



The Federal Redistribution 2011
South Australia



**Comment Number 4
On Public Objections**

**Bev Barber – State Director
Liberal Party of Australia (SA Division)**

5 pages



**LIBERAL PARTY OF
AUSTRALIA
(SA DIVISION)**

ABN: 50 249 620 342

Level One, Stafford House
23-25 Leigh Street
Adelaide

23 September 2011

Redistribution Committee for South Australia
9th Floor
1 King William Street
ADELAIDE SA 5001

To whom it may concern,

I present the Liberal Party's comments on public objections relating to the redistribution of federal electoral boundaries for South Australia.

The Liberal Party of Australia (SA Division) is willing to provide further information in written form or by presentation to the Redistribution Committee should the need arise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bev Barber".

**Bev Barber
State Director**

Redistribution of federal electoral boundaries in South Australia

Liberal Party of Australia (SA Division)

Comments on Public Objections

The Liberal Party of Australia (SA Division) welcomes the opportunity to present comments on objections to the proposed redistribution of South Australia.

The Liberal Party, in setting out its initial submission, ensured the Redistribution Committee's set criteria for the redistribution, outlined at Section 66(3) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act (1918) (the Act), was the principal driver of the suggestions presented to the Committee.

The Liberal Party considers that the Committee has achieved a sound balance in deriving the draft electoral boundaries in accordance with the criteria.

Only three Objections to the Proposed Redistribution of South Australia were raised and the Liberal Party notes that, amongst other issues, each makes conflicting objections to the realignment of the Wakefield divisional boundary:

- The Barossa District Council objection argues the desirability of uniting the entire Council region within one division, being the Division of Wakefield;
- Dr Mulcair contends no realignment of the Division's eastern boundary should take place; and,
- In Public Objection Three, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) suggests shifting a portion of the Barossa council from Barker into Mayo and debates the volume of electors to be shifted across the Division's southern boundary into the Division of Port Adelaide.

Division of Wakefield

The Liberal Party reiterates that, due to their close proximity to Gawler, the towns of Lyndoch and Williamstown share a clear and logical community of interest with the Gawler township. To incorporate this area into the Division of Wakefield is an appropriate realignment, consistent with the criteria of the Act.

Public Objection Three, from the Australian Labor Party, argues that the Northern Expressway link between Williamstown and Gawler, referred to in paragraph 118 of the Committee's Report, does not in and of itself, automatically give rise to a community of interest encompassing the towns. On this basis alone, Public Objection Three argues the area would be better incorporated into the Division of Mayo.

The Liberal Party considers this a simplistic view and submits the Expressway link is a result of the strong community of interest between the towns, not the reason for it.

Confusingly the ALP previously recognised the strong community of interest between Williamstown and Lyndoch, and Lyndoch and Gawler, stating in its initial Public Suggestion (Number Six) that:

"Lyndoch is changing in nature to become more of a commuter township for the growing Gawler area, and will be even more so with the Gawler East and Concordia residential developments."

The ALP offers no further rationale for incorporating Williamstown into Mayo but comments:

"...we are just suggesting that these Barossa Council electors are transferred to Mayo (... now a wholly regional electorate) rather than the largely metropolitan electorate of Wakefield."

The Liberal Party refutes this categorisation of Wakefield on the basis that:

- The Australian Electoral Commission's *Profile of the electoral division of Wakefield (SA)* notes the division's demographic rating as 'Rural'.
- Public Objection One by the Barossa District Council clearly advocates Wakefield as the most appropriate Division for the area concerned.
- Analysis of the Division of Wakefield in relation to the 'Metropolitan Adelaide' geographic area, legally defined by declaration of the relevant Minister on 11 November 1993, shows some 94.3% (5801 sq km) of the Division lies outside of the metropolitan area.

The Liberal Party stands by comments it made in Public Suggestion Eight that:

"Lyndoch and Williamstown... as the Labor submission points out – are increasingly becoming commuter suburbs for Gawler and therefore moving them into the division of Wakefield provides a stronger community of interest than moving them into Mayo. Far more people in these towns would work in Wakefield, go to school in Wakefield or access a range of services in Wakefield than in Mayo, where other major centres are significant distances away."

Cursory examination of a map supports this view. The nearest major centres in Mayo, Gumeracha or Birdwood, are close to 30 kilometres from Lyndoch. By comparison, Gawler is half the distance.

The Division of Wakefield and the Clare Valley region in particular also have major industries, like viticulture and winemaking, in common with Lyndoch and Williamstown.

The Liberal Party also points out that maintaining the proposed realignment of Wakefield's eastern boundary negates any requirement to reconsider the extent of the realignment to the Division's southern boundary, called for only in Public Objection Three.

In Public Objection Three, the ALP takes a simplistic view of the Committee's reasoning to criticise the proposed realignment of Wakefield's southern boundary. The suggestion that it is irrational to seek the unification of Burton into one division without seeking the unification of all suburbs is both flawed and confusing.

