



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

Local Government Advisory Board

Annual Report 2017-2018

August 2018

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Further information:

Local Government Advisory Board

Annual Report 2017-2018

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

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Chair's Report

The year 2017-2018 was an important year for the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) and for the sector in general, with the conduct of the local government elections in October 2017.

While the elections provide the opportunity for renewal among the elected members of the State's 137 local governments, it also allows many councils to review and reconsider their current ward and representation structures. These reviews must always be completed by 30 June in the year of the election, in order for any changes to take effect on time.

One of the important roles of the Board is the consideration of all such reviews undertaken by local governments. After careful analysis and assessment of a council's proposal, the Board makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government. The Minister may accept or reject the Board's recommendation on the proposed changes.

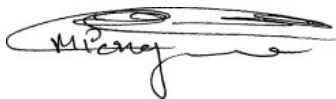
Ward and representation reviews also provide the opportunity for comprehensive public consultation. As well, in their review, each council must consider and analyse five specific factors, being community of interest; physical and topographic features; demographic trends; economic factors; and the ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards. Considering and combining these elements provides the ideal opportunity for creating a ward and representation structure which is both fair and best meets the needs of the local community.

The Board would like to acknowledge the work and thank those local governments that submitted reviews in preparation for the 2017 elections. Local governments are in a unique position to consult with the community and ensure that there is balance and good governance in their own local area. The Board supports the concept of autonomy and accountability for all local governments in Western Australia. Providing the opportunity for each local government to undertake their own ward and representation analysis is a positive step towards this goal.

The Board has also continued to build on its governance structure over the past 12 months, including a one day workshop which focused on evaluating Board performance and further developing (internal) templates for assessment of boundary change proposals, and ward and representation reviews. All Board governance documentation is developed in accordance with Public Sector Commission principles.

As always, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Board members and deputies for their contribution throughout the year. Their depth of experience delivers a professional, knowledgeable and independent approach to the decision making process.

I would also like to thank our immediate staff, Julie Knight, Julie Craig and Renata Mlinar, who provided great support to the Board throughout the year. Your assistance helps us to operate in an efficient and effective manner. I look forward to the Board continuing its excellent work over the coming year.



Mel Congerton

Chair

Local Government Advisory Board

31 August 2018

Role and Function of the Board

The Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) is a statutory body established under section 2.44 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act).

The role of the Board is to consider proposals for changes to district boundaries and wards and representation structures of local governments. These proposals can be initiated by the Minister for Local Government (the Minister), local governments or electors. After the Board has considered a proposal it makes a recommendation to the Minister about the proposal. The Minister has the option of either accepting or rejecting the recommendation.

The Board can also carry out other inquiries that the Minister may direct.

The Board's Guiding Principles

The Board's Guiding Principles form the basis for the consideration of any changes to local government boundaries and take into account the eight factors set out in the Act, and which are detailed below.

Community of interests

Community of interests include parts of a district that share common interests, values, characteristics and issues giving rise to a separate sense of identity or community. Factors contributing to a sense of identity or community include shared interest and shared use of community facilities. For example, sporting, leisure and library facilities create a focus for the community.

The use of shopping areas and the location of schools also act to draw people together with similar interests. This can also give an indication about the direction that people travel to access services and facilities. The external boundaries of a local government need to reflect distinct communities of interest wherever possible.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging. The Board believes that wherever possible, it is inappropriate to divide the units between local governments.

Physical and topographic features

Physical and topographic features may be either natural or man-made and will vary from area to area. They may include:

- water features (such as rivers)
- catchment boundaries
- coastal plains and foothills
- parks and reserves
- man-made features (such as railway lines or freeways).

These features can form identifiable boundaries and can also act as barriers to movement between adjoining areas. In many cases physical and topographic features are appropriate district and ward boundaries. The Board supports local government structures and boundaries that facilitate the integration of human activity and land use.

Demographic trends

Local governments should consider the following characteristics when determining the demographics within their locality:

- Population size
- Population trends
- Distribution by age
- Gender
- Occupation.

Current and projected population factors are also relevant, as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

Economic factors

Economic factors can include anything that reflects the range of economic activities and resources in the area including:

- industries within the local area
- distribution of community assets
- infrastructure.

History of the area

The history of an area can be a relevant consideration, although the Board believes that in the majority of cases this will not be a primary justification for changing or retaining local governments and local government boundaries. The nature of historical ties between communities is important to understand, irrespective of where the local government boundaries lie.

A community within a local government may have a strong historical identity; alternatively there may be strong historical links between two or more communities in adjacent local governments. It is important to note that historical identity is not lessened if an area does not have its own local government.

