

WAEC

29 APR 2015

# **THE NATIONALS** *for Regional WA*

2015 Electoral Distribution Submission

29 April 2015

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# 1. OVERVIEW

The Nationals WA's submission is based on the need to maintain and ensure effective representation for regional WA and in consideration of expected further development in these regions.

The primary focus of The Nationals WA continues to be regional Western Australia. Accordingly, the submission on the boundaries relates to the Electoral Districts and the three Legislative Council regions outside the Perth Metropolitan area, as defined in the Electoral Act; that is, the Mining and Pastoral, Agricultural and South West regions.

State and regional development planning and policies are focused on economic growth and community development in country WA. Royalties for Regions initiatives, including such projects as Pilbara Cities, are being progressed to ensure regional WA is economically viable, sustainable and attractive for the growing WA population. The Government's SuperTowns program is delivering growth plans for its nine regional centres to ensure their readiness for economic and population growth. These initiatives are funded through Royalties for Regions and supported by the WA Planning Commission and Regional Development Commissions, bringing together key agencies for regional planning for the first time. Accordingly, policy and program settings by the Government and State agencies continue to be moving toward absorbing and maintaining some of the State's increasing population in regional areas. The Nationals WA notes that recent increases in population occurred across the State, with the proportion of country to metropolitan electors in 2015 being almost the same as in 2007 and 2011.

It is important to acknowledge that the lag time between planning and development to investment and construction means that permanent changes in residential characteristics take time to be realised. However, the beneficial impact of substantial government and private sector investment in regional WA is beginning to bear fruit with the regions experiencing an overall increase in both population and electors over the past four years. Substantial increases in school enrolments in such towns as Karratha and Port Hedland reflect the normalisation of residential workforces in regional centres. Since the advent of the Royalties for Regions policy, there has been broad cross-party acknowledgement and support for the continuation of major regional investment programs. Consequently our view is that investment and current or similar policy settings will continue to drive development and greater than average growth in the regions.

There may be a perception that the regional population is decreasing as a result of the changing economic climate, in mining in particular, but by and large this is affecting the fly-in fly out work force, rather than the permanent residents of the Districts. Government policy is acknowledging the need, wherever possible, to provide a residential workforce through encouraging suitable residential accommodation and over time to better integrate transient workers' accommodation options into the local community. While each location is considered on a case by case basis, a recent decision not to extend the lease of Gap Ridge "fly-in fly-out" village reflects the Government's direction on this issue. The movement from construction phase to operational phase in the Mining and Pastoral region will be an encouragement for a more permanent workforce in local communities, supported by easier housing options.

Adjustments in Electoral Districts in 2011 and evolving demographic change has meant that by 9 March 2015, the four regional Electoral Districts are close to or over the legislated allowable variation to the prescribed Average District Enrolment (ADE). The Districts concerned are; Central Wheatbelt, Wagin, North West Central and Kalgoorlie.

The Nationals WA suggests boundary variations to these Districts and adjacent Districts to manage the anomalies identified in the "Commissioners' Preliminary Observations". These suggestions recognise the value of incremental change and the necessity of balanced representation of the regional District and Council

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Regions. We believe that these adjustments will enable the Commissioner to maintain the recognised communities of interest, as per the intentions of the Electoral Act. More substantial adjustments are likely to result in inadequate representation across the regions, particularly given the difficulty of servicing large and geographically remote Districts. Although all the suggestions bring the Districts under the ADE, they are well within the permissible variations of +/- 10%, and +10%/-20% in the Mining and Pastoral region. The Nationals WA believe that these suggestions are consistent with both the intent and the provisions of the Electoral Act established for this purpose, and will minimise the domino effect which would be caused by greater boundary changes.

The Nationals WA are mindful of the challenges associated with Distribution given the significant population increases in the metropolitan area. However, it is noted that the total number of electors has also increased in regional WA and where downward changes have occurred in certain Districts, this has been at the margins, with North West Central losing 1.5% of electors (including LDA) at worst.

Albeit at the higher end of permissible variation from ADE provisions, The Nationals WA believe that from the data included in the “Commissioners’ Preliminary Observations” the increase of electors in the metropolitan districts can still be provided for in the metropolitan area as defined in the Act as the Metropolitan Region Scheme area. Boundary changes within the metropolitan area are unlikely to have significant impact on effective representation, relevant community of interest, communications and community engagement. This will not be the case in the Mining and Pastoral, Agricultural and South West regions where distance alone affects all of the matters just noted.

## 2. SUGGESTIONS

### Summary of suggestions

1. That the allocation of 17 country seats be maintained;
2. That the Districts of Albany, Bunbury, Collie-Preston, Dawesville, Geraldton, Kimberley, Eyre, Mandurah, Murray-Wellington and Vasse remain unchanged;
3. That the locality of Newman is transferred to the District of North West Central;
4. That the Shire of Sandstone be transferred to the District of Kalgoorlie;
5. That the localities of Morangup and Hoddys Well be transferred to the District of Central Wheatbelt; and
6. That the Shire of Boyup Brook be transferred to the District of Wagin, and that the Agricultural and South-West Regions’ boundaries be adjusted accordingly.

#### 2.1. That the allocation of 17 country seats be maintained

The Nationals WA notes the Commissioners’ comments on the ADE disparity between country and metropolitan districts and whether reducing the country allocation of 17 districts is justified. The Nationals WA makes the following observations:

1. When ‘one vote one value’ legislation was introduced, the allocation of districts to country regions was 17 and 42 to metropolitan regions. At that time, the ratio of country electors to metropolitan electors was 25.73% (without LDA). In 2015, this ratio has decreased slightly to 24.98%. In real terms, this change equals less than half of a District’s ADE;
2. The average ADE across country districts (including LDA) is -6.1% and the average ADE across metropolitan districts is 5.88%, each reasonably within the statutory tolerance levels; and

3. Fundamental changes to country districts will have a significant impact on effective representation, relevant community of interest, communications and community engagement.

