



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Submission OB256

Barunga West Council

15 April 2026

South Australian redistribution
Australian Electoral Commission
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To the Redistribution Committee,
Australian Electoral Commission

SUBJECT: Submission – Proposed Redistribution of the Electoral Division of Grey

Barunga West Council welcomed the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the proposed redistribution of the Electoral Division of Grey. I write to inform that Barunga West Council strongly opposes the proposed expansion of the Electoral Division of Grey.

Council submits that the current configuration of Grey is already at, or beyond, a practical limit for effective federal representation. The proposed expansion would materially weaken, rather than improve, the ability of the Federal Member to effectively represent the communities within the electorate.

The Electoral Division of Grey is:

- The largest electorate in South Australia, covering more than 92% of the State's landmass
- One of the largest electorates in Australia by geographic area
- Comprised of more than 30 local government areas, spanning coastal, agricultural, remote, and outback communities

This scale is not theoretical — it translates directly into operational constraints, including:

- Significant travel demands, often requiring full-day or multi-day commitments to service different parts of the electorate. For example:
 - Travel from Pt Broughton (Barunga West) to Ceduna is approx. 6–7 hours by road (500–550 km)
 - Travel from the Mid North to the Far North or Eyre Peninsula requires full-day or multi-day travel
 - Servicing remote communities often involves limited transport corridors and long transit times.These are not outliers — they represent the standard operating environment of the electorate.
- A large number of dispersed townships and communities, each with distinct economic and social priorities
- Significant variation in infrastructure, service access, and regional needs across the electorate

By any reasonable measure, Grey already represents a high-complexity service environment for a single Federal Member.

Council notes that the Electoral Division of Grey is already within an acceptable tolerance of the enrolment quota and submits that the proposed expansion is inconsistent with the principle of effective representation.

Accordingly:

- There is no compelling population-based justification for expansion
- The proposed increase in elector numbers is marginal relative to the significant increase in complexity
- The redistribution appears to prioritise numerical adjustment over functional representation outcomes

Council submits that the proposed changes risk weakening the community of interest within the electorate and that numerical adjustments should not come at the expense of functional representation effectiveness.

The addition of further councils and population centres would reduce the capacity for regular, meaningful engagement across existing communities and further constrain responsiveness to local issues.

Grey is currently characterised by:

- Regional, rural, and remote economies
- Agricultural, resource-based, and coastal industries
- Shared challenges relating to service access, infrastructure, and regional development

The inclusion of metropolitan fringe areas would:

- Introduce fundamentally different socio-economic priorities
- Shift the representational balance
- Dilute the cohesion of regional interests

If adjustment is required, Council strongly supports alternatives that:

- Do not introduce additional councils into Grey
- Do not materially increase geographic scale
- Maintain a clear regional and rural focus

In this context, the inclusion of areas from Light Regional Council currently within the Division of Spence represents a more balanced approach. This approach would:

- Achieve enrolment objectives
- Avoid adding new councils
- Limit additional geographic burden
- Preserve the integrity of regional representation

Renaming of the Electorate

Council acknowledges the proposal to rename the electorate in honour of Lowitja O'Donoghue and recognises her outstanding national contribution. However, Council emphasises that:

- The name "Grey" has been in continuous use since 1903
- It reflects a long-standing regional identity associated with George Grey
- Any renaming should be carefully balanced against community identity, historical continuity, and local sentiment




In conclusion, Barunga West Council submits that the current scale of the Electoral Division of Grey already presents significant and well-established challenges to effective representation.

The proposed expansion would:

- Increase complexity without delivering meaningful representational benefit
- Further stretch the capacity of the Federal Member
- Diminish advocacy outcomes for regional and remote communities

Council therefore strongly urges the Redistribution Committee not to proceed with the proposed expansion.

Yours sincerely


Mark McDonald
Chief Executive Officer

Cc/ Tom Venning MP, Federal Member for Grey

