

## Guiding Principles

The Board's Guiding Principles form the basis for considering changes to local government boundaries and take into account the factors set out in the Act.

### **Community of Interest**

Community of interest includes parts of a district that share common interests/values/characteristics/issues giving rise to a separate sense of identity or community.

Factors contributing to a sense of identity or community include shared interests and shared use of community facilities. For example, sporting, leisure and library facilities create a focus for the community. The use of shopping areas and the location of schools also act to draw people together with similar interests. This can also give indications about the direction that people travel to access services and facilities.

The external boundaries of a local government need to reflect distinct communities of interest wherever possible. Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging. The Board believes that wherever possible, it is inappropriate to divide these units between local governments.

### **Physical and Topographic Features**

Physical and topographic features may be natural or man-made and will vary from area to area. They may include:

- water features (such as rivers);
- catchment boundaries;
- coastal plain and foothills;
- parks and reserves; and
- man made features (such as railway lines or freeways).

These features can form identifiable boundaries and can also act as barriers to movement between adjoining areas. In many cases physical and topographical features are appropriate district and ward boundaries.

The Board supports local government structures and boundaries that facilitate the integration of human activity and land use.

### **Demographic Trends**

Local Government should consider the following characteristics when determining the demographics within its locality:

- population size;
- population trends;
- distribution by age;
- gender; and
- occupation.

Current and projected population factors will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

### **Economic Factors**

Economic factors can include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area including:

- industries within the local area;
- distribution of community assets; and
- infrastructure.

### **History of the Area**

The history of an area can be a relevant consideration, although the Board believes that in the majority of cases this will not be a primary justification for changing or retaining local governments and local government boundaries.

The nature of historical ties between communities is important to understand, irrespective of where the local government boundaries lie. A community within a local government may have a strong historical identity; alternatively there may be strong historical links between two or more communities in adjacent local governments. It is important to note that historical identity is not necessarily lessened if an area does not have its own local government.

### **Transport and Communication**

The transport and communications linkages between towns and other areas may be a significant barrier to movement and therefore an appropriate boundary between local governments.

Consideration of the following factors is important in any assessment of local government boundaries:

- port access;
- neighbouring towns;
- railways; and
- major roads.

### **Matters Affecting the Viability of Local Governments**

Local government should have a sufficient resource base:

- to be able to efficiently and effectively exercise its proper functions and delegated powers and operate facilities and services;
- to be flexible and responsive in the exercise of its functions and powers and operation of its facilities and services;
- to employ appropriate professional expertise and skills; and
- to be capable of embracing micro-economic reform.

Each local government should have a diverse and sufficient rate base to ensure that general purpose grants do not represent the major revenue source.

### **Effective Delivery of Local Government Services**

A broad range of factors can be relevant to the effective delivery of local government services and these are often directly relevant to those that also affect the viability of local governments. They include:

- the size and geographical spread of the population;
- management effectiveness and efficiency;
- the availability of staff expertise;
- appropriate infrastructure and equipment; and
- customer satisfaction and feedback.