While there may be a disparity between the number of metropolitan and country electors, The Nationals WA believes that this is manageable at this Distribution. The Commissioners may make a recommendation as part of this Distribution process that for future Distributions, additional seats be created.

Accordingly, The Nationals WA believes that there is no justification to reduce the numbers of country Districts at this Distribution.

A summary detailing the community of interests and binding characteristics of each country District has been provided for the Commissioners reference in Section 3 of this submission.

## **2.2. Unchanged Districts**

The Nationals WA suggests that the Districts of Albany, Bunbury, Collie-Preston, Dawesville, Geraldton, Kimberley, Eyre, Mandurah, Murray-Wellington and Vasse should retain their current boundaries as drawn in the 2011 Distribution.

This proposal is consistent with The Nationals WA overall approach to make only minimal changes to balance the ADE between Electoral Districts and to maintain the connection of the current communities of interest.

The Nationals WA believes that in their current form, the communities within these Districts have clear and identifiable binding characteristics; that they are provided with the means of effective Parliamentary representation and that their ADE is well within the permissible limits as defined by the Act.

## **2.3. Newman to North West Central**

The Nationals WA suggests that the locality of Newman, described in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, be transferred from the District of Pilbara to the District of North West Central to balance the number of electors in each electorate to within the permissible limits. A map is provided as Map 1 in the Appendix on page 16.

The Nationals WA believes that this change will ensure the characteristics of the communities in both electorates will be maintained.

The communities within North West Central clearly demonstrate community of interest through mining exploration, pastoral diversity and tourism. The main industries in the district are iron ore processing and export, salt production from extensive evaporation ponds for export and other mineral extraction.

Newman was originally established as a mining town to service the Mount Whaleback mining operations and its economy continues to be driven by these operations – much like the relatively close communities in the north-eastern area of North West Central such as Tom Price and Paraburdo.

These communities have also formed a historical, cultural and natural tourism base which includes historic trails, walking trails and eco-trails and the natural attractions of the Ningaloo Coast, Shark Bay and Karijini National Park.

The Karijini National Park also serves as a geographic and tourist link between communities within the north-eastern area of the district, including Newman.

Newman is connected to the North West Central electorate and the capital city of Perth via the Great Northern Highway.

As a result, this minor change will decrease the ADE of the District of Pilbara to -14.53%, and will improve the ADE of the District of North West Central (including other boundary changes) to -13.62%.

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Referring to Commissioner's comments concerning the consideration of lower VFADE in newer developing areas, although the Pilbara and North West Central districts are below the ADE, the Pilbara region is continuing to grow. The District of Pilbara has had an increase in electors since the 2011 Distribution of 6%. Population forecast figures according to the City of Karratha indicate a 10% increase over the next four years.

The Western Australian State Government has also invested significantly into the Pilbara Cities initiative which aims to build Karratha and Port Hedland into cities of 50,000 people and Newman to 15,000 people.

Government policy supports a residential workforce rather than the alternative 'fly-in, fly out' model, encouraging suitable residential accommodation and integrating transient workers' accommodation facilities into the local community. A recent decision not to extend the 2000-bed Gap Ridge "fly-in fly-out" village in Karratha reflects the Government's direction on this issue and the capabilities within Pilbara communities to absorb a larger population.

Therefore, The Nationals WA anticipates an increase of electors within these two districts which will begin to improve the overall variation of ADE over time.

#### **2.4. Shire of Sandstone to Kalgoorlie**

Whilst Kalgoorlie's ADE remains within the permissible limit of -16.48%, The Nationals WA suggest that the Shire of Sandstone be transferred to the District of Kalgoorlie. A map is provided as Map 2 in the Appendix on page 16.

Communities within the goldfields region, located in the western part of the Kalgoorlie share obvious geographic, land use and economic characteristics that bind together to form a community of interest.

Located within a distinct outback location, towns such as Leinster, Leonora, Menzies and Sandstone were founded on the back of the Western Australian gold rush. The primary economic drivers in the region continue to be gold mining, pastoral grazing and historic tourism.

Sandstone is synonymous with the Goldfields region and was included in the Kalgoorlie electorate prior to the 2011 Distribution.

The resulting ADE for Kalgoorlie will be -14.25%.

This is a minimal change that improves the ADE, brings together communities that share similar characteristics and reunites a historic goldfields town with Kalgoorlie.

#### **2.5. Morangup and Hoddys Well to Central Wheatbelt**

The ADE for the District of Central Wheatbelt is currently -10%, which is at the lower permissible limit. A map is provided as Map 3 in the Appendix on page 17.

The Nationals WA suggest transferring the localities of Morangup and Hoddys Well from the District of Moore to the District of Central Wheatbelt to allow the Commissioners to address the current under enrolment.

The localities share similar economic and land use characteristics to those located within the Avon Valley such as agriculture, small hobby farms and other cottage industries. The Avon Valley Advocate, a newspaper that covers much of the Central Wheatbelt district includes Morangup and Hoddys Well within its distribution.

Central Wheatbelt will improve its ADE from -10% to -7.32%, which is within the lower permissible limit and Moore will decrease its ADE from -4.12% to -6.81%, which is also within the permissible limit.

While these districts are below the quota of 24,923 electors, there is a realisation and commitment from Government to the growth of these districts through the SuperTowns initiative. Jurien Bay and Morawa (Moore) and Northam (Central Wheatbelt) were selected as SuperTowns under the State Government program of the

same name. Inclusion in the SuperTowns program allows these towns to access funding from the Western Australian State Government to assist communities to prepare for a projected doubling of the State's population in the next 30 years.

## 2.6. The Shire of Boyup Brook to Wagin

The Nationals WA suggest that the Shire of Boyup Brook be transferred from the District of Warren-Blackwood to the District of Wagin. A map is provided as Map 4 in the Appendix on page 17.

