

13 March 2014

Mr M Congerton
Chairman
Local Government Advisory Board
GPO Box R1250
Perth, WA, 6844
By email: advisory.board@dlgc.wa.gov.au

Dear Mel,

Submission to Metropolitan Local Government District Inquiries

The Committee for Perth is an apolitical business sector think tank whose focus is to actively improve the livability of Perth by providing visionary ideas and solutions that drive the sustainable development of Perth as a metropolitan area of rich cultural diversity, economic prosperity and world-class amenity.

Since its inception in 2006, the Committee for Perth has advocated for local government reform on the basis that, in order to effectively compete with other metropolitan regions throughout the world for a skilled workforce and investment dollars, the Perth metropolitan region needs to be formally organised to explicitly serve the purposes of the region in pursuit of economic development.

Our long term view, formed through academic and on the ground research, has been that the current governance structure fails to achieve this for two primary reasons: local government is too fragmented; and there is no dedicated mechanism for integrated regional co-operation.

The Committee for Perth therefore supports the current local government reform process and believes that the process of local authority amalgamations should aim to:

1. Reduce local government fragmentation and improve the capacity for integrated, regional strategic decision making capacity.
2. Provide for efficient and equitable service delivery.
3. Enable integrated planning of functional economic, social and cultural areas and activity centres.
4. Develop a strong capital city.
5. Build Perth's national and international competitiveness and profile.
6. Maximise potential for efficient urban growth.

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A complete list of current members is available at www.committeeforperth.com.au

The Board is required through legislation to consider a number of specific factors, such as demographic trends and economic factors, when assessing proposals for local authority boundary changes or amalgamations. The Board can also consider any other factors it considers relevant to the Inquiries. We therefore also urge consideration of the following relevant factors:

- **Reduce fragmentation and improve capacity for integrated regional decision making:** It is our view that the Board should aim to ensure that local authority boundary changes increase the potential for co-operation between local authorities in the Perth region and improve the capacity for local authorities in Perth to respond to issues of national, state or regional importance in a more integrated manner.
- **Economies of scale (size/efficiency) in service delivery:** Our research indicates that larger local authorities tend to be more efficient than smaller local authorities and we therefore believe that the process of boundary changes should therefore ensure that opportunities for efficiency in service delivery and economies of scale are maximized. We also believe that consideration should be given to reducing the potential for parochialism and competition between authorities.
- **Integrated planning for economic growth and social and cultural development:** It is evident that local authorities should be organised to enable the efficient, cohesive and integrated planning of functional economic, social and cultural areas. In this regard local authority boundaries in Perth should reflect the social and economic function of the Perth region and its sub-regions and the interdependence of key economic activity generators, including services, infrastructure and the community. Areas or centres of greatest interdependence or with significant potential for integrated planning and service delivery should be grouped under a single local authority banner. Similar consideration should be given to the form, function and service requirements of urban and suburban areas with local authorities organised to achieve greatest consistency in urban form and therefore in governance and service requirements across their municipality.
- **Developing a strong capital city and Perth's international competitiveness:** The Committee for Perth believes that the development of the Perth region as a capital city of national and global significance substantially hinges on its ability to develop a strong central core. In this regard we strongly support the amalgamation of the key and iconic central economic, social, cultural and residential areas and infrastructure under a single local authority umbrella. This will enable the cohesive planning of the functional central area as a whole; will enable the development of integrated and interdependent central social, economic and cultural hubs; and will enable Perth to develop its role as the key economic, social, retail, cultural, entertainment, education and research centre of the state.
- **Maximising potential for efficient urban growth:** In establishing local authority boundaries consideration should be given, where possible, to regional growth strategies and to ensuring that areas with urban growth potential or targets for

significant densification are located within local authorities that have the capacity to both maximize future growth potential and provide appropriate infrastructure, services and representation to future residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this process, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely

John Langoulant AO
Chair