



# **Review of Elected Member Representation Review Discussion Paper**



# Background

The Shire of Kulin has resolved to undertake a review of its Elected Representation to comply with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) and in line with the recently announced Local Government Reform – Election Transition Arrangements announced by the State Government.

The Minister for Local Government has announced a package of reforms to the Local Government Act. As part of the reforms to strengthen democracy and increase community engagement, the Minister proposes to review Councillor numbers based on population.

Under the reform package and the Shire of Kulin as a Band 4 Local Government and a population of less than 5000 people will have a reduction in the number of elected members (Shire Councillors) from 9 to not more than 7.

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.

Under this proposed reform package and as a Local Government with a population with less than 5000 people the current Ward system in the Shire of Kulin will be abolished.

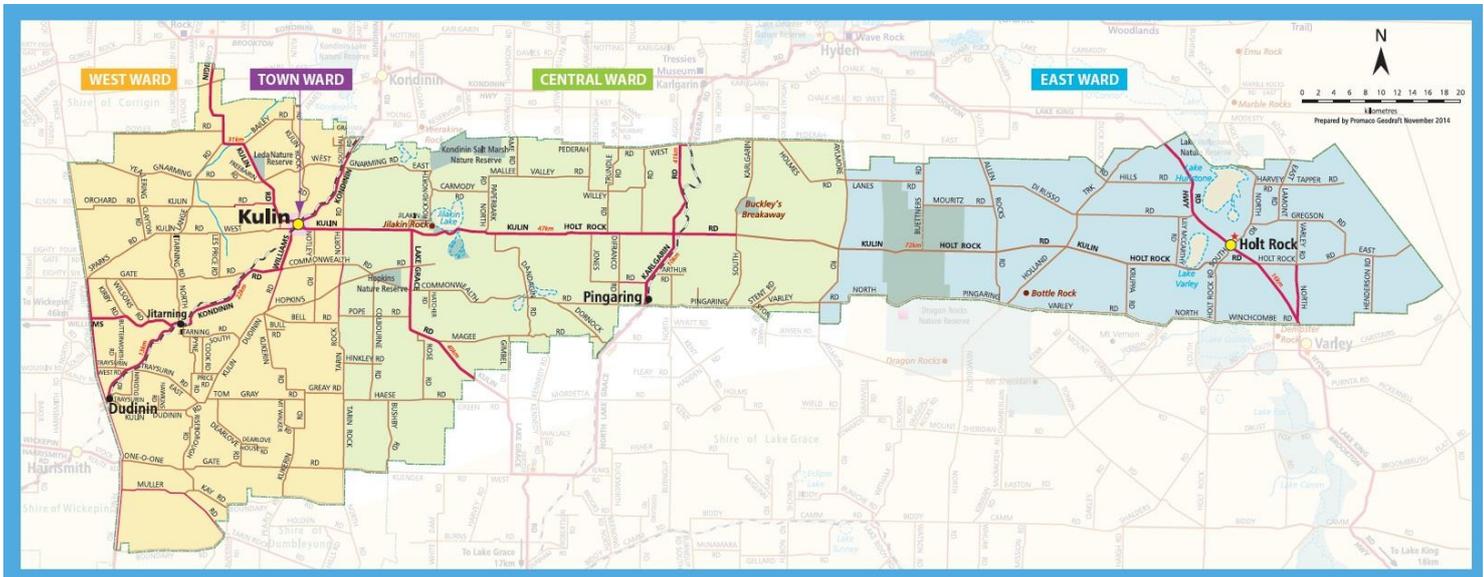
# Current Situation

Currently the Shire of Kulin has (9) councillors elected from four (4) wards as follows:

**Table: Shire of Kulin elector to councillor ratios - current situation (2021 Election)**

Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/ Elector Ratio	% Ratio Deviation
Central	108	2	1:54	+14.28%
East	48	1	1:48	+23.80%
West	180	3	1:60	+4.76%
Town	229	3	1:76	-20.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1:63</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

## Shire of Kulin LGA Wards



Full version can be viewed at <https://www.kulin.wa.gov.au/council/your-council/about-us.aspx>

As part of the State Government Local Government Reforms: Election Transition Arrangements the Shire of Kulin is captured as a Local Government whereby the Wards system will be abolished. In addition, as the Shire of Kulin has a population of less than 5000 people, the Shire of Kulin must reduce the number of elected members down from 9 to not more than 7 but not less than 5 elected members.

The Shire of Kulin at its Ordinary Meeting of Council on the 19 October 2022 resolved the following with respect to the Local Government Reforms: Election Transition Arrangements proposed by the State Government as per Council Minute 07/1022;

**07/1022**

**Moved Cr Smoker Seconded Cr Lucchesi that Council in response to the proposed Local Government Reforms: Election Transition Arrangements (Abolish Wards and Change Number of Council Members) advised by Honourable John Carey MLA, Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness and Local Government;**

- **Provides formal written advice to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries that its preferred pathway is the Voluntary Pathway**
- **Provide confirmation to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries that the Shire of Kulin will commit to undertaking a Ward and Representation Review and have the completed review to the Local Government Advisory Board by the 14 February 2023;**
- **Confirm to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries that the Shire of Kulin's preferred number of Council members is no less than seven.**
- **Formally advise Honourable John Carey MLA, Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness and Local Government of its dismay as to the hypocritical way any Ward and Representation Review process will be premised in that it should not diverge from the proposed election reforms.**

**Carried 8/0**

Given the upper limit on the number of Shire Councillors for the Shire of Kulin is 7 as we have a population of less than 5000 people under the Local Government Reform: Election Transition Arrangements, Council was unanimous in its view that it wished to maintain the maximum allowable number of Councillors allowable under the reform package.