Communities within the Wagin district share common land use characteristics with mixed cropping/wheat and sheep farming contributing to a predominantly agricultural based economy.

The Shire of Boyup Brook has a strong link to the Wagin community of interest as its economy is based on primary industry, focusing on broad scale agriculture. Other primary industries include wool, sheep, cattle, grain, vineyards and olives.

The town of Boyup Brook includes many agricultural service businesses including a grain handling terminal, agricultural suppliers, stock agents, livestock transporters, machinery dealers and stock yards.

This change will improve the Wagin ADE from -12.50% to -7.90%, and Warren-Blackwood will decrease its ADE from 5.89% to 1.28%.

It is also worth noting the inclusion of Katanning and Boddington (within Wagin) and Margaret River and Manjimup (within Warren-Blackwood) within the SuperTowns initiative indicating further commitment from Government to support growth in these two Districts.

### Resulting District ADE

2015 estimated ADE as per Boundary Maker information provided by the Office of Electoral Distribution Commissioners

### The South-West Region

| District          | Permissible Limit | 2015 ADE | Proposed ADE |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Mandurah          | +10 to -10        | 1.5%     | Unchanged    |
| Dawesville        | +10 to -10        | 6.38%    | Unchanged    |
| Murray-Wellington | +10 to -10        | 1.50%    | Unchanged    |
| Collie-Preston    | +10 to -10        | -1.66%   | Unchanged    |
| Bunbury           | +10 to -10        | -4.10%   | Unchanged    |
| Vasse             | +10 to -10        | 0.33%    | Unchanged    |
| Warren-Blackwood  | +10 to -10        | 5.89%    | 1.28%        |
| Albany            | +10 to -10        | -2.49%   | Unchanged    |
| Average ADE       |                   | 0.92%    | 0.34%        |

## The Mining and Pastoral Region

| District           | Permissible Limit | 2015 ADE | Proposed ADE |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Kimberley          | +10 to -20        | -7.01%   | Unchanged    |
| Pilbara            | +10 to -20        | -3.91%   | -14.53%      |
| North West Central | +10 to -20        | -22.01%  | -13.62%      |
| Kalgoorlie         | +10 to -20        | -16.48%  | -14.25%      |
| Eyre               | +10 to -20        | -12.99%  | Unchanged    |
| Average ADE        |                   | -12.48%  | Unchanged    |

## The Agricultural Region

| District          | Permissible Limit | 2015 ADE | Proposed ADE |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| Moore             | +10 to -10        | -4.12%   | -6.81%       |
| Geraldton         | +10 to -10        | -6.89%   | Unchanged    |
| Central Wheatbelt | +10 to -10        | -10.00%  | -7.32%       |
| Wagin             | +10 to -10        | -12.50%  | -7.90%       |
| Average ADE       |                   | -8.38%   | -7.23%       |

## 3. DISTRICT PROFILES

The Nationals WA recognises the importance of representation based on communities of interest.

The 17 country Districts are described below in terms of their binding characteristics to illustrate the importance of their unique and independent representation in the Western Australian Parliament.

### 3.1. Mining and Pastoral Region

The Nationals WA believes that the Mining and Pastoral Region encompasses the geographic and economic characteristics of the area effectively, providing a clear differentiation between the area covered by the Agricultural Region, consistent with the description of this region provided in the Act.

The Nationals WA believes that the composition of the Mining and Pastoral Region should continue to include the Districts of Kimberley, Pilbara, North West Central, Kalgoorlie and Eyre, as described in this submission.

It should be noted that in the second reading speech of the One Vote One Value Bill 2005, the then Minister of Electoral Affairs, Hon Jim McGinty MLA stated that:

*The provision for five Assembly seats in the Mining and Pastoral Region takes into account the needs, requirements and interests of our geographically remote and regional citizens.*

The Nationals WA does not recommend any changes to the Mining and Pastoral Region's boundaries or to change the number of Districts within its boundaries.

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## Kimberley

The Kimberley District is located at the most northern part of Western Australia and binds together towns and communities that identify themselves characteristically as being in the Kimberley.

Kimberley includes the towns of Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham.

The Kimberley is world-famous for its unforgiving, yet breathtaking terrain. Regular flights to Broome from Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Darwin have opened up the region as a highly desirable national and international tourist destination.

The economy is also driven by agriculture, pastoral grazing, pearling, construction, diamond mining and extraction of high-grade iron ore. The Ord/East Kimberley Expansion Project and development of the Browse Basin continue to provide employment opportunities within the District.

The Kimberley Development Commission Blueprint forecasts a population of 92,000 people in 2036, an increase of 145% from 2011 population statistics.

The distance between two of the Kimberley's major towns, Broome and Kununurra is 1032km, demonstrating that traversing the District can be challenging and difficult for electors to interact with their elected representative, which would be exacerbated if the District was to increase in size.

The Kimberley District's ADE is -7.01%, which is reasonably within the statutory tolerance levels.

## Pilbara

The Pilbara region is known for its rich, abundant mineral resources including iron ore, natural gas and crude oil.

Major towns in the proposed District of Pilbara include Karratha, Port Hedland, Dampier, Roebourne, Wickham, Marble Bar and Nullagine.

The Pilbara economy is predominately centred around the extraction and exporting of mineral resources and industries servicing the mining sector. Major railways crisscross the Pilbara District connecting mines to the ports of Port Hedland, Dampier, Ashburton and Anketell. In recent years, the economy has grown to include significant construction development, retail and hospitality industries.

The Districts' population continues to grow as the mining sector transitions from the construction phase to being operational. Karratha and Port Hedland have received significant Government investment through the Pilbara Cities initiative which is creating the infrastructure needed to accommodate 50,000 people in each city by 2035. The State Government's commitment to stable growth in the area is being realised with substantial new school enrolments, and the pending closure of the transient workers accommodation at Gap Ridge.

