



SHIRE OF CARNARVON

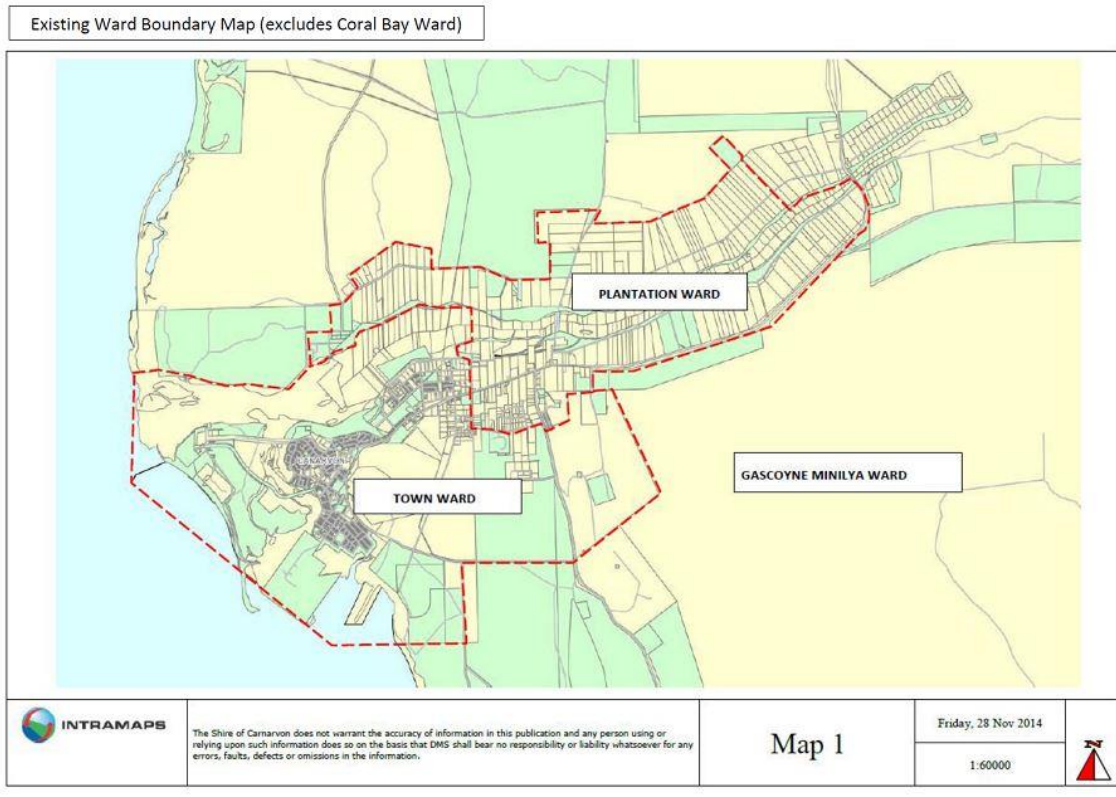
REVIEW OF  
WARDS AND REPRESENTATION  
OPTIONS DISCUSSIONS PAPER

July 2022

# Contents

Background .....	3
Review Process.....	3
Current Context .....	3
Comparisons with other Local Governments .....	5
The Ward System .....	5
Physical and topographic features:.....	6
Demographic trends .....	7
Economic factors.....	8
Community of interest.....	10
Ratio Of Elected Members to Electors.....	11
Options for Discussion: .....	12

In accordance with Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Shire of Carnarvon is reviewing its Wards and Representations. The Shire last conducted a review of Wards and Representation in December 2014.



**SHIRE OF CARNARVON WARD BOUNDARIES**

RESOURCE: <https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/ward-boundaries/resource/4d19d515-106d-4b57-89a1-41ad09021bba>

## **BACKGROUND**

Local governments in Western Australia have either a ward system in place or no ward system for the representation of electors and the election of Elected Members throughout a district. A ward system (such as in place in the Shire of Carnarvon) provides for the division of the local government district into “wards” (usually a collection of suburbs) with one or more Elected Members elected from each ward.

A no ward system provides for all Elected Members to be elected by all electors throughout its district. Whether a local government has a ward system or not, the role of Elected Members is to represent all the electors and residents across the entire local government district, not just those electors within their respective ward.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

This review seeks feedback from the community as to whether the current ward system should remain in place, be modified, or be changed to a no ward system. In addition, the Shire is seeking comments on the current names of wards and the number of Elected Members representing each ward (assuming a ward system is retained).

