

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission into the effectiveness of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Location of Corporate Commonwealth Entities) Order 2016* (the Order).

While I applaud the intent of the Order, in practice it provides no benefit or any prospect of benefit to Western Australia. This is not unusual. The Commonwealth presently funds 33 Cooperative Research Centres, none of which is located in WA.

The Order specifies that:

Location of corporate Commonwealth entities

(1) It is a policy of the Australian Government that a corporate Commonwealth entity with agricultural policy or regulatory responsibilities is to be located:

(a) in a regional community; and

(b) within 10 kilometres by road of the main campus of a regional university that is recognised for research and teaching in the field of agricultural science.

(2) In this section:

regional community means a community that is not within 150 kilometres by road of Canberra or the capital city of a State.

There is not a single location in WA that would meet the definition. WA is the most urbanised State in Australia, with the greatest concentration of its population in the capital city of Perth, which is also the home of all WA universities. Conversely the areas outside of Perth are the most sparsely populated and WA's regional cities would benefit most from hosting Commonwealth agencies.

I struggle to think of a single commonwealth agency that bases its national headquarters in Western Australia. Australia has a National Water Plan that covers only those states in the Murray Darling basin (with funding attached). Much is made of the National Electricity grid which does not now and is never likely to extend to Western Australia.

Our military posture is another example. We are well prepared for an attack from New Zealand, but in the unlikely event of a threat from Asia we are virtually defenceless. Perhaps the Brisbane line is still in play?

You will be aware of the massive imbalance between GST collections in WA and the distribution of those funds. While everyone blames the formula or the Grants Commission, and cites the deal that was signed when the GST was introduced, no-one anticipated the massive imbalance. If it was NSW picking up only 39% of its collection the problem would be fixed tomorrow.

While this does not relate directly to your inquiry, making orders with a set of rules that immediately exclude participation by Western Australia is symptomatic of the massive imbalance between financial contributions and benefits we as Western Australians experience.

I would encourage the committee to consider public hearings in WA to at least gain an appreciation of how little benefit accrues in WA. Ironically, while we support the principle of basing facilities in regional communities, a facility 200 kilometres from Melbourne makes it even less accessible for those of us who have to travel from WA.

Best Regards

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