

9.5.4 LATE ITEM: Proposed Electoral Boundary Changes

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| Ward: | - | Date: | 19 August 2015 |
| Precinct: | - | File Ref: | |
| Attachments: | 1 – Proposed Electoral Boundary District of Mount Lawley 2 – Proposed Electoral Boundary District of Perth 3 – The Electoral Distribution Commissioners' Justification and Commentary (in summary) | | |
| Tabled Items: | - | | |
| Reporting Officer: | R Hall, Project Manager – Business Improvement | | |
| Responsible Officer: | L Kosova, Chief Executive Officer | | |

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. OBJECTS to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners' proposal to change electoral boundaries within the City of Vincent and RECOMMENDS that an alternative boundary change be pursued, to minimise or avoid fragmentation of the City of Vincent community as part of the proposal; and**
- 2. NOTES the mapping error shown in Attachment 1 – Proposed Electoral Boundary District of Mount Lawley, which omits the City of Vincent's local government boundary.**

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider changes to the electoral districts and boundaries proposed for the next State general election in March 2017.

BACKGROUND:

On 24 July 2015 the Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners released its electoral boundary proposals for comment or objection. The proposals are open for public comment or objection until 24 August 2015. Administration has contacted the Western Australian Electoral Commission and obtained an extension to comment until Wednesday 26 August 2015.

DETAILS:

Electoral Boundaries are frequently reviewed because there is a maximum percentage difference in the number of electors that each electorate is allowed to have, given that each electorate has equal representation in the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament and therefore should each have an equivalent number of enrolled voters plus or minus 10% of the average district enrolment.

There is one area of the City of Vincent that is affected by a proposed change which is on the City's eastern boundary, where it is proposed to remove all remaining parts of the suburb of Mount Lawley in the City of Vincent and include them in the Mount Lawley electorate (rather than in the Perth electorate, as is currently the case). The proposed electoral boundaries are depicted in **Attachment 1**. It should be noted that the map of the proposed electoral boundary for the district of Mount Lawley does not show the City of Vincent's eastern local government boundary as indicated on the legend and is potentially misleading for anyone considering the proposed boundary change.

CONSULTATION:

Nil.

LEGAL/POLICY:

The electoral boundaries are proposed to change in accordance with the State Electoral Act 1907.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

There is a risk that not making an objection will be taken as support for the proposal. If the electoral boundary is changed it could be used as a precedent for a future local government boundary adjustment affecting the eastern portion of the City of Vincent.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

The City of Vincent community overwhelmingly responded to the City's previous local government reform plebiscite expressing a desire for the whole of the City of Vincent to remain intact and not be fragmented. While the proposed electoral boundary change is not the same as the local government reform proposal, the community's strong preference from the plebiscite is still relevant and has some application to the proposed electoral boundary change.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

COMMENTS:

Although this change will not have any operational impacts on the City's level of service to the community, City of Vincent residents have previously voiced their strong desire to remain and be represented as a united community.

In developing their proposals, the Commissioners are required to weigh up a range of relevant factors including the level of community interest, existing local government boundaries and the trend of demographic changes.

Whilst it is understood a boundary change needs to be made to bring the Perth electorate within the tolerated range of +/- 10% (currently 11.4%), the current proposal fragments the Vincent community to redistribute only 1,578 electors from the Perth electorate to the Mount Lawley electorate. In Administration's view, this number of electors does not warrant the extent of change proposed and could be addressed in other ways.

As an alternative, a revised boundary could be applied, which reduces the number of electors in the Perth electorate by excluding areas from both the City of Perth and the City of Vincent. For example, the area of West Perth – west of Mitchell Freeway – could be ceded to the neighbouring electorate of Nedlands. This would use the significant physical barrier of Mitchell Freeway to define the eastern edge of the Nedlands electorate, and would also recognise the proximity and physical connection between the West Perth area and the neighbouring Subiaco precinct, compared to the CBD/East Perth area.

It is forecast that Vincent and Perth will continue to rapidly grow in population (and therefore electors) and the current boundary proposal is seen as a short term solution with longer term implications. Additionally, Walcott Street is a clear geographical separator and is aligned to local government boundaries and should be maintained.

It is recommended that Council objects to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners' proposal to change electoral boundaries within the City of Vincent and recommends that an alternative boundary change be pursued, to minimise or avoid fragmentation of the City of Vincent community as part of the proposal.