

OBJECTION No 4

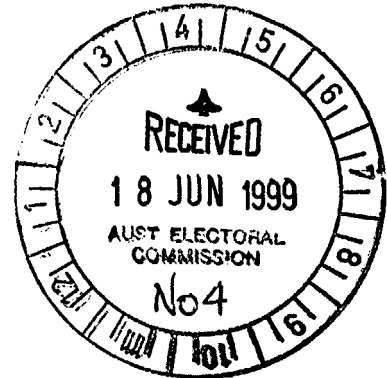
Australian Democrats

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June 18, 1999

Redistribution Committee for South Australia
Electoral Commission
9th Floor AMP Building
1 King William Street
ADELAIDE 5000



Dear Sirs,

Re: Objections to the Proposed Redistribution

Please find enclosed the Australian Democrats' Objections to the Proposed Redistribution published by the Redistribution Committee for South Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Black
on behalf of

Mike Elliott, MLC
Federal Campaign Director
Australian Democrats

1999 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REDISTRIBUTION

OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS (S.A. DIVISION) INC.

INTRODUCTION

Following the making of Public Suggestions to the Redistribution Committee for South Australia ("the Committee"), and following the provision of Comments on those Public Suggestions, the Committee has now published a Report and a Proposed Redistribution. The public is invited to submit Objections. We now do so.

We commence with criticisms of the Report and then turn to the Proposed Redistribution in "geographical" terms.

THE REPORT

At the outset, it should be noted that a number of persons, (private individuals, Members of Parliament, political parties, community groups and Local Government bodies) made a large number of varied submissions to the Committee, both in the Suggestions and in the Comments. Those persons are entitled to have their submissions acknowledged other than by simple recitation of the identities of the participants in the process. There were suggestions of significant change which are simply not noted, let alone provided with detailed reasons for their rejection.

One such omission relates to our submission (in our Suggestions under the heading "The 'Next Redistribution' Considerations") that the Committee could or should consider future Redistributions in its deliberations. In this case, the occasion for the submission is the first ever use of the new section 63A of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. Our submission may well be properly rejected upon an analysis of the Act. However, the point is certainly arguable, particularly in the context of a section of the Act recently introduced, allowing the AEC to make forward projections, and in the days of powerful computers capable of performing sophisticated modelling, into the future, of matters geographical, socio-economic and psephological.

Other omissions are numerous, and mostly relate to the specific submissions made in relation to particular electorates. For example, major changes in Grey were proposed by the ALP and by us, but were not the subject of comment or rejection. Similarly the ALP proposal relating to Gawler, our submission in relation to Mayo and Barker based upon the peri-urbanisation of the Fleurieu Peninsula, and numerous others were not cited and then rejected. Amongst other things, such a failure does not help future participants in the process know what is expected of them, or what they can do to assist future Committees.

Further, although one of the criteria in section 66 is, in effect, the maintenance of existing boundaries (s66(3)(b)(v)), it is by no means clear that the existing boundaries either did, or still do, define communities of interest or otherwise comply with section 66(3)(b). Indeed, there were many submissions to the contrary, particularly with respect to Mayo. Therefore, minor adjustments to boundaries cannot satisfy the community of interest criterion: a wider inquiry needs to have occurred. The happening of such an inquiry is not evident from the Report.

THE PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION

In the section of the Report entitled "The Country" the Committee has used what we described as "the simple approach" in our Suggestions and Comments, in performing the redistribution. We both anticipated and opposed this approach in our Suggestions and Comments. It is therefore not necessary for us to recite further our grounds of objection to the proposal.

In the section of the Report entitled "The City", the Committee commenced its metropolitan redistribution in the Willunga Basin. There was merit in this, given the widespread support for the move made. On the other hand, the better starting point would have been the suburban parts of Mayo, which were the subject of numerous strong submissions relating to the community of interest and ease of communication criteria. The Proposed Redistribution does not fully deal with the problem inherited from 1992: indeed, it is highly arguable that the transfer of only some, but a significant proportion, of the relevant area into Sturt only serves to exacerbate the non-compliance with s66(3)(b).

On their face, there is little objectionable about any of the changes made to Adelaide, Bonython, Boothby, Hindmarsh, Kingston or Makin, or with their ultimate configurations. The difficulty is that there is much which is objectionable about the changes to Mayo, Sturt and Port Adelaide, and to their proposed configurations.

Our objections in Mayo and Port Adelaide flow from our Suggestions and Comments. In Mayo the objection is that already identified – namely the further marginalisation of the electors in Athelstone, Rostrevor and surrounding suburbs. The whole area should be in Sturt, where it was before 1992. In Port Adelaide our objection is that the northward movement of the electorate into the "northwesterly portion of Bonython" is a greater breach of s66(3)(b) than previously obtained.

In relation to Sturt, our objection flows from the failure to transfer the Athelstone/Rostrevor region into the electorate, but is compounded by the transfer of areas further north from Mayo to Sturt. The community of interest criterion strongly suggests that, if only part of metropolitan Mayo could be transferred to Sturt, then the parts to be transferred should have been in the south – ie Rostrevor.

In our submission, the following changes to the Proposed Redistribution should occur:

1. The proposed Kingston should be retained;
2. Athelstone, Rostrevor and surrounding suburbs should be removed from Mayo and replaced with Belair, Blackwood and surrounding inner southern hills suburbs;
3. Bonython should move west to take in all areas north of Wingfield and the salt pans currently proposed to be in Port Adelaide;
4. Makin should make a consequential move to the north-west;
5. Port Adelaide and, to a lesser extent, Hindmarsh should take the inner north western suburbs from Adelaide; and then
6. Adelaide, Boothby and Sturt and possibly Hindmarsh would need significant rearrangement. However such a rearrangement could allow Adelaide to become a "City plus inner suburbs in all directions" electorate, Hindmarsh to be the western and south-western suburbs (Hawker!), Boothby to be the southern and eastern suburbs and Sturt to move into the north and north-east.

Our arguments in favour of this approach appear in our Suggestions and Comments, and need no repetition.

CONCLUSION

The Committee appears to have felt too constrained to make only minimal changes from those made in 1992. In the Proposed Redistribution, the Committee has failed to consider the future, and failed to correct a significant problem created in 1992. We submit that the Augmented Committee should make the bold changes necessary to comply with s66 of the Act.