Transport and communication

The transport and communication linkages between towns and other areas may be a significant barrier to movement and therefore an appropriate boundary between local governments.

The following factors are important in any assessment of local government boundaries:

- port access
- neighbouring towns
- railways
- major roads.

Matters affecting the viability of local governments

A local government should have a significant resource base:

- to be able to efficiently and effectively exercise its proper functions and delegated powers and operate facilities and services
- to be flexible and responsive in the exercise of its functions and powers and operation of its facilities and services
- to employ appropriate professional expertise and skills
- to be capable of embracing micro-economic reform.

Each local government should have a diverse and sufficient rate base to ensure that general purpose grants do not represent the major revenue source.

Effective delivery of local government services

A broad range of factors can be relevant to the effective delivery of local government services and these are often directly relevant to those that also affect the viability of local governments. They include:

- the size and geographical spread of the population
- management effectiveness and efficiency
- the availability of staff expertise
- appropriate infrastructure and equipment
- customer satisfaction and feedback.

Membership of the Board

There are five members on the Local Government Advisory Board. The Chair is appointed by the Minister. The Minister also appoints two members from nominations made by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), and one member from nominations made by Local Government Professionals Australia (LG Pro) WA. The Board also includes one member who is an officer of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

Four deputy members are also appointed to officiate in the absence of members.

All appointments must be approved by Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister and then by the Governor in Executive Council.

The current membership of the Board is as follows:

Chair:

Mr Melvyn Congerton

WALGA Nominees:

Cr Karen Chappel

Mayor Gary Brennan (Deputy)

Cr Russ Fishwick

Cr Chris Cornish (Deputy)

LG Pro Nominees:

Mr Anthony Vuleta

Ms Francesca Lefante (Deputy)

DLGSC officers:

Ms Mary Adam (Deputy Chair)

Ms Narrell Lethorn (Deputy)

The terms of appointment for the following members and deputy member expire on 31 August 2018:

- Mr Melvyn Congerton
- Cr Karen Chappel
- Mayor Gary Brennan

Member profiles (as at 31 August 2018)

Melvyn Congerton – Chair

Mel Congerton has been a member and Chair of the Board since 2009. His term of appointment concludes in August 2018. Mel was a councillor with the City of Swan from 1999 to 2015, including four years as deputy mayor. He is President of the Australian Business Enterprise Centre and Chairman of the International Institute of Business Technology (Governance Board).

Mary Adam – Deputy Chair

Mary Adam has been a member and Deputy Chair of the Board since 2013. Her term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Mary currently works with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as the General Counsel. She is a member of the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association, Women on Boards and United Nations (UN) Women Australia.

Karen Chappel – Member

Karen Chappel has been a member of the Board since 2011. Her term of appointment concludes in August 2018. Karen was a deputy member of the Board until 2015, after which she was appointed as a member. She was elected to the Shire of Morawa in 2005, and has served as President since 2009. Karen is Zone President of the Northern Country Zone of WALGA, is a WALGA State Councillor and represents local government on various committees. Karen has a Diploma in Local Government (elected member) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Anthony Vuleta – Member

Anthony Vuleta has been a member of the Board since 2016. His term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Anthony has been the CEO of the Town of Victoria Park since 2014. He was previously President of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (WA) and is now a member of that Board.

Russ Fishwick – Member

Russ Fishwick has been a member of the Board since 2016. His term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Russ previously worked as the Executive Manager of Governance with the Town of Victoria Park. He has also been a councillor with the City of Joondalup for 12 years. Russ is the Chair of the Mindarie Regional Council and a WALGA zone representative.

Narrell Lethorn – Deputy member to Mary Adam

Narrell Lethorn was appointed as a deputy member to the Board in April 2018. Her term of appointment concludes in August 2021. Narrell currently works with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. She has a Master of Business Administration, and is on the IPAA Young Professionals advisory committee.

Gary Brennan – Deputy member to Karen Chappel

Gary Brennan has been a deputy member of the Board since 2015. His term of appointment concludes in August 2018. Gary has been Mayor of the City of Bunbury since 2013. He was also previously Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Wagin, Town of Port Hedland and City of Bunbury. Gary was the former deputy chairman and a member of the Bunbury Port Authority.

Francesca Lefante – Deputy member to Anthony Vuleta

Francesca Lefante has been a deputy member of the Board since 2016. Her term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Francesca was previously the CEO at the City of Bayswater for a period of eight years. She is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Chris Cornish – Deputy member to Russ Fishwick

Chris Cornish has been a deputy member of the Board since 2016. His term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Chris has been a councillor with the City of Bayswater since 2011 and is the Deputy Mayor. He currently works as a self-employed financial planner. Chris is a board member of Hampton Senior High School, Treasurer of the Bayswater Childcare Association and has previously served on the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council.

