



## Discussion Paper

# Review of Wards and Representation Levels

November 2022



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## 1 Background

The Shire of Collie has resolved to undertake a review of its representation. This review is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* and is undertaken in accordance with resolution 9072 of Council on 11 October 2022. More specifically, clause 5.(a) of Schedule 2.2 of the Act permits a review to be carried out.

The Shire of Collie currently has eleven (11) Councillors elected from the Shire. There are no wards into which the Shire is divided.

Based on a population of 8,812 (2021 census statistic), there is presently 1 Councillor per 801 people.

## 2 Review Process

Prior to conducting a review, the Shire must provide at least six weeks local public notice that a review will be carried out. The purpose of the local public notice is to inform the community of the proposed review and invite comments and submissions which will inform the review process. The public is invited to consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Shire's current representation and suggest options for change, and the local government can facilitate this by providing some examples of ward and representation change as suggestions.

Examples could include:

1. Creating wards;
2. Changing the name of the district;
3. Changing the number of offices of Councillor on a council; and
4. Specifying the number of offices of Councillor for wards if wards are proposed.

The review process involves a number of steps:

- The council resolves to undertake the review
- Public submission period opens
- Information provided to the community for discussion
- Public submission period closes
- The Council considers all submissions and relevant factors and makes a decision
- The Council submits a report to the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) for its consideration
- If a change is proposed, the Board submits a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government (the Minister).
- The Governor, upon recommendation of the Minister, may make an order making changes

Any changes ordered by the Governor would be in place for the next ordinary election where possible.



### 3 Factors to be considered

When considering changes to wards and representation, Schedule 2.2 of the Act specifies five factors that must be taken into account by a local government as part of the review process:

1. Community of interest
2. Physical and topographic features
3. Demographic trends
4. Economic factors
5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards.

The Local Government Advisory Board has offered the following interpretation of these factors.

1 *Community of interest*

The term community of interest has a number of elements. These include a sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities. It can also include dependence on the shared facilities in a district as reflected in the catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging.

2 *Physical and topographic features*

These may be natural or man-made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations. Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be relevant as may other man-made features such as railway lines and freeways.

3 *Demographic trends*

Several measurements of the characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information. Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

4 *Economic factors*

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area. This may include the industries that occur in a local government area (or the release of land for these) and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks.

5 *Ratio of Councillors to Electors*

It is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to councillors across the wards of its district if they were to exist.



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The characteristics of the Shire of Collie in relation to the factors to be considered are now described.

### Community of Interest

The townsite of Collie is central to the Shire both geographically and functionally. The townsite connects four arterial roads; east and west (Coalfields Highway), south (Collie Preston Road) and north-east (Collie Williams Road).

The range of services expected from a regional town are centred in Collie. This includes five primary schools, a regional high school and a TAFE campus. A hospital, doctors surgeries, allied health services, retail, business and many community services are based in the town. Extensive sporting facilities are available along with an art gallery, museum and visitors centre complementing the many visitor attractions in town.

Over 86% of the Shire residents are town based, with the remaining 14% within small settlements or the hinterland. These characteristics provide a cohesive community with common interest.

### Physical and Topographic Factors

The Shire of Collie is situated on the Darling Range – the uplifted edge of the Yilgarn land mass. This places Collie at around 200 metres above sea level and contains soil types supporting jarrah dominated forests. Marri, blackbutt and flooded gum are also well represented.

Coal resources of the Collie Basin were discovered in the late 1800's, leading to the opening up of coal fields and the ensuing prosperity and development of the town. Coal has remained synonymous with Collie and will always be central to European settlement history.

Named the Collie River, a watercourse that passes through the town plays an important role in the lives of Nyungar people. Their connection to the river is reflected in their mythological and spiritual beliefs, and its role as a source of food, water and recreation.

### Demographic Trends

In 2021, there were 8,812 people in the Collie local government area. The male/female distribution was 51%/49% respectively with a median age of 44 years.

Whereas the change in population between the 2011 and 2016 census periods saw a decrease of 492 people, the period between 2016 and 2021 saw a slight increase of 14 people. Moderate population growth can be expected in the foreseeable future.

As the resident population is predominantly town based, there is no basis to draw meaningful demographic comparison between areas across the local government.

### Economic Factors

Collie is an economic hub in the South West (representing around 12% of the region's gross regional product), benefitting from the State's only productive coalfields, together with state-significant energy generation and transmission infrastructure.



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Identified by State Government planning frameworks as a sub-regional centre, Collie is transitioning to a more sustainable economy with a greater range of industries and reduced reliance on coal mining.

Strategic focus areas for economic development of Collie include:

- Facilitating industry opportunities;
- Providing incentives for growth;
- Ensuring infrastructure is industry-ready; and
- Developing a future workforce.

The key to the future economy of Collie is to diversify the employment base and provide for a smooth economic transition in the future.

### **Ratio of Councillors to Electors**

The table below identifies the ratio of people in relation to elected members for local government areas across the southwest region.

Local Government	Population (2021 Census)	Number of Elected Members	Ratio (Persons per Councillor)
Shire of Collie	8,812	11	801
City of Bunbury	32,987	13	2,537
Shire of Dardanup	14,686	9	1,631
Shire of Harvey	28,567	13	2,197
Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	6,155	9	683
Shire of Nannup	1,538	8	192
Shire of Manjimup	9,093	11	827
Shire of Augusta Margaret River	16,791	7	2,399
Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes	5,238	9	582
Shire of Boyup Brook	1,834	9	203

Local government areas with larger populations tend to have a higher number of persons per councillor, while lesser populated areas are more highly represented. Representation for the Shire of Collie is generally consistent with this trend.