Although the suggestion provided in this submission would result in an ADE of -14.53%, The Nationals WA believes that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that stable population increases are likely, and these will offset any Distribution disparities in the near future.

## North West Central

The proposed North West Central District includes the major towns of Carnarvon, Newman, Exmouth, Meekatharra, Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Onslow and Pannawonica.

The communities within North West Central clearly demonstrate community of interest through mining, pastoral diversity and tourism. The main industries in the district are iron ore processing and export, salt production from extensive evaporation ponds for export and other mineral extraction.

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The northern area of the District has rich mineral deposits. Iron ore is extracted in the mining towns of Newman, Tom Price and Paraburdoo, and the town of Onslow services the Wheatstone natural gas project. Newman, Tom Price and Paraburdoo are relatively close geographically and share cultural and tourist links.

On the coast, tourism, fishing and tropical fruit plantations contribute significantly to the local economy. Carnarvon is the gateway to the world heritage listed Ningaloo Coast and located only three hours from Coral Bay.

The Gascoyne area of the District has over 80 pastoral stations that contribute up to 27% of the area's total income through beef, sheep and lamb meat production.

In addition to the Pilbara Cities projects mentioned above, the State Government has recognised the potential growth opportunity in the towns of Exmouth, Newman, Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction and has invested through Royalties for Regions into local town redevelopment projects.

The State Government has invested \$150m over six years in the Gascoyne Revitalisation plan which will build the economic and socio-economic capabilities within the Gascoyne region, providing better quality of living and employment opportunities in the region.

The North West Central District, while diverse in its land use patterns and industries, has a definite sense of community, in comparison to its neighbouring Districts. Those who reside in the District see themselves as living in the North West.

The District of North West Central currently covers an area of 656,573 km<sup>2</sup>. The distance north to south from Onslow to Mount Magnet by road is 1,289km or 14 hours and the distance west to east from Carnarvon to the eastern boundary is approximately 1,400km. Any changes to the District in addition to those suggested by The Nationals WA will significantly reduce the access of electors to their elected representatives.

The Nationals WA's suggestion in this submission will result in an improved ADE of -13.62% which is within the statutory permissible limits. This is better than the 2011 ADE for North West Central. The Nationals WA believes that given the large geographic area of North West Central, the investment by Government and the recognition of future growth in the region, the District's suggested ADE is acceptable.

## **Kalgoorlie**

The District of Kalgoorlie is synonymous with the Goldfields region, and the communities within the district share obvious geographic, land use and economic characteristics that bind together to form a community of interest.

The District covers mostly outback terrain and towns such as Leinster, Leonora, Laverton, Menzies, Sandstone, and at the region's centre, the City of Kalgoorlie were founded on the back of the Western Australian gold rush. The primary economic drivers in the region continue to be gold mining, pastoral grazing and historic tourism.

The City of Kalgoorlie provides mining service industries such as geological and drilling expertise, earth moving, analytical laboratories, and machinery servicing and pastoral service industries including transportation, machinery maintenance, advisory and veterinarian services. Government, health and education services are also provided from Kalgoorlie.

Aboriginal people living in the District belong to a number of language groups. They are represented in all communities and live in urban situations or indigenous community groups. For example, 2000 Aboriginal inhabitants live in the Ngaanyatjarra region centred around Warburton, an area spanning 159,948 square kilometres. This community considers Kalgoorlie as its major regional centre and traverses the area via Laverton, Leonora, Menzies and Kalgoorlie.

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The District is connected to Perth and the eastern states by daily flights from Kalgoorlie Airport and rail services on the transcontinental railway. The Port of Esperance is located 400km south of Kalgoorlie, providing import and export capabilities.

The suggestion by The Nationals WA in this submission will result in the Kalgoorlie District having an ADE of -14.25%, which is within the statutory permissible limits.

## **Eyre**

The District of Eyre encompasses towns located in the south eastern part of Western Australia, including Boulder, Coolgardie, Kambalda, Esperance and Ravensthorpe.

The Eyre District is characterised by its diverse economic base that includes mining and exploration, agriculture and pastoral grazing, aquaculture, coastal tourism and industries supporting these sectors and Government departments servicing the southern part of the Mining and Pastoral region.

The District has substantial links to the Port of Esperance by standard gauge rail and the sealed Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie road that provides export capabilities to many of the mining and agricultural producers located within the District.

This link also provides for the importation of petroleum products to the Eastern Goldfields region.

Esperance is a pivotal town to the entire District, providing a hub for many Government services delivered through the Departments of Health, Main Roads, Tourism, Community Development, Transport, Sport and Recreation and Centrelink which service the communities within the District.

Students who reside within the Mining and Pastoral region have access to boarding facilities at the Esperance Residential College, which is located conveniently adjacent to the combined educational facility that includes the Esperance Senior High School, Curtin University and the Vocational Training and Education Centre, and there are additional newly completed boarding facilities at the Esperance Anglican Community School.

The Town of Esperance has received just under \$20.3m to support the planning and infrastructure stages of the Esperance SuperTowns project, which aims to build the town's infrastructure and economy to share the expected doubling of state population by 2036.

Esperance is located 720 kilometres south-west of Perth and 369 kilometres by road from Kalgoorlie.

Eyre's current ADE is -12.99%.

The Nationals WA believes that the communities in the District of Eyre are suitably bound as they share common characteristics which are different to those in neighbouring Districts. The Nationals WA also believes that the existing boundaries should be retained to ensure that this diverse District is effectively represented in Parliament.

### **3.2. Agricultural Region**

The Nationals WA believes that the composition and existing boundaries of the Agricultural Region, with exception to the suggestion in this submission to include the Shire of Boyup Brook into the District of Wagin, should remain unchanged.

## **Moore**

The District of Moore is defined by its geographical location north of Perth, at the edge of the Agricultural Region and includes industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism and fishing and has well established transport routes.

