

9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

A Chara,

My name is Dr. Éilís Ní Dheá. I reside in County Clare and am interested in both local and national politics. I have given consideration to 2022 preliminary population figures for the mid-west region and wish to make the following formal submission to Electoral Commission as part of the 2023 Dáil constituency boundary review.

### **Current constituency configurations in mid-west**

The 2017 Constituency Commission report led to the following constituency boundary changes in the mid-west region, encompassing counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary –

**Clare** - 4 seat constituency

2017 change - gained the Ballyglass DED from the Limerick City Constituency.

**Limerick City** – 4 seat constituency

2017 change - ceded the Ballyglass DED to Clare Constituency and gained the Birdhill, Kilcomenty, and Newport DEDs from Tipperary.

**Limerick County** – 3 seat constituency

2017 change - gained the Cappamore, Doon West and Bilboa DEDs from Limerick City.

**Tipperary** – 5 seat constituency

2017 change - ceded the Birdhill, Kilcomenty, and Newport DEDs to Limerick City.

### **Current population:TD ratios**

In their current configurations the constituencies of Clare, Limerick City, Limerick County and Tipperary have a population to TD ratios of –

Constituency	2022 (Preliminary) Population	Number of TDs	Population per TD
Clare	127,419	4	31,855
Limerick City	120,639	4	30,160
Limerick County	89,479	3	29,826
Tipperary	162,987	5	32,597
Waterford	127,085	4	31,771

Kerry	155,258	5	31,052
<i>Source: Electoral Commission Statement 2023</i>			

Article 16.2.2 of the Irish Constitution states – “*The number of members shall from time to time be fixed by law, but the total number of members of Dáil Éireann shall not be fixed at less than one member for each thirty thousand of the population, or at more than one member for each twenty thousand of the population*”. Based on this constitutional requirement the following defacto

Constituency	2022 (Preliminary) Population	Population per TD
Clare	127,419	7,419 above max. for having 4 TDs
Limerick City	120,639	639 above max. for having 4 TDs
Limerick County	89,479	521 below max. for having 3 TDs
Tipperary	162,987	12,987 above max. for having 5 TDs  *7,013 below min. for having 6 TDs – which would require the formation of two 3-seat constituencies
Waterford	127,085	7,085 above max. for having 4 TDs
Kerry	155,258	5,258 above max. for having 5 TDs

Based on the above it is very evident that Tipperary is in line to gain a TD and that it would be prudent to again split the county into Tipperary North and Tipperary South constituencies.

A population increase for Tipperary could be achieved by adding the DEDs:

DED	2022 Population (Preliminary)	County	Current constituency
Killaloe	2,281	Clare	Clare
O’Briensbridge	708	Clare	Clare
Lackareagh	128	Clare	Clare
Carrowbaun	116	Clare	Clare
Ogonnelloe	772	Clare	Clare
Mountshannon	470	Clare	Clare
Inishcaltra North/South	384	Clare	Clare
Scarriff	1,465	Clare	Clare
Drummaan	650	Clare	Clare
Cappaghbaun	219	Clare	Clare
Cloonusker	240	Clare	Clare
Newport	3,187	Tipperary	Limerick City
Birdhill	743	Tipperary	Limerick City
Kilcomenty	744	Tipperary	Limerick
Total	12,107		
New Tipperary population	175,094		

The proposed changes would see 7,433 of the current Clare electorate move to Tipperary and return 4,674 of the Tipperary electorate currently in the Limerick City and County constituencies – an overall increase of 12,107 (as per 2022 Census preliminary population figures).

The result of this transfer would mean Tipperary would now have a population allowing for the county to be split into two three-seat constituencies once more.

