

YOUR REF:  
OUR REF: OCR2110892-14.1.1  
ENQUIRIES: Dale Stewart



89 Earl Street, Narrogin  
**Correspondence to:**  
PO Box 1145, Narrogin WA 6312  
**T** (08) 9890 0900  
**E** enquiries@narrogin.wa.gov.au  
**W** www.narrogin.wa.gov.au

11 August 2021

Hon. Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier  
13th Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Via email: [wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Premier

## **OPEN LETTER REQUESTING LABOR MPS BE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO A CONSCIENCE VOTE**

Whilst Premier, we have made our formal submission into the current review of the WA State Electoral System, I now write to you and appeal to you direct, on behalf of the elected members of the duly elected Shire of Narrogin and its 5,200 inhabitants.

Any electoral reform that reduces the voice of regional people is a concern for not just Narrogin and its electors, but also the electors of the wider district. Narrogin, as a sub-regional centre, services not just the 5,200 residents of this Shire, but also the immediate hinterland of over 11,000 people.

These are people that rely on the Members of Parliament of metropolitan areas appreciating and recognising that one vote one value and equal representation between voting districts, based purely on population, would be totally inappropriate and indeed unjust.

In a State as diverse, large and indeed in many instances remote, Governments need to consider the voices and issues of the minority, as well as the voters that have the largest voice (or power). Labor has, since inception, been founded and prided itself on representing the masses, the downtrodden, the common man (and woman). We in the country, need your help more than ever now.

The only way that country people in Western Australian have had 'some' form of representation and ear of the Parliament, has been through the proportional voting system that has allowed greater participation in Parliament, through a long held agreed positive (beneficial) distortion to the one vote one value system.

The extreme and rare anomaly of the election of a candidate from *The Daylight Saving Party* (winning a seat in the Mining and Pastoral Region with only primary 98 votes), has indeed highlighted an anomaly (with group voting tickets), that needs to be looked at in terms of votes harvesting. Yes, this anomaly needs to be fixed. But can I say, *not* at the expense of a total dismantling of the current electoral system in the Legislative Council.

Put simply, if the Government of today, does not protect the country people of today, tomorrow there might be no people in the country to govern.

Our requests of you Premier are twofold:

- 1) For the Government to protect the principles of regional representation in the Legislative Council at its present level, which has served well for decades and has enabled country people to have access to basic services and facilities, which in turn has enabled the regions to enormously contribute to our culture, our values and our economy, of this great and diverse State; and
- 2) For you as Premier to allow a conscious vote of your sitting Labor MPs on this matter in both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, when the proposed legislative reform bill is put to the vote.

Premier, on behalf of the constituents of our municipality and representing its 5,200 inhabitants, we ask this question, will you allow your Labor MPs a conscious vote on this matter?

We the people of Narrogin look forward to your response and should you require further information or clarification on the above, please contact me via email, [president@narrogin.wa.gov.au](mailto:president@narrogin.wa.gov.au) or telephone 9890 0900.

Yours sincerely



Leigh Ballard  
**Shire President**

cc

Members of Legislative Council & Legislative Assembly – Australian Labor Party

Members of Legislative Council & Legislative Assembly – Liberal Party

Members of Legislative Council & Legislative Assembly – The Nationals WA

Members of Legislative Council & Legislative Assembly – Minor Parties and Independents