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Major towns in the District include Dongara, Port Denison, Jurien Bay, Northampton, Kalbarri, Carnamah, Eneabba, Bindoon, Moora, Gingin, Lancelin and Toodyay. These towns are connected locally and to Perth by the Brand Highway, Great Northern Highway and a substantial rail network transporting grain and minerals.

The Jurien Bay and Morawa SuperTowns projects, coupled with the Mid West Investment Plan which includes the Eneabba and Carnamah revitalisation project will bring further investment and development into the region, resulting in increased population and good employment opportunities.

The Nationals WA agrees with the Commissioner's comments relating to the difficulty of extending the metropolitan boundary further north into Moore as the common land use and community of interest is significantly different.

The suggestion by The Nationals WA in this submission will result in the ADE of the Moore District as -6.81%. The Nationals WA believes that these suggested boundaries bind communities with shared characteristics together and provides the means for effective interaction between electors and their elected representatives.

### **Central Wheatbelt**

The communities within the District of Central Wheatbelt share obvious geographic, land use and economic characteristics that bind together to form a community of interest.

Local government authorities within the Central Wheatbelt District include the shires of Beverley Brookton, Bruce Rock, Corrigin, Cunderdin, Dowerin, Goomalling, Kellerberrin, Kondinin, Koorda, Merredin, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Narembeen, Northam, Nungarin, Quairading, Tammin, Trayning, Wongan-Ballidu, Wyalkatchem, and York and the proposed inclusion of Hoddys Well and Morangup localities of the Shire of Toodyay.

The economy of the Central Wheatbelt District has historically consisted of agriculture and industries servicing this sector, however, mining, tourism, light industry and small business are continuing to supplement the diversity of the local economy.

Most communities are connected in some way to either Merredin or Northam and the transport links of the Great Eastern Highway and the transcontinental railway, which many of the grain railway branch lines are connected. The Avon Link, Merredin Link and Prospector train services also provides residents and visitors from Perth with affordable travel options to the District.

Some broad-acre farming operations are diversifying their businesses to include tourist attractions. Tourism is becoming more relevant in the District, particularly in the Avon Valley area.

Visitors from Perth can enjoy a number of historical and adventure activities such as ballooning, skydiving and visiting many historical attractions in the District.

Northam was selected to receive SuperTowns funding from the Western Australian State Government to assist in the planning and provision of infrastructure to accommodate the expected doubling of the State's population in the next 30 years.

The resulting ADE from The Nationals WA's suggestion for the Central Wheatbelt District is -7.32%, which is within the permissible limits described in the Act. The Nationals WA believes, with only minimal change as described above, that the Central Wheatbelt District will continue to represent the communities shared characteristics well and provides the means for effective Parliamentary representation.

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## Wagin

The current District of Wagin consists of over 250 separate towns and communities over an area of 68,973 square kilometres.

The economy of the Wagin District is traditionally centred on agriculture including wheat and mixed cropping, sheep and wool farming and industries servicing this sector. Australia's biggest gold mine is situated at Boddington and further mining opportunities lie east of Katanning.

The towns of Narrogin, Wagin and Katanning are the main regional centres in the Wagin District and provide much of the service industries associated with agriculture, such as machine servicing, manufacturing, transport and livestock sale yards. Government services such as education and health provisions are also coordinated in these towns.

The District is connected locally and to Perth by the Albany Highway and Great Southern Highway and the Great Southern Railway connects the District to the Albany Port and Perth. Many grain branch lines in the District are connected to this line.

Katanning and Boddington were selected to receive SuperTowns funding from the Western Australian State Government in 2011. The Katanning Town Centre Commercial and Streetscape Revitalisation plan and the Boddington Economic Development Implementation and Ranford water capacity development will ensure that these towns can provide the necessary infrastructure required to double their populations within 30 years.

The inclusion of the Shire of Boyup Brook in the Wagin District will help to address the current ADE of the Wagin District without compromising the District's community of interest. The Nationals WA are concerned that increasing the size of the District further than this suggestion will make effective representation in this District difficult.

It is expected that, despite a suggested ADE of -7.90% as a result of The Nationals WA's suggestion in this submission, recent Government investment and commitment to the development of the District will encourage population growth, therefore offsetting the ADE disparity at future Distributions.

## Geraldton

The boundaries of the current Geraldton District reflects a regional city that includes the suburban, commercial and industrial areas of the City of Greater Geraldton.

Geraldton is strategic to the future development of regional Western Australia and its economy is based on providing service and logistics to mining, fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors.

Health and education services are delivered to the surrounding regional communities from the Geraldton Hub and The Port of Geraldton is a major west coast seaport and exports over 15 million tonnes of produce each year.

Geraldton and the surrounding region is a holiday destination with major attractions including the Abrolhos Islands, the HMAS Sydney Memorial and Greenough River. Newly developing wine and olive industries, fishing, boating, eco-tourism and farm-stays all add diversity to the region's tourism potential.

Geraldton's ADE is currently -6.89%, which is reasonably within the statutory tolerance levels.

The Nationals WA suggests no changes to this District.

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### 3.3. South-West Region

The Nationals WA believes that the composition and existing boundaries of the South-West Region, with exception to the suggestion in this submission to include the Shire of Boyup Brook into the District of Wagin, should remain unchanged.

#### Mandurah

The District of Mandurah is defined by its status as a regional city, its connectivity to the metropolitan area and the South-West region and by its suburban, semi-rural and coastal lifestyle options.

Mandurah's economy is focused on tourism, retail and manufacturing/construction. Due to its proximity to Perth and ease of access, Mandurah is a popular day-trip destination.

Much like its neighbouring Districts, water-based activities such as fishing, crabbing, swimming, recreational cruising and water-skiing are rapidly developing in the extensive waterways of the Peel-Harvey estuary and the Serpentine River.

