



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

Local Government Advisory Board

2022-23 Annual Report



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Local Government Advisory Board

Annual Report 2022-23

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

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Front cover image: Kalbarri National Park, Western Australia

Image courtesy of Tourism Western Australia.

Chair's report

Local Government reform has been a major consideration in the work of the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) for the past 12 months. During this period, the outcomes achieved by the Board, underpinned by the cooperation and commitment of the local government sector in WA, have been outstanding.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) has also maintained a strong focus on local government reform, resulting in major changes for many individual councils being implemented ahead of the 2023 local government ordinary elections.

More generally, the proposed changes to the Local Government Act and Regulations provide for a stronger, more consistent framework for local governments across Western Australia. The reforms have been designed to deliver significant benefits for residents and ratepayers, small business, industry, elected members and professionals working in the sector.

As part of the emphasis on stronger local democracy and community engagement, a number of changes have been introduced to bring further consistency to individual councils including:

- requiring public election of the mayor or president for all larger councils
- abolishing the use of wards for smaller local governments; and
- aligning the size of councils with the size of the population of each local government area.

During the reforms process, DLGSC has identified that 68 of the State's 139 local governments would be required to make changes to either their wards and/or representation structures to meet the reform requirements. Of those 68, a total of 55 resolved to undertake a formal review to seek community consultation ahead of implementing any changes.

This figure represents around four times as many reviews as would normally be considered by the Board in the period leading up to the bi-annual elections. To meet the associated timeframes, Board staff implemented new streamlined processes and procedures, and Board members met more frequently to consider the larger volume of submissions in a timely way.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Board members and staff for their professionalism and commitment to the reforms process, to ensure that all ward and representation changes could be formally implemented ahead of the 2023 elections.

I would also like to express my genuine appreciation to a long-standing member, Mary Adam, who will be concluding her term with the Board on 31 August, after 10 years in the role. During that time, Mary has been involved in numerous significant government initiatives – and her knowledge, experience and candour will be missed.

I would also like to thank our executive staff, Julie Craig, Emma Johns, and Leah Horton; and former executive staff Shannon Wood, and Chloe Papasergio, who provided support to the Board throughout the year. Their knowledge and dedication helps us to operate in an efficient and effective manner. I look forward to the Board continuing its important work over the coming year.



Dan Bull

Chair – Local Government Advisory Board

31 August 2023

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 ward 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 to either accept or reject the recommendation.

The Board can also carry out other inquiries that the Minister may direct, in accordance with the Act.

Minister responsible

Hon David Michael MLA – Minister for Ports; Local Government; Road Safety; Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport.

The Board would like to acknowledge the previous Minister, Hon John Carey MLA, following his departure from the Local Government portfolio in June 2023.

Ministerial Statement of Expectation

The purpose of the June 2021 Ministerial Statement of Expectation is to provide clarity on the roles, values and objectives necessary to support an effective relationship between the Minister and the Board. The Statement is publicly available on the [Local Government Advisory Board webpage](#)¹ and covers the following topics:

- Good governance
- Ethical behaviour and conflicts of interest
- Performance management
- Appointments
- Government policies and objectives
- Financial management
- Communication.

Local Government Advisory Board Statement of Intent

The Board responded to the Minister's Statement of Expectation with a Statement of Intent in August 2021, which outlines how the Minister's expectations will be implemented. This statement is also available on the Board's webpage.

¹ <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/boards-and-commissions>

The Board's guiding principles

The Board's guiding principles form the basis for the consideration of any changes to local government boundaries and consider eight factors set out in the Act, as detailed below. Other relevant factors may also be considered by the Board.

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 considers 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 exercise its proper functions and delegated powers and operate facilities and services efficiently and effectively
- 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 Board. The Chair is appointed by the Minister. The Minister also appoints two members from nominations usually made by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), and one member from nominations usually made by Local Government Professionals Australia WA (LG Pro). The Board also includes one member who is an officer of 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:

Name	Position	Nominated by	Current term ends
Cr Dan Bull	Chair	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2024
Ms Mary Adam	Deputy Chair	DLGSC representative	31 August 2023
Mr Anthony Vuleta	Member	LG Pro	31 August 2024
Cr Russ Fishwick	Member	WALGA	31 August 2024
Cr Caroline Knight	Member	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2024
Vacant	Deputy to the Deputy Chair	DLGSC representative	
Ms Joanne Soderlund	Deputy to Anthony Vuleta	LG Pro	31 August 2024
Cr Karen Wheatland	Deputy to Russ Fishwick	WALGA	31 August 2024
Cr Jannah Stratford	Deputy to Caroline Knight	Minister for Local Government	31 August 2024

Member profiles (as at 31 August 2023)

Cr Dan Bull – Chair

Dan Bull was appointed as chair of the Board in October 2021. He is presently appointed until August 2024. Dan is currently a councillor at the City of Bayswater – a role he has held since 2015. He was also the City's Mayor from 2017 to 2021. Dan is a member of a number of internal and external committees, including the Aged Care Governance Committee, the Policy Review and Development Committee and the Joint Development Assessment Panel. Dan is currently the Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission Chair, having been appointed in June 2023. Dan graduated from UWA with a Bachelor of Laws.