The steps in the Review will be undertaken in three phases as summarised below:

### **Phase 1**

- Development of a Discussion paper;
- The Shire resolves to undertake a review of its ward and representation;
- The Shire advertises that it is conducting a Review and seeks public submissions; and
- Public Submissions period, minimum of six weeks, during which submissions from the public are invited.

### **Phase 2**

- Administration will assess submissions and consider options for change against the relevant factors to be considered and draft the Proposal;
- Report to Council on outcome of submissions and the Proposal;
- Council considers the Proposal and determines preferred option; and
- Preferred option submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) via the Board Report.

### **Phase 3**

- The Board reviews the Board Report to ensure that the Review was validly conducted and makes a recommendation to the Minister on changes (if any);
- Minister accepts or rejects the Board's recommendation;
- If the Minister accepts the Board's recommendation, the Minister will request the Governor issue a Governor's order; and
- The Shire will implement the changes in accordance with the Governor's order ahead of the next Local Government elections.

## **CURRENT CONTEXT**

The Shire of Carnarvon currently has 4 Wards from which 7 Elected Members are elected. An eighth Elected Member, being the Shire President is elected independently by all Electors.

The electoral roll provided for in the October 2021 ordinary election shows the ward representation and electors as follows:

Ward	Suburbs	No. of Electors	No. of Elected Members	Ratio - Elected Member: Elector	% Ratio deviation from average*
Town Ward	8 Babbage Island Brockman Brown Range Carnarvon East Carnarvon Greys Plain Morgantown South Carnarvon	2534	4.25	1: 596	-48%
Plantation Ward	4 Brown Range Kingsford North Plantations South Plantations	519	1.25	1:415	-3.25%
Coral Bay Ward	1 Coral Bay	77	1.25	1:62	84%
Gascoyne/Minilya Ward	7 Inggarda Lyndon Macleod Minilya North Plantations Wooramel Yandoo Creek	78	1.25	1:62	84%
Shire President	1		Included as a percentage across all four wards		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3208</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1:401</b>	

Source: "Enrolment by district, region, LG, locality, postcode SA1.xlsx (live.com)"

\*NB: The percentage ratio deviation shown in the table provides an indication of the percentage difference between the average Elected Member/elector ratio for the whole of the Shire (one Elected Member to 401 electors) and the Elected Member/elector ratio for each Ward.

It is expected that a local government will have similar ratios of Elected Members to electors across the wards of its district, generally falling within a deviation of plus or minus 10%. The percentage ratio deviation is calculated by subtracting the Elected Member/elector ratio for a ward from the average Elected Member/elector ratio for the whole district. The result is then divided by the average Elected Member/elector ratio for the whole district and multiplied by 100 to give a percentage. A negative result indicates that the ward is under-represented, and a positive result indicates the ward is over-represented.

The data shown demonstrates that there is a significant imbalance in representation across the Shire with the Gascoyne/Minilya and Coral Bay Wards over-represented, and the Town and Plantation Wards under-represented.

## COMPARISONS WITH OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local Government	No of Wards	No of Elected Members	No of Electors	Ratio – Elected Member: Elector
East Pilbara	4	10	2,887	1:288
Broome	2	9	7,415	1:823
Ashburton	6	9	2,919	1:324
Shark Bay	2	7	493	1:70

Source: Enrolment by district, region, LG, locality, postcode SA1.xlsx (live.com)

## THE WARD SYSTEM

Many local governments have a Ward system.

The advantages of a Ward system *may* include:

- Different sectors of the community can be represented ensuring a good spread of representation and interest amongst Elected Members;
- There is more opportunity for Elected Members to have a greater knowledge and interest in the issue of the Ward; and
- It may be easier for a candidate to be elected if they only need to canvass one Ward.

The disadvantages of a Ward system *may* include:

- Elected Members can become too focused on their Wards and less focused on the affairs of her Wards and the whole local government;
- An unhealthy competition for resources can develop when electors in each Ward come to expect the service and facilities provided in other Wards, whether they are appropriate or not;
- The community and Elected Members can tend to 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; and
- Balanced representation across the local government may be difficult to achieve, particularly if a local government has highly populated urban areas and sparsely populated rural areas.

