



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

Local Government Advisory Board

2018-19 Annual Report



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Further information:

Local Government Advisory Board

Annual Report 2018-19

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Reference: E1906752

Chair's Report

This has been an important year for the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) and for the sector in general, in anticipation of the local government elections in October 2019.

In preparing for the elections, and for those local governments that operate with a ward structure, many councils undertake a ward and representation review to ensure a balanced ratio of councillor to electors. These reviews also provide the opportunity for comprehensive public consultation, which contributes to creating a structure which is both fair and best meets the needs of the local community.

This year, the Board analysed and assessed 13 individual ward and representation reviews – with the Minister for Local Government approving all of the Board's recommendations. The Board would like to acknowledge the work done and to thank those local governments that submitted reviews ahead of the 2019 elections.

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.

I would also like to note the significant work which is currently being undertaken by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in its review of the *Local Government Act 1995*. This is the first significant reform of local government conducted in more than two decades. The objective is for Western Australia to have a new, modern Act that empowers local governments to better deliver for the community.

As part of the comprehensive public consultation process, the Board made a submission to the Act review, with suggestions on how to improve and streamline its processes, which in turn would have a positive flow-on effect for local government in WA.

As I was appointed to the position of Board Chair in September 2018, I would like to publicly acknowledge the work of the previous Chair, Mr Mel Congerton, whose term finished in August 2018, after more than nine years in the role. Thanks go to Mel for his dedication and commitment to the Board and also to Mayor Gary Brennan, whose role as a deputy member also concluded in 2018.

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

I would also like to thank our executive staff, Julie Knight and Julie Craig, 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.



Marion Blair OAM

Chair

Local Government Advisory Board

31 August 2019

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.

Minister responsible

Hon. David Templeman MLA – Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts

Ministerial Statement of Expectation

The purpose of the Ministerial Statement of Expectation is to provide clarity as to the roles, values and objectives necessary to support an effective relationship between the Minister for Local Government and the Board. The Statement is publicly available on the [Local Government Advisory Board webpage on the department's website](#) and covers the following topics:

- role and functions
- community participation
- requirement to consider proposals
- the Board's relationship with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- good governance
- the Board's communication with the Minister.

Local Government Advisory Board Statement of Intent

The Board responded to the Minister's Statement of Expectation with a Statement of Intent, which outlines how the Board will implement the Minister's expectations. This statement is also available on the [Board's webpage](#).

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 which are detailed below.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. History of the area

The history of an area can be a relevant consideration, although the Board believes that in most 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 exercising its functions and powers, and operating 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.

8. 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:

Ms Marion Blair

WALGA Nominees:

Cr Karen Chappel

Mayor Dennis Wellington (Deputy to Cr Chappel)

Cr Russ Fishwick

Cr Chris Cornish (Deputy to Cr Fishwick)

LG Pro Nominees:

Mr Anthony Vuleta

Ms Francesca Lefante (Deputy to Mr Vuleta)

DLGSC officers:

Ms Mary Adam (Deputy Chair)

Ms Narrell Lethorn (Deputy to Ms Adam)

The terms of appointment for the following members and deputy members expire on 31 August 2019:

- Ms Mary Adam
- Cr Russ Fishwick
- Mr Anthony Vuleta
- Cr Chris Cornish
- Ms Francesca Lefante.

Member profiles (as at 31 August 2019)

Marion Blair – Chair

Marion Blair was appointed as Chair of the Board in September 2018. Her term of appointment concludes in August 2021. Marion was previously a councillor with the City of Mandurah and also with the City of Belmont where she was Deputy Mayor for nine years. In 2015, she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division for service to local government, to the community of Perth and to women. Marion is a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association of Western Australia.

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 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 2021. 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 Life Member and 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.

Russ Fishwick – Member

Russ Fishwick has been a member of the Board since 2016. His term of appointment concludes in August 2019. Russ has more than 40 years' experience as a serving local government officer and previously worked as the Executive Manager of Governance with the Town of Victoria Park. He has also acted in the role as its CEO. Russ is currently a councillor with the City of Joondalup and was first elected in 2006. He has also served two terms as its Deputy Mayor. Russ was the Chair of the Mindarie Regional Council for 10 years and is a current WALGA State Councillor.