Ms Mary Adam – Deputy Chair

Mary Adam has been a member and Deputy Chair of the Board since 2013. She is presently appointed until August 2023. Mary currently works with the DLGSC as Special Legal Counsel. She is the immediate past President of the WA Chapter, and a national director, of the Association of Corporate Counsel Australia and a member of Women Lawyers WA.

Mr Anthony Vuleta – Member

Anthony Vuleta has been a member of the Board since 2016. He is presently appointed until August 2024. Anthony has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Victoria Park since 2014. He is also a member and the current deputy president of LG Pro WA. Anthony was previously president of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (WA) and is now a member of that board. He is also a member of the Burswood Park Board.

Cr Russ Fishwick – Member

Russ Fishwick has been a member of the Board since 2016. He is presently appointed until August 2024. 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 Chief Executive Officer. Russ is currently a councillor with the City of Joondalup and was first elected in 2006 and has served three terms as its Deputy Mayor. Russ was the Chair of the Mindarie Regional Council for 10 years and is a WALGA Life Member and State Councillor. He was also appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2010 and holds post graduate qualifications in business and management. He is active in surf lifesaving and is a Senior Assessor for Surf Lifesaving WA.

Cr Caroline Knight – Member

Caroline Knight was appointed as a member of the Board in October 2021. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Caroline is currently the Deputy Mayor of the City of Mandurah – a role she has held since 2017. She was a councillor at the City for six years prior to being elected to the position. Caroline is currently Chair of the Peel Harvey Catchment Council and is also Chair of the Mandurah Environmental Advisory Board. She is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Caroline was appointed as a Commissioner representing non-metropolitan local government on the West Australian Planning Commission in 2022.

Deputy member to Mary Adam

Currently vacant

Ms Joanne Soderlund – Deputy member to Anthony Vuleta

Joanne Soderlund was appointed as a deputy member of the board in September 2022. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Joanne is currently the Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Tammin. Prior to her CEO position at Tammin, Joanne was the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at the Shire of Cocos Keeling Islands.

Cr Karen Wheatland – Deputy member to Russ Fishwick

Karen Wheatland was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in September 2019. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Karen has been a councillor with the City of Melville since 2017, where she is also a member of several committees. Karen is currently National Vice President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association.

Cr Jannah Stratford – Deputy member to Caroline Knight

Jannah Stratford was appointed as a deputy member of the Board in October 2021. She is presently appointed until August 2024. Jannah is currently the President of the Shire of Koorda – a role she has held since 2020. She was a councillor at the Shire for two years prior to being elected to the position. Jannah has previously held the position of Chair of the North Eastern Wheatbelt Region of Councils (NEWROC) and is a member of the Eastern Wheatbelt District Health Advisory Committee. She is also involved with several sporting and community clubs in the Shire of Koorda.

The year in review – Board activities 2022-23

District boundary amendment proposals considered by the Board

Under schedule 2.1 of the Act, local governments may make proposals to create, change the boundaries of, or abolish districts.

Carried over from 2021-22

Proposal to amend the boundaries between the City of Kalamunda and the City of Gosnells (Carried over from 2020-21, expected to be finalised in 2022-23)

In December 2020, the Board received a proposal from the City of Kalamunda to amend three anomalies in the district boundary within the Maddington Kenwick Strategic Employment Area. The proposal resulted in three lots currently bisected by the district boundary to be located in one local government district (City of Gosnells). The new boundary follows established lot boundaries in Welshpool Road East and Courtney Place, Wattle Grove, and Logistics Boulevard, Kenwick.

The boundary change was finalised and published in the Government Gazette in March 2023.

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.

In addition, due to the requirements of the local government reforms, a large number of councils resolved to undertake a ward and representation review in 2022-23.

The following is a summary of the local governments that completed reviews. Also note that some local governments may have chosen or been placed onto the 'election reform pathway'.