### **No Ward System**

The advantages of a No Ward system *may* include:

- Elected Members are elected by the whole community not just a section of it. Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs would result in broadening the views beyond the immediate concerns of those in a Ward;
- The smaller town sites and rural areas have the whole Council working for them;
- Members of the community who want to approach an Elected Member can speak to any Elected Member;

- Social networks and community of interest are often spread across a local government and Elected Members can have an overview of these;
- Elected Members can use their specialty skills and knowledge for the benefits of the whole local government;
- There is balanced representation with each Elected Member representing the whole community; and
- The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and for the Council to administer.

The disadvantages of a No Ward System *may* include:

- Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they do not have an affinity with any of the Elected Members;
- Elected Members living in a certain area may have a greater affinity and understanding of the issues specific to that area;
- There is potential for an interest group to dominate the Council;
- Elected members may feel overwhelmed by having to represent all electors and may not have the time or opportunity to understand and represent all the issues; and
- It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvass the whole local government area.

When considering the Ward system, including boundaries and representation levels, the *Local Government Act 1995* specifies that the following factors must be taken into account.

- Physical and topographic features
- Demographic trends
- Economic factors
- Community of interest
- Ratio of Elected Members to electors in the various wards.

### **PHYSICAL AND TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES**

These may be natural or manufactured 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 also be relevant as may other man-made features such as railway lines and highways.

The Shire of Carnarvon has several dramatic physical and topographic features that define the district. The Gascoyne River and catchment area, the broad pastoral rangelands, the Shark Bay coastal environs and Ningaloo coastline and marine park as some define features together with man-made structures such as North West Coastal Highway that traverses the Shire from south to north.

Other features include the vast distances with the district, particularly relevant for Coral Bay residents and residents on pastoral stations.

These features could be a consideration in determining Wards and Representation.





Rocky Pool, Gascoyne River, Carnarvon

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

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

In the Shire of Carnarvon, the resident population (ERP) was 5,251 in August 2021 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). **Table 1** below summarises the inter-census estimated permanent resident population change between 1996 and 2013.

**Table 1: Estimated Resident Population 2001-2021**

	2001	2006	2013	2016	2021
Shire of Carnarvon (estimated resident population)	6,751	6,051	6,139	5,528	5,251

*Source: 2021 Carnarvon, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)*

In 2021, 52% of residents in the Shire were male and 48% female compared to the figures for Australia of 49.3% male and 50.7% female. There were 1,151 families in the Shire in 2021 and there was an average of 1.8 children per family, while the average household size was 2.3 persons.

The 2021 Census indicated that 16.3% of Shire residents were indigenous persons, compared with 3.2% in Australia.





The median age in the Shire was 40 in 2021 compared to 38 in Western Australia and 38 in Australia. **Table 2** below indicates a relatively significant increase in the median age from 35 in 2006 to 40 in 2021, indicating an ageing population.

**Table 2: Shire of Carnarvon Median Age 2006-2011**

2006	2011	2021
35	38	40

Source: ABS Census data

**Table 3** indicates the age distribution of the 2021 resident population across six age groups and compares the town and the Shire with Western Australia and Australia. The data demonstrates that the population of the Shire has higher proportions of children aged under 4 in relation to Australia, and a much lower proportion of youth aged 5-19. The Shire has a higher proportion of persons aged 50-64 compared to Western Australia and Australia.

**Table 3: Age Distribution, 2021**

	Medium Age	Age group					
		0-4	5-19	20-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Carnarvon	40	6.7%	16.5%	12.6%	25.1%	22%	16.2%
Western Australia	38	6.1%	18.6%	12.5%	28.2%	18.3%	16.1%
Australia	38	5.8%	18.2%	13.1%	27.4%	18.1%	17.2%

Source: ABS, 2021 Census Data

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the District. 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.

Broadly, the Shire economy is under pinned by service provision, tourism, mining, fishing, retail, horticulture, and pastoralism.

From a regional perspective tourism is a significant contributor with potential for growth, as is mining and the newly emerging green energy sector.

Fishing (predominantly prawns, but also scallops, fin fish, crabs and lobsters) is also another industry of value to the Shire.

The horticultural industry which currently serves the Perth market, carries a crop value in excess \$104m annually. This industry has recently expanded with the Food Bowl Initiative.

The Pastoral industry with improved access to global markets and reduced Australian dollar as well as increased opportunity for diversification to incorporate other uses, such as horticulture and tourism, remains an important part of the local economy.



