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Country and Outback Health

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Subject: [Redistribution SA - Submission] *WWW* [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 13 April 2026 10:13:51 AM

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Form submitted: 13/04/2026 10:13 AM

Skeldon, Zieco - Redistribution SA - Submission on the proposed South Australian redistribution

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Submission on the proposed South Australian redistribution details

Category: Boundaries

Details:

ABOUT COUNTRY & OUTBACK HEALTH
Country & Outback Health is a regional healthcare provider whose mission is to empower and advocate for healthy rural communities by delivering diverse and excellent health services. Our diverse team of health professionals is committed to providing high-quality care to improve the mental health and overall wellbeing of those living in regional communities. In the 2024/2025 financial year, Country & Outback Health provided over 44,000 appointments to more than 11,000 South Australians across regional areas, delivering critical services that include mental health, allied health, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support, and Aboriginal health services.

Operating across a vast geographical footprint with locations including Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, and Ceduna, Country & Outback Health is fundamentally focused on reducing the severe healthcare gap between urban and regional communities by strengthening access to services close to home,

CONCERNS REGARDING THE BOUNDARY CHANGES AND THE INCORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PLAYFORD
As an organisation deeply invested in the welfare and future of regional South Australians, Country & Outback Health wishes to express significant representational concerns regarding the proposed boundary changes that incorporate parts of the City of Playford into a predominantly rural electorate.

While it is understood that this adjustment is primarily a numerical necessity to balance projected enrolment quotas, incorporating an expanding outer-suburban footprint into a remote and outback electorate risks fundamentally shifting the focus of the region's federal representation. We consider that it is highly illogical to combine rapidly urbanising northern Adelaide fringe suburbs with remote and rural South Australia in the same electorate.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEDICATED RURAL ADVOCACY

The danger of diluting rural representation becomes clear when looking at the unique and complex service delivery challenges faced by remote communities. Delivering vital healthcare to regional populations requires navigating the logistical hurdles of remote travel, workforce shortages, and the specific socio-economic challenges of outback towns.

Requiring a single Member of Parliament to balance the complex advocacy needed to support rural health networks like Country & Outback Health with the competing demands of Adelaide's rapidly urbanising northern fringe makes effective representation highly challenging. An MP whose attention is divided by the infrastructure and growth needs of outer-suburban housing estates may struggle to provide the dedicated, laser-focused advocacy necessary to sustain and expand critical rural services.

RECOMMENDATION

While the numerical challenges facing the Redistribution Committee are acknowledged, Country & Outback Health recommends that the Committee reassesses the inclusion of the City of Playford's urbanising localities into the state's largest rural electorate. It is vital that the final boundaries preserve the fundamentally regional character of the electorate to ensure that outback communities and the essential services that sustain them, retain focused and dedicated federal representation.