Local Government		Gazettal date	Representation Changes	Ward/Boundary Changes
1.	Albany	30 June 2023	✓	✓
2.	Ashburton	30 June 2023	✓	✓
3.	Bayswater	30 June 2023	✓	✓
4.	Belmont	30 June 2023	✓	✓
5.	Beverley	30 June 2023	✓	
6.	Boyup Brook	30 June 2023	✓	✓
7.	Broome	30 June 2023	✓	✓
8.	Bruce Rock	20 June 2023	✓	
9.	Bunbury	30 June 2023	✓	
10.	Canning	20 June 2023		✓
11.	Carnarvon	Status quo maintained		

Local Government		Gazettal date	Representation Changes	Ward/Boundary Changes
12.	Chapman Valley	20 June 2023	✓	
13.	Claremont	20 June 2023	✓	✓
14.	Collie	30 June 2023	✓	
15.	Coorow	20 June 2023	✓	
16.	Cunderdin	20 June 2023	✓	
17.	Dalwallinu	20 June 2023	✓	
18.	Dandaragan	20 June 2023	✓	
19.	Dowerin	20 June 2023	✓	
20.	East Pilbara	30 June 2023	✓	✓
21.	Esperance	30 June 2023	✓	✓
22.	Fremantle	30 June 2023	✓	✓
23.	Gnowangerup	30 June 2023	✓	
24.	Greater Geraldton	30 June 2023	✓	
25.	Harvey	30 June 2023	✓	
26.	Irwin	20 June 2023	✓	
27.	Kalamunda	30 June 2023	✓	✓
28.	Karratha	30 June 2023	✓	
29.	Kent	30 June 2023	✓	
30.	Kojonup	20 June 2023	✓	
31.	Kondinin	30 June 2023	✓	
32.	Kulin	30 June 2023	✓	✓
33.	Lake Grace	30 June 2023	✓	
34.	Mandurah	30 June 2023		✓
35.	Manjimup	30 June 2023	✓	✓
36.	Merredin	30 June 2023	✓	
37.	Mukinbudin	30 June 2023	✓	
38.	Mundaring	30 June 2023	✓	
39.	Murray	30 June 2023	✓	
40.	Nannup	30 June 2023	✓	✓

Local Government		Gazettal date	Representation changes	Ward/Boundary Changes
41.	Narembeen	20 June 2023	✓	
42.	Nedlands	30 June 2023	✓	✓
43.	Northam	30 June 2023	✓	✓
44.	Northampton	30 June 2023	✓	✓
45.	Pingelly	20 June 2023	✓	
46.	Serpentine-Jarrahdale	30 June 2023	✓	
47.	Swan	30 June 2023	✓	✓
48.	Toodyay	20 June 2023	✓	
49.	Victoria Plains	30 June 2023	✓	✓
50.	Wagin	20 June 2023	✓	
51.	Waroona	20 June 2023	✓	
52.	Wickepin	20 June 2023	✓	
53.	Wyndham-East Kimberley	30 June 2023	✓	

While many local governments may have undertaken a ward and representation review to address how and when the council membership will be changed, other local governments may have chosen or been placed onto the 'electoral reform pathway'. The electoral reform pathway provided for implementation of the reforms to council representation without a ward and representation process. The legislative powers associated with change orders and transitional orders under sections 2.16B, 2.18A, 2.17 and 2.17A of the *Local Government Act 1995* are aligned with population estimates for local government districts. These orders do not require a ward and representation review through the Local Government Advisory Board to take effect. Local governments on the electoral reform pathway:

- Shire of Cranbrook
- City of Busselton
- Shire of Derby-West Kimberley
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Shire of Narrogin
- Shire of Quairading
- Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
- Shire of Williams

Local governments that had wards abolished in accordance with Part 2 Division 3 (Districts that cannot be divided into wards) of the *Local Government (Constitution) Regulations 1998*:

- Town of Cottesloe
- Shire of Denmark
- Town of East Fremantle

- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Shark Bay

Local governments on the electoral reform pathway that changed to a Mayor or President elected by the electors in accordance with Part 3 Division 1 (method of filling office of Mayor or President) of the *Local Government (Constitution) Regulations 1998*:

- City of Busselton
- Shire of Augusta Margaret-River
- Shire of Derby-West Kimberley

Carried over from 2021-22

One ward and representation proposal was under consideration by the Board in 2021-22 that was subsequently finalised and published in the Government Gazette on 12 August 2022 (City of Joondalup).

Carried over to 2023-24

There are no ward and representation proposals under consideration by the Board in 2022-23 that will be carried over to 2023-24.

Governance of the Board

During 2022-23, 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. These guidelines and templates are available on the [Local Government Advisory Board webpage](#).²

The Board generally meets annually or bi-annually to review its governance principles and documentation and to ensure currency and consistency with Public Sector Commission (PSC) guidelines.

The Board's charter, code of conduct, meeting procedures and communications protocol will be reviewed at a governance workshop scheduled for September 2023, in accordance with the PSC's good governance processes and guidelines.

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 DLGSC officers provided executive, research and administrative support to the Board in 2022-23:

Officers

Mrs Leah Horton – Manager, Board Governance and Reporting (from July 2023)

² <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/boards-and-commissions>

Ms Julie Craig – Strategy and Research Officer, Local Government Executive Support

Ms Emma Johns – Strategy and Research Officer, Local Government Executive Support

Officers (former)

Mr Shannon Wood – A/Manager, Local Government Executive Support (until April 2023)

Ms Chloe Papasergio – A/Manager, Local Government Executive Support (until May 2023)