## 4 Review of Ward System and Representation

### Ward System

A Ward system divides the local government district into Wards with Councillors elected from each Ward and representing the electors in that Ward.

The **advantages** of a ward system may include:

- Councillors may be more accessible to electors of the Ward they represent.
- Different sectors of the community can be represented ensuring a good spread of representation and interests amongst elected members.
- There is potentially more opportunity for elected members to have a greater knowledge and interest in the issues in their ward.
- It may be easier for a candidate to be elected if they only need to canvass one ward.



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The **disadvantages** of a ward system may include:

- Elected members can become too focused on their wards and less focused on the affairs of other wards and the whole local government.
- An unhealthy competition for resources can develop where electors in each ward come to expect the services and facilities provided in other wards, whether they are appropriate or not.
- The community and elected members may regard the local government in terms of wards rather than as a whole community.
- Ward boundaries may appear to be placed arbitrarily and may not reflect the social interaction and communities of interest of the community.

### Reduction in Councillor Representation

The ideal number of Councillors for a local government is determined independently by each local government. The Shire of Collie currently has 11 Councillors, and a Shire President elected by the Council.

The **advantages** of a reduction in the number of elected members may include the following:

- The decision-making process may be more effective and efficient if the number of elected members is reduced.
- Cost efficiencies for the Shire and ratepayers, saving approx. \$20,050 (plus incidental costs) per annum if numbers were reduced by two.
- Fewer elected members are more readily identifiable to the community.
- Fewer positions on council may lead to greater interest in elections with contested elections and those elected obtaining a greater level of support from the community.

The **disadvantages** of a reduction in the number of elected members may include the following:

- A smaller number of elected members may result in an increased workload for incumbent members and may reduce efficiency and effectiveness.
- There is the potential for dominance in the council by a particular interest group.
- A reduction in the number of elected members may limit the diversity of interests around the council table.
- Opportunities for community participation in council's affairs may be reduced if there are fewer elected members for the community to contact.

## 5 Options to consider

There are a range of ward and representation options that can be contemplated. These include:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Option 1: | No wards (current arrangement)                |
| Option 2: | Create wards                                  |
| Option 3: | Maintain representation (current arrangement) |
| Option 4: | Reduce representation                         |
| Option 5: | Combinations of the above                     |



## 6 Next Steps in the Review Process

The review process and associated deadlines are as follows:

Date	Review process action
24 November 2022	Public notice provided in the Collie Bulletin, on the City's website and notice boards, and on social media.  Submissions are invited for a period extending beyond six weeks.
12 January 2023	Submissions close at 4:30pm.
14 February 2023	Review presented to Council for endorsement at Ordinary Meeting of Council.
15 February 2023	Shire to notify the Local Government Advisory Board of outcome of review.
February 2023 onwards	Local Government Advisory Board to consider the Shire's review proposal and make a recommendation to the Minister in respect to ward of representation changes.
2023	Minister to consider recommendation to the Minister concerning any changes to ward and representation for the Shire of Collie.

## 7 Submissions

Members of the community are invited to make a written submission about any aspect of ward boundaries and representation and lodge it via:

- Post to:  
Shire of Collie  
Locked Bag 6225  
COLLIE WA 6225  
or
- via e-mail: [colshire@collie.wa.gov.au](mailto:colshire@collie.wa.gov.au)  
or
- hand delivered to 87 Throssell Street, Collie

All submissions must be received by no later than 4:30 on 12 January 2023.



# SHIRE OF COLLIE

0

2

4

6

8

Km

GDA 2020 MGA 50  
(map created at A3 size)

Townsite

Local Government Authority

Locality

Major Roads

Minor Roads

Watercourse

Lake

Forest

National Park

COLLIE

SHIRE OF COLLIE

COLLIE

COALFIELDS RD

GASTALDO RD

Datasets represented from Landgate's Basemap geodatabase.  
Ref: Job no. 445161 - Shire of Collie - Custom Map  
Produced: 3/03/2022  
Geospatial, Location Intelligence, Landgate  
Email: [geodata@landgate.wa.gov.au](mailto:geodata@landgate.wa.gov.au)  
[www.landgate.wa.gov.au](http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au)

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This map displays the Shire of Collie and its surrounding areas. The Shire of Collie is outlined in green, while other shires like Shire of Boddington, Shire of Harvey, Shire of Dardanup, Shire of West Arthur, Shire of Boyup Brook, and Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup are shown in light green. Major roads are highlighted in red, including Coalfields Rd, Collie-Williams Rd, and Collie-Preston Rd. Watercourses are shown in blue, with the Harris River and Bingham River being prominent. Lakes such as Lake Ballingall, Lake Kepwari, and Lake Balingup are also depicted. The map includes various localities and towns like Collie, Allanson, Worsley, and Muja. Surrounding shires are labeled in green text: SHIRE OF WAROONA, SHIRE OF BODDINGTON, SHIRE OF HARVEY, SHIRE OF DARDANUP, SHIRE OF WEST ARTHUR, SHIRE OF BOYUP BROOK, and SHIRE OF DONNYBROOK-BALINGUP. The map also shows Wellington National Park and Preston National Park. A legend in the top left corner defines symbols for townsites, local government authorities, localities, major roads, minor roads, watercourses, lakes, forests, and national parks. A scale bar indicates distances up to 8 km, and a north arrow is present. Metadata at the bottom left includes the date (3/03/2022), the organization (Landgate), and contact information. A disclaimer at the bottom left states that the map is a pictorial representation and does not guarantee accuracy.

**DISCLAIMER**

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