



## SHIRE OF MENZIES

### REVIEW OF WARDS AND REPRESENTATION DISCUSSION PAPER BACKGROUND

#### BACKGROUND

The Shire of Menzies has resolved to undertake a review of its ward system to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1995 (the Act).

Schedule 2.2 of the Act requires local governments with wards to carry out reviews of the ward boundaries and the number of Councillors for each ward from time to time so that no more than eight years elapse between successive reviews. The last review of wards in the Shire of Menzies was undertaken in 2009 and it is now appropriate to carry out another review.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

Currently the Shire of Menzies has seven (7) Councillors elected from two (2) wards as follows:

**Table:** Shire of Menzies elector to Councillor ratios – current situation

Ward	2015 Number of Councillors	2015 Number of Electors	Ward Ratio Average	% Ratio Deviation
Town	3	96	32	11.8%
Rural	4	158	40	-8.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	254	36	

The % ratio deviation gives a clear indication of the % difference between the average Councillor/elector ratio for the whole local government and the Councillor/elector ratio for each ward.

#### REVIEW PROCESS

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; and
- If a change is proposed, the Board submits a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government (the Minister).

Any changes approved by the Minister will be in place for the next ordinary election where possible.

## **FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED**

When considering changes to wards and representation, Schedule 2.2 of the Act specifies 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; and
5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards. The Board offers 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 an area as reflected in 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 in the various wards**

It is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to Councillors across the wards of its district.

## OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Council may consider the following options and members of the community may suggest others:

**Option 1** - Maintain the current ward system (Town and Rural)

**Option 2** - No wards

**Option 3** - More wards (perhaps three or four)

### MAINTAIN THE CURRENT WARD SYSTEM (TOWN AND RURAL)

The table at the commencement of this document shows a % deviation of 11.8% in the Town Ward. The guidelines identify 10% as the point at which action may need to be taken. Closer analysis shows the number of electors variance between the wards is eight. With such a low number of electors it would be difficult to draw boundaries which meet the other factors particularly Community of interest and economic factors.

If the number of Councillors in each ward were to be redistributed the result would show

Ward	2015 Number of Councillors	2015 Number of Electors	Ward Ratio Average	% Ratio Deviation
Town	4	96	24	33.3%
Rural	3	158	52	-44.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	254	36	

This arrangement would clearly be unfair to those in the rural ward.

Another option is to reduce the number of Councillors from seven to six. This would reduce the expenditure for Councillors by between \$11,000 and \$15,000 dependent of the reimbursements of travel costs.

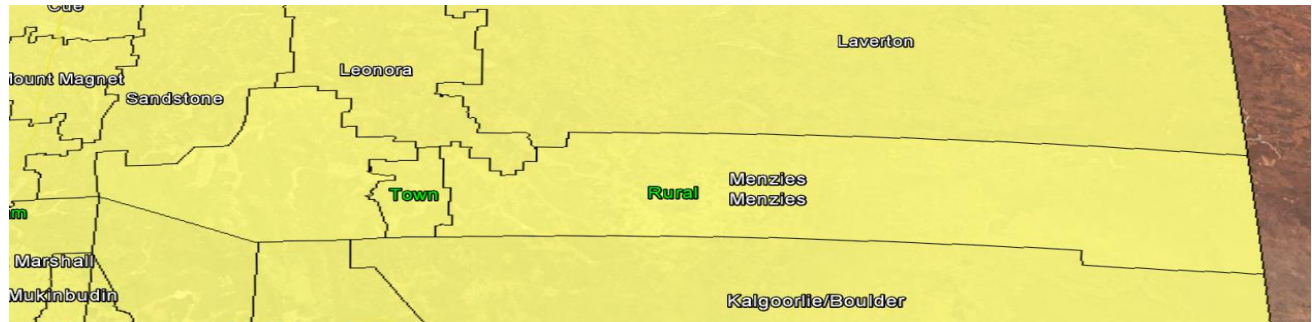
The following tables show the possible combinations for the allocation of members while retaining the current ward boundaries.

Ward	2015 Number of Councillors	2015 Number of Electors	Ward Ratio Average	% Ratio Deviation
Town	3	96	32	23.8%
Rural	3	158	53	-23.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	6	254	42	

Ward	2015 Number of Councillors	2015 Number of Electors	Ward Ratio Average	% Ratio Deviation
Town	2	96	48	-14.3%
Rural	4	158	39	7.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	7	254	42	

The wards were introduced to ensure that a balance of representation of interests was maintained between those who are for the most part resident within the town sites and have a day to day relationship with the town community, and those both resident and non-residents whose interest is directed toward rural pursuits.

The names of the wards may also be considered. For example, rather than localities such as Town and Rural it may be preferable to use names better reflecting the local names in use for the district. The map showing the ward boundaries which follows suggests that Town which encompasses Menzies and Kookynie, and Rural to the east and west of the town sites and including Tjuntjuntjara is reasonable.



### **NO WARDS**

The removal of ward boundaries is certainly an option. This would require all members to truly represent the whole of the Shire. Were this option to be pursued, consideration would need to be given to the number of Councillors. Due to the physical shape of the Shire, and the fact that the ratio average would be between 36 and 42 having no wards may result in Councillors being clustered either in the extreme east or west. This could reduce the contact between electors and their representative.

### **MORE WARDS**

Most of the population of the Shire is concentrated equally in two areas. The town site of Menzies, and the Tjuntjuntjara Communities. As the map above shows, the Rural ward is split into two parts. East of the Town ward, and west of the Town ward. Consideration may be given to alternate ward boundaries which could result in more than two wards.

### **PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS**

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

Shire of Menzies  
PO Box 4  
MENZIES WA 6436

Submissions will also be accepted by email:

Email: [admin@menzies.wa.gov.au](mailto:admin@menzies.wa.gov.au)

All submissions must be received by 5pm on 10 March 2017.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this review. Council welcomes your comments on any matters that may assist it to make informed and responsible decisions for the benefit of the people of the Shire of Menzies.

Councillor Jill Dwyer  
**SHIRE PRESIDENT**

Rhonda Evans  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**