Gascoyne Food Festival, Carnarvon

**Table 4** below indicates that the largest industry in the Shire is health care and social assistance, followed by retail trade, then public administration and safety.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2016 Census of Population and Housing  
G53 INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION  
Count of employed persons aged 15 years and over

	<i>Total</i>
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	148
Mining	94
Manufacturing	36
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	33
Construction	130
Wholesale Trade	21
Retail Trade	192
Accommodation and Food Services	130
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	100
Information Media and Telecommunications	4
Financial and Insurance Services	13
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	25
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	32
Administrative and Support Services	70
Public Administration and Safety	186
Education and Training	170
Health Care and Social Assistance	197
Arts and Recreation Services	19
Other Services	49
Inadequately described/Not stated	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,724</b>

This table is based on place of usual residence.

Please note that there are small random adjustments made to all cell values to protect the confidentiality of data. These adjustments may cause the sum of rows or columns to differ by small amounts from table totals.

**Table Four:** Industry Of Employment By Occupation 2016; Source:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2016/UCL515006>

## COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

The term community of interest has several 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.

Considering these elements, it is clear the entire Shire has a shared community of interest for many things, but there are some variations.

In this context there is some distinct difference between two population centres in the Shire as Carnarvon is the principal townsite for the Shire, and the Regional Centre for the Gascoyne, that accommodates a range of commercial, social and community services in support of a range of industries including agriculture, pastoral, mining fishing and tourism.

Conversely, Coral Bay being some 230kms north of Carnarvon is a Settlement founded on tourism and underpinned by the values of the Ningaloo Reef.





Five Fingers, Coral Bay

### **RATIO OF ELECTED MEMBERS TO ELECTORS**

The ideal number of Elected Members for a local government is determined independently by each local government. There is a diverse range of Elected Member / elector ratios across Western Australia, reflecting the sparsely populated remote areas and the highly populated urban areas. The structure of the Council's operations will provide some input into the number of Elected Members needed to service the local government.

It is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of Elected Members to electors across the Wards of its district. The Local Government Advisory Board considers this to be one of the most relevant determining factors.

The Board expects a balanced representation ration per Ward of plus or minus 10% of the Elected Member/elector ratio across the whole of the Shire. However, an Elected Member to elector deviation of greater than plus or minus 10% will be considered by the Board if the local government can provide adequate and appropriate justification for such circumstances.

The advantages of reducing 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. It is timelier to ascertain the views of a fewer number of people and decision-making may be easier. There is also more scope for team spirit and cooperation amongst a smaller number of people.
- The cost of maintaining Elected Members is likely to be reduced.
- The increase in the ratio of Elected Members to electors is unlikely to be significant.
- Consultation with the community can be achieved through a variety of means in addition to individuals and groups contacting their local Elected Member.

- A reduction in the number of Elected Members may result in an increased commitment from those elected reflected in greater interest and participation in Council’s affairs.
- 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.
- There is a state-wide trend for reductions in the number of Elected Members and many local governments have found that fewer Elected Members works well.  
The disadvantages of reducing the number of Elected Members *may* include the following:
- A smaller number of Elected Members may result in an increased workload and may lessen effectiveness.
- A demanding role may discourage others from nominating for Council.
- There is the potential for dominance in 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.
- An increase in the ratio of Elected Members to electors may place too many demands on Elected Members.
- A change (increase or decrease) in Elected Member numbers may be options that are put forward by members of the public as part of the public feedback period and will therefore be considered as part of the review process.

### OPTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

As part of this Discussion Paper, the Shire has developed the following options only to aid in discussion and for consideration. At this stage, **the Shire is not promoting any particular option, and the community may suggest alternative options for consideration.**

No.	Option	Detail
One	Retain Ward System and number of Elected Members	No change. This option would retain the current Ward structure, which is non-compliant with the 10% variance in representation as preferred by the Local Government Advisory Board:
Two	No Ward System / 8 Elected Members	All Elected Members able to be elected by the whole community, regardless of where the elector lives. It is possible the Shire could operate without Wards with the 7 Elected Members, plus the Shire President, elected at large. By way of comparison there a number of Local Governments represented without a Ward system. However, while this option may prove the easiest to administer there is a possibility the first past the post voting system could result in elected members not being spread across the district and being concentrated in one area.
Three	3 Wards / 7 Elected Members, plus Shire President. The Shire President is allocated at 0.33 to all three Wards. (The Elected Member: Elector ratio for this option is 1: 401)	Merge the Gascoyne/Minilya Ward and Coral Bay Ward into one ward based on their common interest of being remote from the main administrative centre of Carnarvon. Retain the existing Town Ward and Plantation