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. Anthony is also a member of the Burswood Park Board.

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 and has a Master of Business Administration.

Dennis Wellington – Deputy member to Karen Chappel

Dennis Wellington was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in September 2018. His term of appointment concludes in August 2021. He has been Mayor of the City of Albany since 2011. Dennis also has board experience with the Great Southern Development Commission, the WALGA Great Southern Zone and the National ANZAC Centre Advisory Group.

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.

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 eight years. She is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

The Year in Review – Board Activities 2018-19

Creating, changing and abolishing district boundaries

Proposal to amend the boundaries between the Shire of Nannup and the Shire of Manjimup

In April 2019, the Board received a proposal from the Lower Donnelly River Conservation Association (LDRCA) to transfer 33 dwellings located on the Lower Donnelly River in the Shire of Nannup to the Shire of Manjimup.

In May 2019, the Board resolved to conduct a formal inquiry into the LDRCA proposal, which commenced in June 2019, 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 six-week public submission period which concluded in August 2019.

A decision on the proposal was yet to be made at the time of publication of this report. Accordingly, it will be detailed in the 2019-20 Annual Report.

Governance of the Board

During 2018-19, the Board continued to maintain its governance framework, including any required updates of the 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](#).

The Board meets annually to review its governance principles and documentation and to ensure its currency and consistency with Public Sector Commission guidelines.

District boundary amendment proposals considered by the Board

The Board commenced its consideration of the following district boundary amendment proposal during 2018-19:

Table 1: District boundary amendments 2018-19

Local Governments	Matter	Gazettal Date
Shire of Nannup/ Shire of Manjimup	Transfer of territory (33 dwellings) from Shire of Nannup to Shire of Manjimup	N/A

Carried over to 2019-20

The district boundary amendment proposal submitted by the Lower Donnelly River Conservation Association, concerning the Shires of Nannup and Manjimup, (as noted above), is expected be finalised in 2019-20.

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 2019 is a local government election year, it is also common for councils to undertake ward and representation reviews during this period.

The following six local governments conducted ward and representation reviews during 2018-19 and resolved to maintain their existing ward boundaries and levels of representation:

- Town of Cambridge
- Town of Cottesloe
- City of Fremantle
- City of Subiaco
- Town of Victoria Park
- City of Vincent.

Seven other local governments submitted proposals for change following their review, as detailed in the table below.

Proposals recommended to the Minister

Table 2: Ward and representation proposals 2018-19

Local Government	Matter	Gazettal Date
City of Greater Geraldton	Abolish the City's current three-ward structure and implement a single district ward. The number of councillors to be reduced from 14 to 12.	9 April 2019
Shire of Nungarin	Abolish the Shire's current three-ward structure and implement a single district ward. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at seven	2 August 2019
City of Rockingham	Reduce the City's current four-ward structure to three wards. The number of councillors to be increased from 10 to 11.	18 June 2019
Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Amend the boundaries of the Shire's current three-ward structure. Redistribute the number of councillors to three per ward, with the total remaining unchanged at nine.	21 June 2019

City of South Perth	Amend the boundaries of the City's current four-ward structure. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at eight.	10 May 2019
City of Stirling	Amend the boundaries of the City's current four-ward structure. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at 14.	18 June 2019
Shire of Toodyay	Abolish the Shire's current four ward structure and implement a single district ward. The number of councillors to remain unchanged at nine.	7 May 2019

Carried over from 2017-2018

There were no ward and representation matters under consideration by the Board in 2017-18 which would be finalised in 2018-2019.

Carried over to 2019-2020

There are no ward and representation matters under consideration by the Board in 2018-19 which would be finalised in 2019-20.

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 2018-19:

Officers:

Ms Julie Knight – Manager, Local Government Executive Support

Ms Julie Craig – Strategy and Research Officer