Mandurah's residents are well connected locally by an extensive public bus service and to the metropolitan area of Perth by the Transperth Perth to Mandurah electrified railway, the Kwinana Freeway and the Forrest Highway.

Mandurah is a prosperous city but still also aspires to maintain its regional and coastal character.

Given that Mandurah's ADE is currently 1.5% and that its community of interest is suitably bound, The Nationals WA suggests that no change be made to the existing boundaries.

#### Dawesville

The District of Dawesville neighbours the District of Mandurah and includes part of the City of Mandurah local government authority and smaller localities along the Old Coast Road. These include Bouvard, Dawesville, Dudley Park, Erskine, Falcon, Halls Head, Herron and Wannanup.

Communities in the electorate of Dawesville have a natural affinity with the neighbouring electorates of Mandurah and Murray Wellington. These communities are linked by tourism projects and by good road networks.

The District is surrounded by the Harvey Estuary and the Indian Ocean and the waterways of Lake Clifton offers fishing, crabbing, swimming, recreational boating and water-skiing opportunities.

The suburban area of the District includes Halls Head, which is linked to the City of Mandurah by bridge. The District is connected locally by an extensive public bus service and to Perth by the Transperth Perth to Mandurah Railway, and the Forrest Highway.

The Nationals WA suggests that no changes are made to existing boundaries.

#### Murray-Wellington

The District of Murray-Wellington includes the towns of Dwellingup, Harvey, North Dandalup, North Yunderup, Pinjarra, South Yunderup and Waroona as well as the northern Bunbury suburbs of Australind and Leschenault.

The District is distinctly characterised by its location just south of Perth, its rich agricultural land and mineral resources. The economic base of the District is underpinned by the extraction and refinement of alumina and the production of high quality beef, dairy and juice products. A number of service industries also support the District.

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Murray-Wellington's current ADE is 1.5% and The Nationals WA suggests that the current boundaries be retained.

### **Collie-Preston**

The District of Collie-Preston consists of three local government authorities that surround the city and District of Bunbury; Shire of Collie, Shire of Dardanup and the Shire of Capel.

Land use across this District is diverse, from coal and bauxite extraction, to agriculture, horticulture, viticulture and tourism.

Mining, power generation and supporting industries are major contributors to the local economy and provide the bulk of employment opportunities in the District. Collie has an important strategic transportation link to the Port of Bunbury, which is located only 60km away.

Collie is well positioned to support the growth and development of a number of large industrial sectors due to its proximity to power, water and port facilities. The inclusion of Collie in the SuperTowns program provides Collie with access to funding from the Western Australian State Government to assist preparing the community for a projected doubling of the State's population in the next 30 years.

The Wellington Dam supports the region's growth and also provides outdoor activities such as bushwalking, camping and water sports.

Collie-Preston's ADE is currently -1.66% and represents those communities on the outskirts of Bunbury sufficiently whilst maintaining a common sense of community. The Nationals WA suggests that the existing boundaries are maintained for the purpose of this Distribution.

### **Bunbury**

The District of Bunbury encompasses the suburban, industrial and commercial areas of the City of Bunbury, the second largest city in Western Australia with a population of over 50,000 residents.

The local economy consists of manufacturing, construction, retail, health and other community services.

Bunbury is the main hub to the South-West region and provides further education through the Bunbury Campus of Edith Cowan University and the Southwest Regional College (TAFE) and comprehensive specialist health services through the South West Health Campus in Bunbury.

The Port of Bunbury provides much of the region's export capabilities, exporting 15.606 million tonnes per annum.

Bunbury's current ADE is -4.10%. The Nationals WA suggests that the existing boundaries remain unchanged.

### **Vasse**

The District of Vasse encompasses the South-West towns of Busselton, Vasse, Dunsborough, Quindalup, Yallingup, Cowaramup, Gracetown, Prevelly and parts of the Margaret River Shire.

The Vasse District is closely linked to the Margaret River tourist region, servicing visitors from Perth and around the world at resorts and tourist parks in Busselton and Dunsborough.

The local economy thrives during tourist seasons, and is supplemented by viticulture and traditional agriculture industries such as dairy, sheep, cattle and crop-farming.

The current ADE for the District of Vasse is 0.33% and consequently The Nationals WA believes that no changes should be made to existing boundaries.

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## Warren-Blackwood

The District of Warren-Blackwood encompasses the major towns of Margaret River, Bridgetown, Denmark, Donnybrook, Manjimup and Nannup.

These towns and outlying communities share common land use and economic characteristics, particularly concerning primary industry and tourism. The Margaret River region is world renowned as a high quality wine producing region where viticulture, tourism and industries servicing these sectors, such as retail, thrive.

Land use across the District is predominately a mix of agriculture, viticulture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, manufacturing and tourism. Diversification from traditional agricultural practices has included the production of olive oil, cheese, truffles, avocados, asparagus and green tea.

Geographically, the District is characterised by large areas of native forests and rivers, bordered by the Southern Ocean and broad acre farming.

As already noted, The Nationals WA suggests that the Shire of Boyup Brook be included in the Wagin District. This will establish Warren-Blackwood's ADE at 1.28%. The Nationals WA suggests that no other changes be made to the existing boundaries.

## Albany

The District of Albany encompasses the entire local government authority of the City of Albany including the suburban area of the city and outlying communities.

Albany is distinctly a South-West Region District given its location and local industry. The City of Albany is the largest major regional centre on the south coast, providing exporting opportunities through the Port of Albany and other service facilities to the agricultural and mining sectors.

The communities within the Albany District share many common characteristics, through land use patterns and industry. These include primary industries such as aquaculture, agriculture, forestry, viticulture, service industries and value-adding through meat processing, timber mills and the creation of essential oils and cosmetics.

Mining will become a feature of Albany's exports through the proposed extraction of magnetite and expansion of the Port of Albany's export capabilities.