	<p><b>Town Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 4.33 No. Electors: 2534 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:585 % Ratio Deviation: -45%</p> <p><b>Plantation Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 1.33 No. Electors: 519 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:390 % Ratio Deviation: - 3%</p> <p><b>Coral Bay / Gascoyne Minilya Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 2.33 No. Electors: 155 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:66 % Ratio Deviation: 83%</p>	<p>Wards and retain the number of Elected Members.</p> <p>This option is non-compliant with the 10% variance in representation as preferred by the Local Government Advisory Board as both the Town Ward would be underrepresented and the Gascoyne / Minilya / Coral Bay Ward overrepresented.</p>
Four	<p>3 Wards / 6 Elected Members, plus Shire President. The Shire President is allocated at 0.33 to all three Wards. (The Elected Member: Elector ratio for this option is 1:458)</p> <p><b>Town Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 3.33 No. Electors: 2534 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:760 % Ratio Deviation: - 66%</p> <p><b>Plantation Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 2.33 No. Electors: 519 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:259 % Ratio Deviation: 48%</p> <p><b>Coral Bay / Gascoyne Minilya Ward:</b> No. Elected Members: 2.33 No. Electors: 155 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 66 % Ratio Deviation: 85%</p>	<p>Merge the Gascoyne/Minilya Ward and Coral Bay Ward into one ward based on their common interest of being remote from the main administrative centre of Carnarvon. Retain the existing Town Ward and Plantation Wards and reduce the number of Elected Members by one. This option is non-compliant with the 10% variance in representation as preferred by the Local Government Advisory Board, and in fact increases the deviation for the Town Ward.</p> <p>See above for potential advantages and disadvantages of increasing the numbers of Elected Members.</p>
Five	<p>2 Wards / 8 Elected Members, plus Shire President. The Shire President is allocated at 0.5 to both Wards. (The Elected Member: Elector ratio for this option is 1:356)</p> <p><b>Town / Coral Bay Ward:</b></p>	<p>Merge the Plantation and Gascoyne / Minilya Wards into one Ward given their economic focus of primary production; and merge the Coral Bay and Town Wards into one Ward as the urban areas, to bring about a 2 ward/9 Elected Member representation.</p>



	No. Elected Members: 8.5 No. Electors: 2611 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1:307 % Ratio Deviation: - 13%  <b>Plantation / Gascoyne Minilya Ward:</b> No. Elected Members : 1.5 No. Electors: 699 Ratio - Elected Member: Elector: 1: 446 % Ratio Deviation: -25%	While the deviation both wards is still greater than the recommended deviation, the deviation is closer to the recommended plus or minus 10%.  See above for potential advantages and disadvantages of increasing the numbers of Elected Members.
--	--	---

Any number of other options could be explored and this paper invites members of the public to consider options, how the option would reflect in terms of Elected Member: Elector ratios and the standard deviation. Written submissions are strongly encouraged to ensure that Council is provided with robust information on the views of the Community when considering this important matter and making their recommendation to the Department and to the Minister.

Details on how to make a submission are as follows.

Submissions can be made via:

- Post: PO Box 459, Carnarvon WA 6701
- Email: [shire@carnarvon.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@carnarvon.wa.gov.au)
- In person: 3 Francis Street, Carnarvon WA 6701

Submissions must be received no later than 12noon (WST) on Wednesday, 31 August 2022 and must be clearly marked ***Review of Wards and Representation – Submission***.

Public information sessions will be held in Carnarvon and Coral Bay as follows:

- Carnarvon, Council Chambers, Stuart Street on Thursday 11 August 2022, at 5.00pm
- Coral Bay, Venue TBC, Monday 1 August 2022, at 5.00pm

Both sessions will be live streamed via the Shire of Carnarvon Facebook page to allow for virtual participation. Please contact the Shire via [shire@carnarvon.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@carnarvon.wa.gov.au) for more information about accessing the live stream.

For more information, please contact the Shire Chief Executive Officer, Andrea Selvey via email ([selvey.a@carnarvon.wa.gov.au](mailto:selvey.a@carnarvon.wa.gov.au)) or phone 08 9941 0050.