## **(I) Clare, Tipperary and Limerick City**

### **Geographic rationale for moving DEDs in Clare and Limerick City to Tipperary**

#### **Killaloe DED (Population 2,281) –**

1. Is a medium sized town in East Clare and, with Lough Derg, shares a water boundary with the town of Ballina, Co. Tipperary.
2. Killaloe and Ballina are linked by an 18<sup>th</sup> century stone bridge and a new bridge and bypass of the ‘twin-towns’ is currently under construction. The towns share many ties – St. Anne’s is the secondary school for both Killaloe and Ballina and sporting clubs including Derg FC, Ballina-Killaloe RFC and Killaloe-Ballina Tennis Club draw on members from both communities.
3. Commercially Killaloe and Ballina are very much linked, and they combine each year to stage a St. Patrick’s Day Parade.
4. There is a political precedence of joint meetings being regularly held between the Killaloe Municipal District councillors and their counterparts in the Nenagh Municipal District.

#### **O’Briensbridge DED (Population 708) –**

1. This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary.
2. This DED is part of the Parish of Killaloe and is also culturally linked with Killaloe (Smith O’Brien’s GAA Club).

#### **Carrowbaun DED (Population 116) –**

This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary.

#### **Ogonneloe DED (Population 708) –**

This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary.

#### **Mountshannon DED (Population 470) –**

This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary.

**Inishcaltra North/Inishcaltra South DED (Population 384) –**

This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary. The Inis Cealtra Island, in the middle of the Shannon, is also the subject of a major €4.5 million tourism development project that will be of mutual benefit to both counties Clare and Tipperary.

**Drummaan DED (Population 650) –**

This DED shares a water boundary with Co. Tipperary.

**Scarriff DED (Population 1,465) –**

This East Clare town is very intertwined with Killaloe and the East Clare tourism economy. If Killaloe were to move into the Tipperary Constituency it would make sense for this town to follow also.

**Cappaghbaun (Population 219) –**

This rural DED leans on the urban centre of Scariff.

**Cloonusker (Population 240) –**

This rural DED leans on the urban centre of Scariff.

**County Clare**



**Newport DED (Population 3,187) –**

This DED is in County Tipperary and was part of the Tipperary Constituency until 2017.

**Birdhill DED (Population 743) –**

This DED is in County Tipperary and was part of the Tipperary Constituency until 2017.

**Kilcomenty DED (Population 744) –**

This DED is in County Tipperary and was part of the Tipperary Constituency until 2017.

## **(II) Broader considerations**

### **Geographic rationale for moving DEDs in Limerick County to Limerick City**

To make up for the loss of Newport and surrounding DEDs to Tipperary, Limerick City would require a transfer of 4,000 from the Cappamore/Doon West/Bilboa/Doon area which is currently Limerick County (but previously and historically Limerick City/East). These communities are peripheral to the city, part of Co. Limerick and therefore geographically and economically linked to the city.

### **Geographic rationale for moving DEDs in Kerry to Limerick County**

Limerick County would need a transfer of 4,500 population from Kerry in order to sustain the three seats of the constituency. Suggested DEDs along the Limerick-Kerry border would be Newtownsandies (pop. 1,120); Leitrim (pop. 553); Tarmon (pop. 487); Kilmeany (pop. 742); Moynsha (pop. 493); Brosna (pop. 720) and Gneeves (pop. 381).

### **Geographic rationale for moving DEDs in Waterford to Tipperary South**

A transfer of 4,800 from the DEDs in Waterford which bound Clonmel and are a natural hinterland of the town should be transferred to Tipperary South. This would leave Tipperary with the exact population required for two 3 seat constituencies, which traditionally was the case for many decades. Suggested areas include Glen (pop. 1,008); Gurteen (pop. 385); Ballymacarbry (pop. 511); Kilronan (pop. 226); St Mary's (pop. 731); Kilmacomma (pop. 467); Graignagower (pop. 558) and Cappelquinn (pop. 1,311). All of these areas are peripheral to the Clonmel hinterland and sit on the Tipperary border.

Sincerely yours,  
Dr. Éilís Ní Dheá