shire of Trayning acknowledges the challenges inherent in the Ministerial Expert Committee's task to recommend reforms to the Legislative Council, while constrained by the terms of reference.

The Shire believes that rural and remote political representation is important to ensure that regional Western Australia is supported to continue to generate export and employment opportunities that benefit us all.

A reduction in political representation in the Western Australian Parliament will lead to an expectation that Local Governments will expand to fill this role, a role that may stretch Local Governments beyond their capacity and resources.

In addition, it is widely acknowledged that health, education and other services are not provided to all Western Australians equally. Removing or limiting access to Members of Parliament will have significant repercussions and does not achieve electoral equality.

On this basis, it remains important that rural and remote voices are heard in the Western Australian Legislative Council.

Any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Leanne Parola  
Chief Executive Officer



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