

6 May 2022

Dear Ms Malgorzewicz,

Thank you for contacting the Local Government Representation Committee (the committee), we respect and appreciate your comments.

Your letter was discussed at the committee's first meeting after it was received, 29 April. The concerns raised have been given due consideration. The following is the response to the points you have raised.

*"1) Accuracy of the recent Census report"*

Data accuracy is an important factor in the decision making process. The committee has made an effort to use the most recent data available where possible. Unfortunately, as you have said, some of that data was collected during 2016 and may not reflect current figures. The committee remains cognisant of this fact when assessing information for all councils and communities.

In addition to data from the ABS, the committee will also be considering more current information. This includes enrolment figures as of 28 March 2022.

*"2) Timing of the consultation process of the incorporating of unincorporated areas."*

*The Local Government Act 2019* states the committee must invite submissions no more than 10 months after a general election for the council. The last local government election was conducted in August of 2021, meaning the committee could invite submissions no later than June 2022.

Email: [secretariat.ntec@nt.gov.au](mailto:secretariat.ntec@nt.gov.au)

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Decisions regarding the incorporation of unincorporated areas are being made by the Northern Territory Government, independently of the committee. It is uncertain when that process will be completed and what the outcome will be. However, the committee remains aware of it and its potential impact on the work currently being done.

*“3) Need to proactively engage with non-electors”*

The website is freely accessible and provides a wealth of information to help people understand the impact of the reviews and how they can participate. It also offers the opportunity to join the LG representation reviews mailing list.

Additionally, the committee will be releasing a social media campaign to increase general awareness across the NT.

It is the committee’s hope that the links and information in the media release sent on 28 March will be shared by people who have received it with other members of their community, in order to raise awareness.

*“4) Concerns with comparisons of levels of representation of other councils”*

*“The Review has identified the “high number of members given the small population as an area of focus for both Belyuen and Coomalie Councils, yet Wagait Shire Council has “no identified areas of focus”. As Coomalie and Wagait have a similar number of elected members, yet Coomalie Shire has more electors, and a considerably greater population base than Wagait Shire Council Coomalie Council cannot understand the Review Committee’s suggestion that level of representation for one local government area in comparison with another local government area can be fairly and justly made?”*

The areas of focus listed in the information guide are a suggestion of what the committee might consider during these reviews. They are by no means a statement of intent. It is possible there are questions and councils the committee may consider that were not originally identified as an area of focus in the information guide. Conversely, there may be some things identified in the information guide that will not be changed.

However, your comments comparing Coomalie Community Government Council and Wagait Shire Council are justified and duly noted. It is the committee’s intention to make decisions on an equal basis, whilst also taking into consideration each council’s unique circumstances. Your

contribution will be taken into consideration when making future decisions about representation.

*“Council expected it would have received formal correspondence advising of the Review and a direct invitation to participate.”*

*“Council also expressed concern that NTEC or the Review Committee have not written directly to Council regarding the Review process.”*

The formal correspondence delivered to Coomalie Community Government Council members and the CEO on 28 March included advice about the reviews and an invitation to participate. The same correspondence was sent to approximately 300 individuals, including council CEOs, council members, media outlets and Aboriginal organisations across the NT.

The committee takes seriously the responsibility to inform stakeholders of the representation reviews and believes this has been fulfilled appropriately.

However, your concerns have been taken on board. As a result the committee will be sending additional correspondence to all councils.

You are most likely already aware, but after the initial submission period has concluded (31 May) the committee will publish an initial proposal detailing any changes they are considering to representation in councils across the NT. After this document has been published, there will be a secondary submission period to provide councils and the broader public the opportunity to make further comments.

Apologies that a response could not be delivered sooner. We hope that if you have any further questions or concerns, you will not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to reading your submission.

Regards,



Sean Holden  
Chair of the Local Government Representation Committee

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