# Review Process

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The review process involves a number of steps:

- The council resolves to undertake the review – October 2022
- Discussion paper developed – November 2022
- Council advertises that it is conducting a review and the associated public submission period opens (minimum of 6 weeks) – 11 November 2022
- The discussion paper is made available to the community for consideration, and public submissions are invited on the matter
- Public submission period closes – 11 January 2023
- The Council assesses all submissions, considers options for change against the relevant factors to be considered under the Election Transition Arrangements and drafts a report, which includes their decision, for the Local Government Advisory Boards consideration – Special Council Meeting - 18 January 2023
- Formal Review Report is submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board - 19 January 2023
- Local Government Advisory Board makes recommendation to the Minister for Local Government

Any changes approved by the Minister will be in place for the next ordinary election (October 2023).

## Factors to be Considered

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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. (Not applicable under the Local Government Reform - Election Transition Arrangements)

Given the Shire of Kulin will no longer have Wards under the Election Transition Arrangements the ratio of Councillors to Electors will no longer be applicable. The Kulin Shire Council are extremely disappointed with the mandate of the State Government to abolish the Ward System as it is firmly of the view this does not serve in the best interest of democracy, representation, community engagement, fairness and equity for electors and residents of the Shire of Kulin. That said, this discussion paper is drafted on the premise of not diverging from the proposed local government election reform as requested by the Minister for Local Government.

### **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.

Within the Shire of Kulin Communities of interest could be said to exist around –

- The main townsite of Kulin, having 45% of the overall population of the Shires residents (791).
- Other townsites and localities within the Shire of Kulin are Dudinin, Pingaring, Holt Rock, Jitarning and Little Italy.

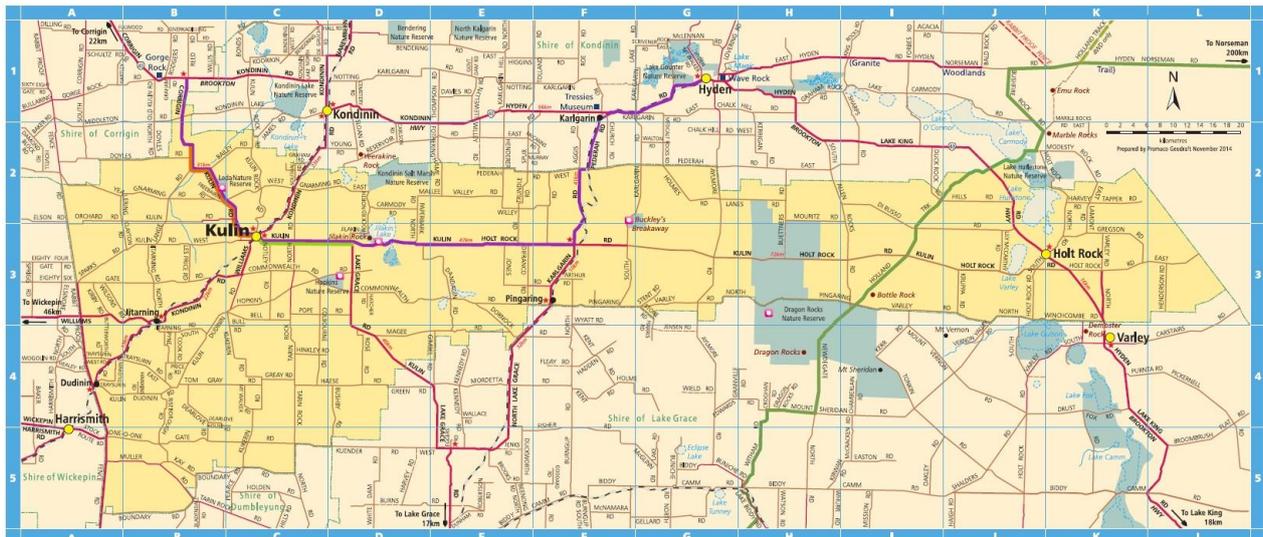
The Shire recognises and values small townsites and communities of interest which exist across the Shire of Kulin which is why the Shire has retained the Ward system and equitable representation up to this juncture.

## 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 manmade features such as railway lines and freeways. The Shire of Kulin stretches approximately 170 km's from the western boundary (West Kulin) to the eastern boundary (Holt Rock) and covers an area of 4718.90 sq kms.