The Year in Review - Board Activities 2017-2018

Creating, changing and abolishing district boundaries

Proposal to amend the boundaries between the City of Belmont and the City of Swan (suburbs of Ascot and Redcliffe) - alternative proposal

(Carried over from 2016-2017)

In October 2016, the Board received a proposal from the City of Belmont to transfer parts of Ascot and Redcliffe from the City of Swan to the City of Belmont. The proposal included three industrial lots, two of which were bisected by the current boundary, so that all three lots would be wholly located in the City of Belmont. This proposal was submitted as an alternative to the earlier City of Swan proposal (to include all three lots within Swan's own boundaries) which was submitted in March 2016. The City of Swan proposal was subsequently rejected by the Minister in December 2016, on the Board's recommendation.

In December 2016, the Board resolved to conduct a formal inquiry into the City of Belmont alternative proposal, which commenced in March 2017, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2.1 of the Act, which relates to creating, changing the boundaries of, and abolishing districts. This inquiry included a public submission period.

The Board received four submissions in total, all of which supported the City of Belmont proposal.

The City of Belmont maintained that its proposal was a logical solution that gave consideration to landowner needs, development matters, infrastructure and service utilisation, appropriate rate allocation from a services aspect as well as future elector representation based on service accessibility.

The City of Swan acknowledged there was significant benefit in land not being split between two local governments and that the City of Belmont's proposal had the support of affected landowners and consequently endorsed the Belmont proposal.

All parties affected by the proposal agreed that where possible, individual properties should not be bisected and should not be situated in more than one local government.

Main transport linkages and road networks used by the affected lots are currently in the City of Belmont and this will remain into the future.

The Board subsequently recommended that the Minister accept the proposal to locate the three affected lots within the City of Belmont. The Minister accepted the Board's recommendation in July 2017, and the district boundary change was published in the Government Gazette on 8 December 2017.

Note: details of this proposal were originally presented in the 2016-2017 Annual Report. However it was not finalised in time to present the outcome in that year.

Governance of the Board

During 2017-2018 the Board considered and further developed its governance framework, including guidelines and submission templates for boundary change proposals and ward and representation reviews, which are available on the [Local Government Advisory Board webpage on the department's website](#).

District boundary amendment proposals considered by the Board

The Board considered and finalised the following district boundary amendment proposal during 2017-2018:

Table 1: District boundary amendments 2017-2018

| Local Government | Matter | Gazettal Date |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------|
| Shire of York/Shire of Northam | Transfer of territory (of a minor nature) to Shire of York (entirety of lot 1, diagram 93692) from Shire of Northam. | 29 June 2018 |

Carried over to 2018-2019

There were no district boundary amendment proposals under consideration by the Board in 2017-2018 to be finalised in 2018-2019.



Ward and representation amendment proposals considered by the Board

Under schedule 2.2 of the Act, local governments with wards are required to conduct ward and representation reviews every eight years.

As 2018 is not a local government election year, it is relatively uncommon for councils to undertake ward and representation reviews during this period.

Consequently, there were no ward and representation reviews conducted by local governments in 2017-2018.

Carried over from 2016-2017

The following ward and representation matters were under consideration by the Board in 2016-2017 and were finalised and published in the Government Gazette in 2017-2018:

Table 2: Matters under consideration in 2016-2017 and finalised in 2017-2018

| Local Government | Matter | Gazettal Date |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------|
| Shire of Augusta Margaret River | Abolish the Shire's current three ward structure and implement a single district ward. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at seven. | 11 July 2017 |
| Shire of Lake Grace | Abolish the Shire's current three ward structure and implement a single district ward. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at nine. | 25 July 2017 |
| Shire of Victoria Plains | Amend the boundaries of the Shire's existing four ward structure. Reduce the number of councillors from nine to seven. | 25 July 2017 |

Carried over to 2018-2019

There were no ward and representation matters under consideration by the Board in 2017-2018 and which would be finalised in 2018-2019.

Other Information

Information required to be reported under section 175ZE of the *Electoral Act 1907* (public agencies to report on certain expenditure) is included in the Annual Report of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

The following officers of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries provided executive, research and administrative support to the Board in 2017-2018:

Officers:

Ms Julie Knight - Manager, Executive Support

Ms Julie Craig - Strategy and Research Officer

Ms Renata Mlinar - A/Strategy and Research Officer