Government services for the Great Southern Region are provided out of the City, including specialist health care through the Albany Health Campus.

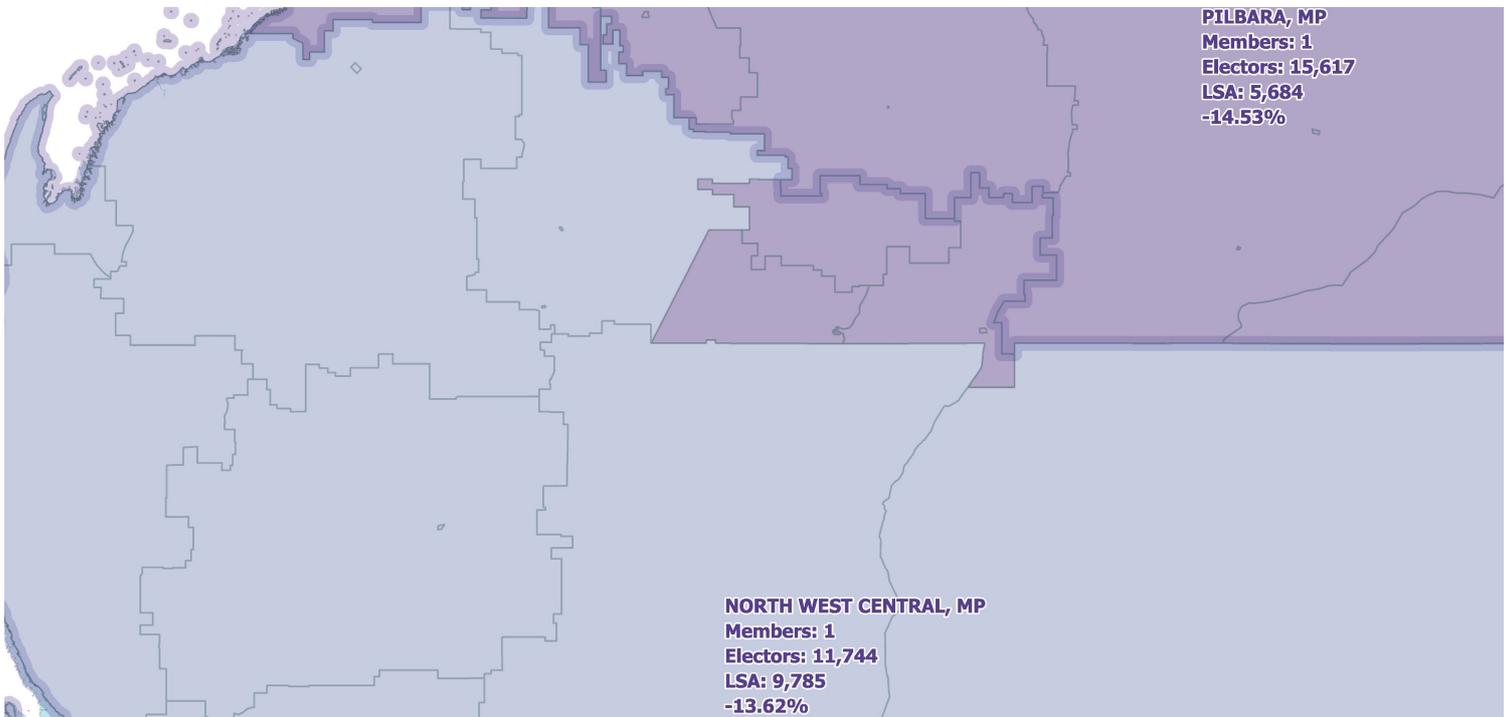
Albany's current ADE is -2.49%. The Nationals WA believes that the communities within the District of Albany share common interests and for the purposes of this Distribution, we recommend that no changes are made to the existing boundaries.