- Arterial and major roads such as the Williams - Kondinin Road, Corrigin - Kulin Road, Yealering – Kulin Road, Kulin - Holt Rock Road and Kulin -Lake Grace Road.
- Vast majority of land within the Shire of Kulin is used for broadacre farming purposes.
- Jilakin Lake system stretches across the central part of the Shire of Kulin for approximately 32km's.
- Dragon Rocks Nature Reserve is an “A” class reserve comprised of 32,203 hectares of bush land, approximately half of which is in the central - eastern sector of the Shire. This reserve is dedicated to the protection of flora and fauna, managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

## Shire of Kulin LGA



Full version can be viewed at <https://www.kulin.wa.gov.au/council/your-council/about-us.aspx>

### 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.

#### Kulin LGA Age Demographics

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-4 years	20	31	44
5-14 years	56	60	117
15-19 years	8	12	20
20-24 years	18	5	22
25-34 years	35	42	78
35-44 years	54	50	107
45-54 years	63	49	117
55-64 years	53	56	114
65-74 years	53	47	94
75-84 years	29	17	43
85 years and over	9	4	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>767</b>

Source: 2021 Census of Population and Housing

#### Kulin LGA Occupation by Age

Occupation	Managers	Professionals	Technicians & trades workers	Community & personal service workers	Clerical and administrative workers	Sales workers	Machinery operators and drivers	Labourers	Not stated	Total
<b>PERSONS</b>										
15-19 years	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	9
20-24 years	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	3	0	19
25-34 years	19	12	6	4	3	0	0	11	0	55
35-44 years	34	12	7	3	8	5	4	6	0	88
45-54 years	40	14	7	12	6	7	5	10	0	95
55-64 years	44	6	6	4	8	0	10	8	0	81
65-74 years	28	0	0	0	4	0	3	3	0	38
75-84 years	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	18
85 years and over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>404</b>

Source: 2021 Census of Population and Housing

#### 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.

The Kulin Region is one of the most agriculturally productive districts in the WA Wheatbelt. Agriculture in the Kulin region relies on an annual rainfall of 350mm, of which 75% falls during the growing season. Soil types are very mixed – from sandplain and sandy duplex soils, through to loamy gravels and grey clay. Cropping occupies approximately two thirds of the land use though this can vary from 50% through to 100%. Wheat is by far the major crop grown, followed by barley. Canola, lupins and field peas are also grown in rotation to provide improved soil nutrition and weed control. Pasture for stock grazing is the other major land use which provides benefits for cropping as well as diversification of income.

The gross value of agricultural commodities produced in the Kulin LGA is \$162,201,055. (2021 ABS Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2021)

#### **Kulin LGA Industry by Employment**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	216
Education and Training	35
Public Administration and Safety	23
Construction	15
Wholesale Trade	15
Health Care and Social Assistance	15
Retail Trade	13
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	13
Accommodation and Food Services	10
Other Services	10
Administrative and Support Services	9
Financial and Insurance Services	5
Inadequately described/Not stated	4
Mining	3
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3
Manufacturing	0
Information Media and Telecommunications	0
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0
Arts and Recreation Services	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>

Source: 2021 Census of Population and Housing

#### 5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards (not applicable)

Under the Proposed Election Transition Arrangements these factor / criteria in the context of this review is not applicable.

## **6. Local Government Reforms**

In addition to the legislative factors to be considered, the review also needs to consider the Minister for Local Government's changes to ward structures and representation.

To comply with the Minister's reform proposals, as the Shire of Kulin is a Band 4 Local Government, with a population of less than 5,000 people (approx. 770). Under the reform proposal the number of shire councillors will be reduced by at least two down from 9 to 7 to seven. The Shire of Kulin unanimously resolved that its preferred number of Shire Councillors is the maximum allowable under the Reform proposal which is 7.

### **Voluntary pathway - Preferred option:**

The Shire of Kulin's preferred option under the Local Government Reforms: Election Transition Arrangements and in accordance with Council resolution of October 19 2022 is to function with not less than 7 elected members:

The transition to reduce the number of elected members from 9 to 7 over two election cycles 2023 and 2025 is detailed hereunder;

### **Transition plan:**

#### **2023 election** – Reduce by one elected member

As a result, the Shire of Kulin will function with eight elected members from October 2023 through to the October 2025 election

#### **2025 election** - Reduce by one more elected member

From October 2025 the Shire of Kulin will function in accordance with the required elected member threshold for a Local Government with population of less than 5000 people of being not less than 5 elected members but not more than 7 elected members.

### **Alternative options**

Members of the community are welcome to suggest alternative options, bearing in mind the elected members thresholds set for the Shire of Kulin being not more than 7 and not less than 5 elected members.

## Public Submissions

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Members of the community are invited to make a written submission about any aspect of the representation review and lodge it at the Shire or by email at [shire@kulin.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@kulin.wa.gov.au).

Shire of Kulin  
38 Johnston Street  
PO Box 125  
Kulin WA 6365

All submissions must be received by 4pm on 11 January 2023

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 Kulin.

*Grant Robins*

**Councillor Grant Robins**

**SHIRE PRESIDENT**

**11 November 2022**

*Alan Leeson*

**Alan Leeson**

**A/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**