



Public Objection Number 1

The Barossa Council

3 pages

2011 proposed Redistribution of South Australia into Electoral Divisions

Submission – The Barossa Council

Summary

By way of background, The Barossa Council is one of the largest regional local government authorities in South Australia, covering the internationally renowned Barossa wine region. The Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recognise the importance of the Barossa region by specifically referring to it on their website (<http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/wine.html>) when providing an overview of the importance of the wine sector in Australia:

Wine grape growing and winemaking are carried out in each of the six states and two mainland territories of Australia. The principal production areas are located in the south-east quarter of the Australian continent, in the states of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

*Wineries in South Australia's **Barossa Valley**, in the Hunter River region north of Sydney in New South Wales and in Victoria played a major role in the development of the industry and continue to be important sources of fine wines.*

In South Australia, wine contributes around 11% of the state's Gross State product, contributing around \$2.4 billion to the state's economy. In 2009/10, the Barossa region contributed \$85 million (20%) in production value to the state's total wine value.

To add further to its 'credentials', the Barossa has recently been acknowledged by an international wine magazine as one of the 5 most recognised wine regions in the world, and this is supported by the busiest Visitor Information Centre in regional South Australia.

The Barossa Council, in covering this important region, values the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed redistribution, and recognises the challenges and competing interests faced by the Electoral Commission in providing an acceptable outcome to all.

The Barossa Council rejects the proposed divisions on a number of important grounds. Under the proposed redistribution, The Barossa Council would be the only local government area in South Australia split into 3 federal electorates – Mayo, Barker and Wakefield. This presents a number of practical problems:-

- Purely from a local geography standpoint, a person starting a brief journey would leave the Barossan town of Tanunda (in the electorate of Barker), drive 20 kms along the Barossa Valley Way and arrive in the Barossan town of Williamstown (proposed electorate of Wakefield), then continue another 29 kms and arrive in the Barossan town of Springton (electorate of Mayo).

All 3 towns are quintessentially and historically Barossan, yet are to be represented by three different federal members? This is completely at odds with the intent of Sections 66(3) and 66 (3A) of the Electoral Act that direct the Redistribution Committee to give due consideration to:-

(3)(b)(i) *community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social and regional interests;*

(3)(b)(iv) *the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division.*

Whilst we recognise that the projected enrolment range is the foremost consideration in a redistribution, it seems counter-intuitive that the Committee proposes to effectively 'carve up' one of the nation's oldest, most productive, and individually recognised agricultural regions into multiple federal electorates.

- Some may argue that the possibility of having 3 federal members is advantageous, in that we would have '3 lines to Canberra', but experience tells us otherwise. We believe that being on the periphery of 3 federal seats will in fact dilute and marginalise any 'message' from our community and render us politically impotent.
- We note from page 17 of the 2011 ***Proposed Redistribution of South Australia into Electoral Divisions*** Report, that one of the key themes proposed by the public and responded to by the committee is to ...*unite the McLaren Vale Wine Region*. The question needs to be asked - why the McLaren Vale wine region is afforded this response by the Committee, yet the older, more recognised and more productive Barossa region is in fact treated in the opposite way.
- Further to the point above, the Committee places great importance on communities of interest (page 20 and 21) – the importance of uniting the suburb of Burton is specifically mentioned (point 77) as are the suburbs of Buckland Park, St Kilda and Waterloo Corner (point 78). The Barossa has arguably one of the most recognised 'communities of interest' in the country yet receives no recognition whatsoever.
- The wider Barossa community shares strong sporting and recreation ties with Councils located in the Wakefield electorate.
- Barossa's tourism strategies are intrinsically linked to our Wakefield neighbours, in particular the Clare Valley Wine Region where we share joint regional tourism strategies. Furthermore, the Clare Region and Eden Valley are the two strongest and most recognised Riesling wine regions in Australia and therefore share an extremely strong "community of interest".
- The state policing region, based in Nuriootpa, also covers significant parts of Wakefield and again, many of our crime and safety strategies are joint strategies with our Wakefield neighbour councils.
- The Barossa region is a world recognised intensive agricultural region, and has close ties with the wine areas of the Clare Valley and the Adelaide Plains, both contained within the Wakefield electorate (current and proposed). Further, under the South Australian Government's '30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide', the Barossa region is defined by the State Government as including the local government areas of The Barossa Council, The Town of Gawler, Light Regional Council and Mallala District Council. It is with these communities that ours works so closely. Already, The Barossa Council has been a member of a group known as the Wakefield Group as our issues and opportunities are inextricably linked with those councils and their communities. Further, our Regional Development Australia body comprises all Wakefield based councils (as mentioned

above) except The Barossa Council. Being a part of Wakefield just makes political and strategic sense.

We note from page 22 of the report (point 96) that the projected enrolment for Wakefield is 104 621 electors (variation of minus 0.13%).

In Conclusion

It is our contention that the entire Barossa Council area should be in the federal seat of Wakefield.

Not only is our existing relationship with other communities in Wakefield already extremely strong and recognised by the state government, but such an iconic and internationally recognised region as the Barossa deserves to be wholly in one federal electorate where our issues, challenges and opportunities can be clearly articulated to one Member.