## 4. CONCLUSION

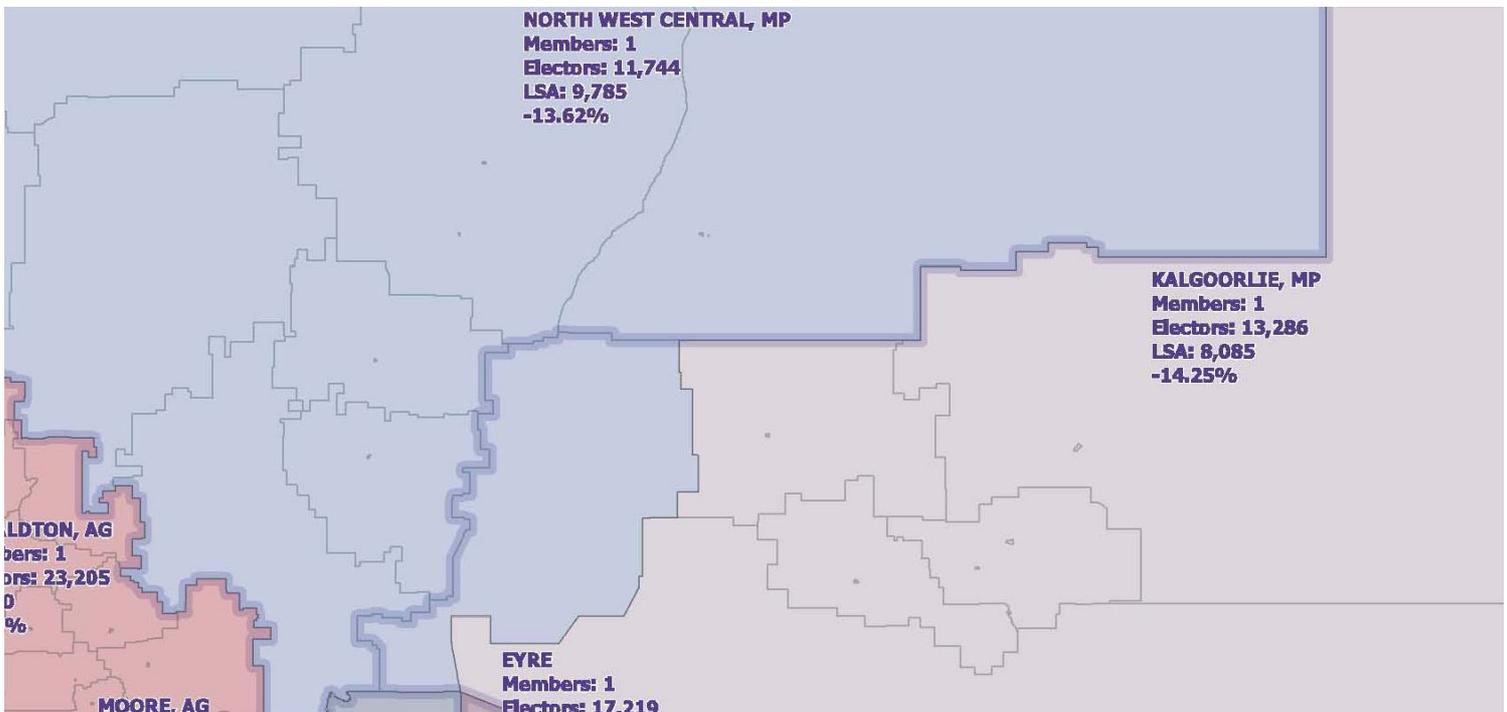
The Nationals WA's suggestions provide a practical and simple way forward for the Electoral Distribution Commissioners to consider in their deliberations on the level of representation for regional WA. These minimal boundary adjustments will enable the Commissioners to largely address the factors which need to be considered under the Electoral Act, especially communities of interest, land use and existing boundaries. It continues to be the view of The Nationals WA that it will be detrimental to the representation and engagement each regional elector receives in the Parliamentary process if these electorates were to expand or change significantly. While remaining within the statutory permissible limits for variations from the ADE, the suggested boundaries will maintain the integrity of the regional electorate structure, maintain the communities of interest, and better balance representation for regional areas.

## 5. APPENDIX

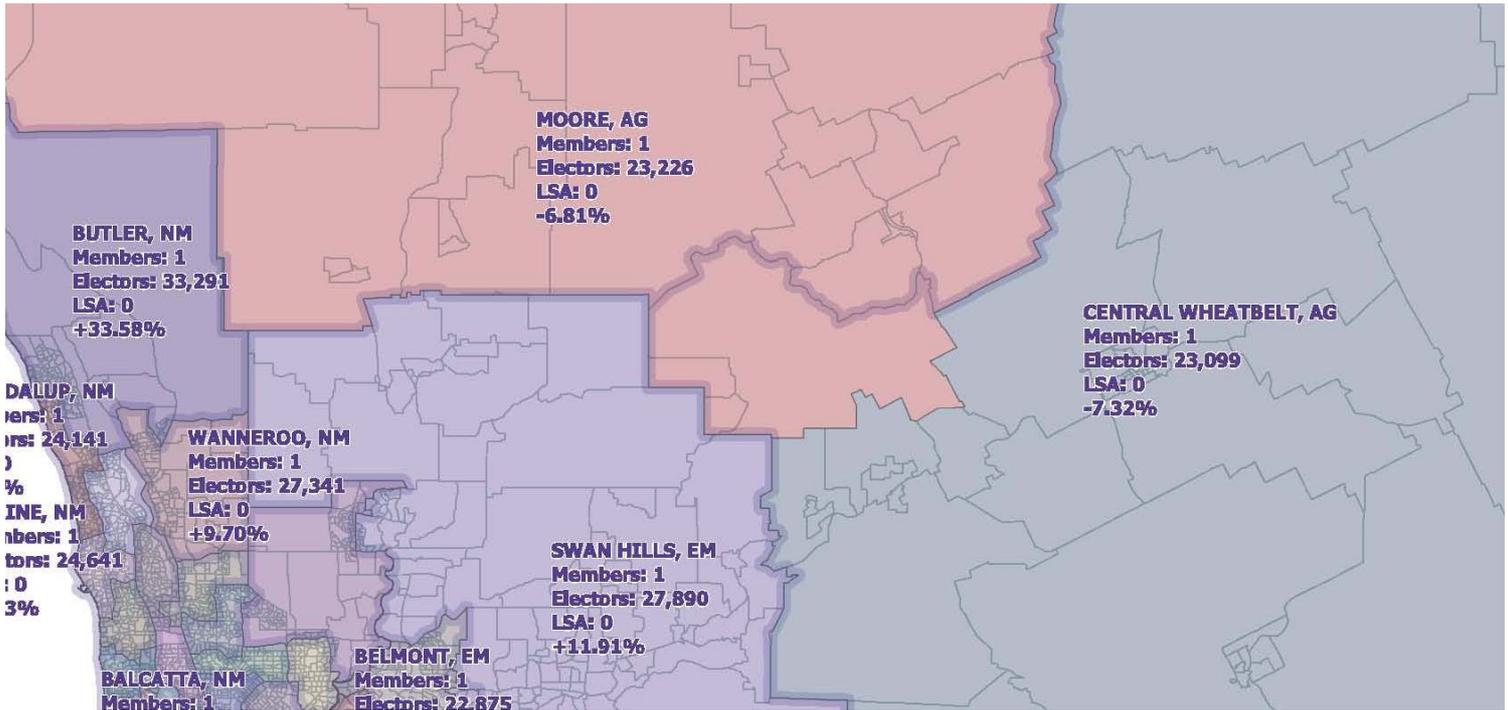
### 1. Newman to North West Central Map



### 2. Sandstone to Kalgoorlie



### 3. Morangup and Hoddys Well to Central Wheatbelt



### 4. Boyup Brook to Wagin