The Liberal Party supports the clear view of the Committee that there is strong merit to uniting the "developing suburb of Burton" within Port Adelaide and that the unification should take place because of the communities of interest in the area, not to create them.

Labor cites transport links as reason to retain suburbs of Burton, Waterloo Corner and Salisbury North in Wakefield, but in relation to similar transport links to Williamstown, says transport links are not distinguishing features that indicate a community of interest.

The Liberal Party also has difficulty reconciling the ALP's argument for placing voters in the same division as major shopping centres. The examples given, Parabanks Shopping Centre in Salisbury and the Elizabeth City Centre in Elizabeth are both large centres and attract custom from each of the Makin, Port

Adelaide and Wakefield Divisions. It is difficult to see how the Committee could satisfy the ALP in this regard.

Retail outlets that are more conveniently located to residents in Burton, Waterloo Corner, Direk and Salisbury North include Settlers Farm Shopping Centre in Paralowie and Hollywood Plaza Shopping Centre in Salisbury Downs, both located in the Division of Port Adelaide, and the Salisbury North Foodland, located in the proposed Division of Port Adelaide.

Indeed, many of the suburbs surrounding Burton, Direk, Waterloo Corner and Salisbury North, such as Paralowie and Salisbury Downs, are in Port Adelaide.

Further, Salisbury North, Burton, Direk and Waterloo Corner are all in the Paralowie High School zone and under the proposed redistribution, all of the school zone, with the sole exception of the RAAF site, would now be in the electorate of Port Adelaide.

In light of this, it is difficult to see how to draw a viable boundary to shift 3000 fewer electors into Port Adelaide; indeed the ALP appears to be unable to offer any recommendation in this regard.

The Committee's proposed boundary is desirable in that it satisfies communities of interest and numerical criteria, and takes advantage of the clear demarcation that exists between the Divisions of Port Adelaide and Wakefield along the Port Wakefield rail line and DSTO and RAAF sites. This boundary is recognised as a strong demarcation between divisions, having been the boundary of the now abolished Division of Bonython.

Finally, the Liberal Party notes at least two public suggestions called for the realignment, as proposed, to incorporate the suburbs of Burton, Direk, Salisbury North and Waterloo Corner into the Division of Port Adelaide.

Unification of Coromandel Valley into the Division of Boothby

Dr Mulcair in Public Objection Two proposes that Coromandel Valley should be united into the Division of Boothby at the expense of a realignment of the Division of Wakefield's eastern boundary.

The Liberal Party reiterates the strong community of interest and numerical arguments for realigning the Wakefield, Mayo and Barker boundaries in the Barossa region and notes the strong support in several public suggestions for the substantial realignment of Boothby, as proposed.

The Liberal Party considers the Committee to have effectively addressed both the communities of interest and numerical criteria considerations in regards to both divisions and suggests any further realignment to the Division of Boothby should not be at the expense of the already sound proposal for the Division of Wakefield.

The Liberal Party understands the nature of the redistribution process and the notion of "one vote, one value" means changes such as Dr Mulcair's cannot always be realistically accommodated.

Unification of Barossa District Council and Wakefield District Council into Wakefield

Public Objections One and Two both argue for the unification of district councils into a single federal division.

Arguments cited for the unification of councils include voter confusion and the marginalisation of communities split across several federal divisions.

The Liberal Party notes the Committee received no submissions presenting evidence of voter confusion in this region.

The Liberal Party also rejects the main principle of Public Objection One, that;

“Under the proposed redistribution, the Barossa Council would be the only local government area in South Australia split into 3 federal electorates.”

At least four other Local Government Areas including the Cities of Charles Sturt, Marion, Onkaparinga and Salisbury are split across three federal divisions. The City of Port Adelaide Enfield is split across four federal divisions. These councils have provided no submission or objection to suggest such arrangements are difficult, undesirable or unworkable.

The argument for incorporating the Barossa District Council into one division also relies heavily on the Committee’s proposal to realign McLaren Vale and Willunga into the Division of Mayo.

In proposing the Mayo boundary realignment the Committee pointed to the desirability of uniting the McLaren Vale and Willunga townships into a rural Division, noting the *“identifiable difference in communities of interest between the McLaren Vale wine region and the more suburban coastal communities in Kingston’s west.”*

The Barossa District Council is already split across the rural Divisions of Barker and Mayo, with the Committee proposing to also have the rural Division of Wakefield encompass some of the Council area.

The Liberal Party notes that the premise for shifting McLaren Vale and Willunga into Mayo, being that those rural communities were better placed in rural divisions, does not apply in the case of the Barossa District Council.

It is therefore difficult to see how the same reasoning could justify shifting the entire Barossa District Council into the Division of Wakefield.

While the Barossa District Council may see convenience in such a shift, the Liberal Party submits that the realignment required to incorporate all 16,038 current electors of the council region into Wakefield would be unnecessarily disruptive and unsupported by evidence provided to the Committee.