



# Objection 312

Australian Labor Party  
(South Australian Branch)

6 pages

# **OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

## **MADE TO THE**

### **AUGMENTED ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

#### **BY THE**

#### **AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH)**

**11 May 2018**

The augmented Electoral Commission for South Australia is most significantly charged with considering all objections to the Redistribution Committee's proposed redistribution and determining the names and boundaries of electoral divisions in South Australia, following the publication of proposed names and boundaries of electoral divisions for South Australia by the Redistribution Committee for South Australia in April 2018.

As part of its considerations, the augmented Electoral Commission may hold an inquiry into any objection or comment on objections under certain circumstances, in accordance with section 72(3) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The Australian Labor Party would welcome the opportunity to expand on this submission in such a forum, if it was deemed necessary.

#### *General comments*

The Australian Labor Party recognises the independence of the Redistribution Committee and accepts that it has fulfilled its legislative responsibilities under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The Australian Labor Party also recognises instances where the Redistribution Committee accepted elements of its submission and comments made on the submissions of others. In particular, the Australian Labor Party welcomes the decision of the Redistribution Committee to divide the ten proposed electoral divisions in South Australia between three of predominantly rural character and the remainder metropolitan.

However, this does not mean that there are not elements of the proposed redistribution completed under this framework with which the Australian Labor Party is not wholly satisfied, and these objections are set out in the following document accordingly. Principally, the Australian Labor Party is deeply disappointed with the decision to abolish the division of Port Adelaide and commends its original submission to the augmented Electoral Commission, proposing the effective abolition of the division of Sturt.

#### **Grey and Barker**

The Australian Labor Party submitted that the two divisions that extend to the state's borders, Grey and Barker, be retained. The Redistribution Committee has accepted this in its proposal. The Australian Labor Party went on to suggest two options for these divisions to meet the required population targets, noting either would have flow-on effects to Mayo.

The Redistribution Committee has proposed boundaries largely along the lines of the Australian Labor Party's first suggested option. This included the boundary of Grey extending further south through the Adelaide Plains to encompass a large portion of the rural districts that were located in the division of Wakefield. However, the suggestion that this include all of the Light local government area was not taken up, neither were suggestions that Barker could achieve growth in

numbers by incorporating the whole of the Barossa local government area and obtain further increases from Mayo as deemed appropriate.

As a consequence, the Australian Labor Party is concerned that the projected enrolment figures for Grey of 120,331 and Barker of 120,468 are out of balance with the projections for remaining divisions and inconsistent with the Redistribution Committee's own assessment on page 23 of the proposed redistribution that the proposed redistribution has resulted in electoral divisions that "are more equitably balanced numerically across the state".

With a permissible minimum for projected enrolment of 118,436, the Australian Labor Party submits that for rural divisions where no evidence of future population growth has been presented to suggest that significant growth is expected, these numbers are too low and that the projected enrolment should exceed the quota, not be below it. The augmented Electoral Commission is invited to consider whether adjustments in the proposed boundaries to increase the number of electors are desirable and if so, the Australian Labor Party submits that this can come from an exchange of electors between Grey and Barker, and also from Mayo.

### **Mayo**

Consistent with the Australian Labor Party submission to the Redistribution Committee, the Australian Labor Party again notes there will be associated changes to Mayo if the augmented Electoral Commission decides to adjust the proposed boundaries of Grey and Barker. Regardless, Mayo will remain a division anchored in the Mount Lofty Ranges on the Adelaide Hills and Mount Barker local government areas but would likely gain from the divisions of Kingston, Boothby and Sturt to meet the required enrolment tolerances.

In gaining projected electors from the division of Kingston in the suburbs of Aldinga Beach, Port Willunga and Sellicks Beach, and part of Aldinga, the Redistribution Committee drew on the submission of the Australian Labor Party that a division boundary along the line of the east-west boundary between Moana and Seaford Rise and Maslin Beach would be appropriate and that Mayo absorb those areas south of that line that are currently located in the division of Kingston.

The Australian Labor Party also submitted that there was also potential to gain from the fringes of Boothby. Under the proposed boundaries, Mayo has already drawn projected electors from Boothby, namely in the suburbs of Hawthorndene, Craighburn Farm and parts of Coromandel Valley. The Australian Labor Party suggests to the augmented Electoral Commission that it may wish to consider adding additional suburbs from the Mitcham local government area from Boothby into Mayo.

### **Kingston**

In the submission to the Redistribution Committee, the Australian Labor Party noted that Kingston could absorb remaining suburban areas of the Onkaparinga local government area that are currently located in Boothby, principally around the suburbs of Aberfoyle Park and Happy Valley. The Australian Labor Party agrees with the decision of the Redistribution Committee to consolidate these two suburbs, as well as Flagstaff Hill, in Kingston, and urges the augmented Electoral Commission to uphold this proposal. As identified by the Redistribution Committee at page 38 of the proposed redistribution, these suburbs share a community of interest and the Australian Labor Party believes this is appropriately defined by the Onkaparinga local government boundary. Based on the location of electorate offices of the current members for these two divisions, residents of Aberfoyle Park currently have a commute by car of roughly equal time to either office, demonstrating that affirmation of the proposed boundaries by the augmented Electoral Commission

would not result in diminished access by residents of these suburbs to their local member of parliament.

