

Submission ID: O-0309
Date Received: 20/3/26, 3:11 pm
Name: Cr Sally O'Neil
Organisation Name: Barcoo Shire Council
Submission Topic: Electorate Boundaries
Electoral District: Gregory

Submission:

See below

Submission Attachments

Subject Keep Blackall & Tambo with the Central West – Objection to Proposed Boundary Changes.pdf

Our Ref: SO/DW
Your Ref: 81996
Contact Person: Mayor Sally O'Neil



20 March 2026

HEART OF THE CHANNEL COUNTRY

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Subject: Keep Blackall & Tambo with the Central-West – Objection to Proposed Boundary Changes

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Barcoo Shire Council, I register a strong objection to the proposed changes that would alter electoral arrangements for Blackall and Tambo.

Your report indicates the electorate of Gregory - which covers our neighbouring communities - faces moderate to significant boundary changes to address enrolment issues. While we respect the need to stay within quota, the current proposal risks breaking apart practical, everyday linkages that make the central-west work.

The collaboration between Council's in the Central West Region through the Remote Area Planning and Development Board is widely recognised as the leading collaborative approach between Local Governments in Australia.

Why this matters:

- 1. A proven regional system:** Our councils operate within the RAPAD framework - a well-established, collaborative structure spanning Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Barcaldine, Boulia, Diamantina, Longreach and Winton. RAPAD drives joint planning, procurement and service delivery (e.g., water/sewer alliances, regional air services work, and coordinated recovery initiatives), giving small communities scale and clout. Splitting Blackall or Tambo from their regional cohort would weaken this machinery and reduce service efficiency.
- 2. Community of interest & service access:** Blackall and Tambo share health, education, emergency management and economic networks with central-west hubs (Barcaldine, Longreach, Jundah). Re-anchoring them to a more distant electorate would fragment representation and complicate access to their MP-contrary to the redistribution requirement to consider communities of interest, communications and travel.



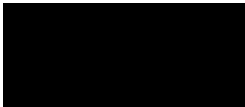
3. **Travel realities:** Distances in our region are vast. Any move that shifts constituents toward electorates centered further away increases cost, time and barriers to democratic engagement—again cutting against the “ways of communication and travel” consideration.
4. **Regional resilience and growth:** The central-west is coordinating long-term economic initiatives (e.g., energy, aviation, workforce and flood-recovery programs) through RAPAD. Keeping Blackall and Tambo aligned with their natural regional partners sustains momentum and safeguards rural representation during future shocks.

Our request:

Please retain Blackall and Tambo within an electorate that aligns with the central-west and preserves the integrity of RAPAD’s collaborative model and our established community-of-interest ties. This outcome best supports effective representation, service delivery and regional development.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely,



Sally O’Neil
Mayor, Barcoo Shire Council