THE FEDERAL REDISTRIBUTION SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Comment on objection 29

Dr Mark Mulcair

5 pages

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From: [redacted]
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South Australian Redistribution comment on objections uploaded from the AEC website.
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COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS TO 2017-18 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REDISTRIBUTION

(DR MARK MULCAIR)

With only 10 Divisions and a fairly consistent approach taken by all Suggestions, this redistribution is mostly uncontroversial. While there are a large number of Objections, the overwhelming majority of them are of the form-letter type, and relate to one specific proposal; the transfer of Flagstaff Hill and Aberfoyle Park to Kingston.

Apart from that, most of the Objections are fairly minor in nature, and there is no real proposal to radically change the Committee's boundaries. I did make a fairly detailed Objection to the boundaries of Adelaide and Hindmarsh, but even this was well within the Committee's broad outline.

I do not recommend any major rethinking or re-arrangement of boundaries at this stage.

OBJECTIONS TO THE BOUNDARIES OF KINGSTON AND BOOTHBY

There is really not much to say about the Objections to the Kingston/Boothby boundary. I cannot see any logical way to retain all of Flagstaff Hill and Aberfoyle Park in Boothby, without either (a) forcing Kingston well up over O'Halloran Hill, or (b) making changes throughout all of southern and eastern Adelaide. I really don't think either of these options are worth the trouble.

Other suggestions, such as those from the Liberal Party, end up splitting Flagstaff Hill off from Aberfoyle Park, which seems to be a 'worst of both worlds' approach.

Possibly, if the southern beachside suburbs were returned to Kingston, then all of Flagstaff Hill and Aberfoyle Park could be united in Mayo. This is apparently not what the locals want, but much of this area has previously been in Mayo, so perhaps they would at least feel more connection there than with Kingston. The numbers don't balance exactly, but possibly some rural southern parts of Mayo (such as McLaren Vale) could be placed in Kingston to even up the enrolment.

OBJECTIONS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

The entire basis of the Liberals' Objection seems to be to return Flagstaff Hill to Boothby. To accommodate this, the Liberals make a cascading series of changes throughout southern Adelaide.

A number of the Liberal proposals are things that I supported in my Objections, such as:

- Placing Novar Gardens and surrounds in Boothby. This could be done either as part of my Objection 1, or the more 'minimalist' proposal I suggested as an alternative.

- Re-uniting the Millswood area in Adelaide. This was my Objection 2, or again the Committee might prefer the 'minimalist' alternative.

- Returning the southern beachside suburbs to Kingston. I support this in principle, but was unable to find a satisfactory way to achieve this.

In addition, the proposal to place part of Boothby's "Hills" component in Mayo was something I explored when making my original Suggestions. In the end, I couldn't find a way to make it work, but I have no problem with this arrangement in principle.

However the fundamental problem with the Liberals' proposal is that it splits Flagstaff Hill from Aberfoyle Park. This is a fairly self-contained area, and it would make more sense to keep it united in a single Division. The Committee proposes to unite all of this area along with Happy Valley in the Division of Kingston, which seems fairly sensible to me. Certainly, I don't think the links between Flagstaff Hill and Boothby are so strong as to warrant a major disruption to the boundaries in this area.

As I said, possibly this area could be accommodated together in Mayo rather than Boothby, if that was seen as a preferable alternative to Kingston. This change would also address any Objections to the splitting of the southern beachside suburbs.

OBJECTIONS OF THE ALP

Labor complains about the relatively low enrolment in Grey and Barker. Given that Grey in particular is geographically enormous, I think it is perfectly reasonable for both Divisions to be towards the low end of tolerance. Attempting to increase their numbers would require even further encroachment on Greater Adelaide, which is not desirable for such vast rural seats.

I agree that we will probably need to return to this issue at the next redistribution, especially if South Australia loses yet another seat. Possibly Barker will need to return to its former boundaries in taking in the Fleurieu Peninsula (as suggested by Charles Richardson). But I don't think we need to make these changes now.

Similar to the Liberals, one of Labor's options for adjusting the Boothby/Hindmarsh boundary is to place more of Glenelg North and Novar Gardens into Boothby. Again, I would tend to support this type of arrangement if my more extensive changes in Objection 1 did not get up.

OBJECTIONS OF CHARLES RICHARDSON

Dr Richardson proposes some quite radical changes, which I don't think are justified. His main Objections seem to be:

- That the Barossa Valley should be united in a single Division.
- That Barker and Grey should be purely rural Divisions, assuming the Barossa Valley is counted as a metropolitan area.
- That the southern beachside suburbs should be placed in Kingston instead of Mayo
- That the proposed boundaries are not 'future proof'.

While some of these arguments have merit, I don't think they warrant the wholesale re-arrangement that Dr Richardson proposes.

For example, I don't think that the idea of Barossa DC being 'metropolitan' is so strong that it precludes Barossa being united in Barker. This is a very simple and minimalist change that would have almost no flow-on effects elsewhere.

Similarly, an improvement in the Adelaide/Boothby boundary can be achieved in a much simpler way (such as my Objection 2, or the Objection of the Liberals). There is no need for a radical redrawing of Boothby, Adelaide, Sturt, Makin, and Spence.

OTHER OBJECTIONS

- Jeff Waddell lends his support, at least in theory, for Adelaide and Hindmarsh being re-oriented in an east-west alignment. His comments were something very close to what I have proposed in my Objection 1.

- Dom Barrett seems to base his suggestions purely on numerical criteria, arguing for a retention of 'Port Adelaide' and abolition of 'Sturt' due solely to potential population growth. However, he does seem to provide any specifics of how abolishing Sturt would work in practise. In particular, he supports no change to the Division of Mayo, so it is not clear where he expects the 100,000+ electors in the existing Sturt to go.

- A couple of Objections propose renaming 'Hindmarsh' as 'Port Adelaide'. If my Objection 1 was supported, then this Division would lose most of its connection to the old Hindmarsh, and be focussed much more clearly on Port Adelaide-Enfield Council. I would certainly agree that a Division of this type would be better named 'Port Adelaide'.

- Some of my fellow independent contributors have agreed that it would be better to return to the previous format of outlining redistributions by geography rather than alphabetically.