The Australian Labor Party also noted the potential for population growth that exists in Kingston on the projected figures provided by the Redistribution Committee, and agrees with the proposal of the Redistribution Committee to draw the boundaries so that the number of projected electors falls below the quota.

### **Boothby and Hindmarsh**

Losing electors in its south to Kingston means Boothby needed to gain further electors to its north. The Australian Labor Party submitted that these could come from suburbs that share a greater common interest with electors in the Unley and Burnside local government area, some of which have previously been in Boothby. However, the Redistribution Committee has proposed the opposite, with Boothby gaining electors from Hindmarsh in the Holdfast Bay and Marion local government areas.

Although the Australian Labor Party does not support the decision to abolish the division of Port Adelaide, the Australian Labor Party welcomes the proposal for Hindmarsh to remain a division centred on the community interests of the western suburbs, particularly through the inclusion of a greater portion of the Charles Sturt local government area and the Le Fevre Peninsula. However, the augmented Electoral Commission may wish to revisit the proposal of the Redistribution Committee to use the Adelaide to Glenelg tram line and the boundary between the Holdfast Bay and West Torrens local government areas as the boundary between Boothby and Hindmarsh.

The Australian Labor Party presents two options for the augmented Electoral Commission here. The first involves using the major road of Anzac Highway as the division boundary, which would include moving the suburb of Glenelg North from Boothby into Hindmarsh. This could continue beyond Marion Road to the boundary between Boothby and Adelaide. Alternatively, the boundary between Hindmarsh and Boothby could extend further, retaining Glenelg North but also including suburbs such as Novar Gardens and Netley, and consolidating the suburb of Plympton in one division. This second option also recognises the natural boundary formed by Adelaide Airport, which would be ideal as a division boundary.

Noting that if Boothby cedes electors to Mayo in the Mitcham local government area it may need to gain electors, but also that there is a significant disparity between the projected number of electors in Boothby at 125,502 and in Hindmarsh at 122,634, the Australian Labor Party believes that necessary adjustments in the enrolments of both divisions can occur along this shared boundary as outlined.

It can be expected that there may be some suggestions that involve Boothby retaining the suburbs of Aberfoyle Park, Flagstaff Hill and Happy Valley. For the reasons stated in this submission, particularly with respect to the composition of the proposed division of Kingston, the Australian Labor Party does not believe this is a viable, necessary or preferable option. Further, it has been brought to the attention of the Australian Labor Party that the current Member for Boothby has been soliciting objections to the proposed boundaries from residents of these suburbs, in an email entitled "Urgent: Radical Boundary Change to Your Suburb". Within the email is a link to a website <https://boothby.good.do/helpsaveboothby/have-your-say/> set up by the Member for Boothby, which automatically generates a submission to the augmented Electoral Commission using supplied text. The Australian Labor Party sees this method of generating robo-submissions as a shameless attempt to preserve political interests rather than broader community interests and has confidence that the augmented Electoral Commission will treat any such submissions accordingly.

## **Port Adelaide and Wakefield**

The Australian Labor Party believed that as it already retained a high number of electors, the highest in South Australia, minimal change was needed to the division of Port Adelaide, and continues to affirm this position. The proposed loss of the identity of Port Adelaide in the House of Representatives is particularly disappointing and is at odds with recognition of the locality on a local and national scale.

However, the Australian Labor Party also recognises that the Redistribution Committee elected to take a different course. Whilst it is open to the augmented Electoral Commission to reconsider the proposal to abolish Port Adelaide – and the Australian Labor Party believes it should, it is also necessary to address the reality of the proposal as it has been made.

As such, the Australian Labor Party accepts the proposed boundaries of Wakefield, which is proposed to be known as Spence. As outlined in the original submission, it was a logical decision to consolidate Wakefield as a predominantly metropolitan division.

## **Adelaide, Makin and Sturt**

The Australian Labor Party felt that history and geography both recommended that Adelaide's east was the logical place to achieve the necessary reduction in the number of divisions in South Australia from eleven to ten. As has been argued throughout this submission, this position is not conceded, but the reality of the decision of the Redistribution Committee necessitates that the proposed boundaries are addressed as they have been presented.

The decision to increase the number of projected electors in Adelaide along its western and northern boundaries is supported by the Australian Labor Party and is sensible way of addressing some of the effects of the abolition of Port Adelaide. Similarly, the extension of the boundary of the division of Makin from Port Wakefield Road and the Adelaide to Gawler railway line to the Little Para River and Gulf St Vincent is an appropriate way to address the same effects. The Australian Labor Party originally proposed extensive changes to Sturt, but the failure of the Redistribution Committee to adopt these suggestions leads to no further comment about the proposed boundaries of the division.

## **Naming of electoral divisions**

As outlined in the Australian Labor Party's original submission, the electoral divisions in South Australia can be clearly divided into three categories on the basis of names: federation names, names first applied in 1949 and names first applied in 1984. In determining names for the proposed divisions, the Redistribution Committee has retained names in all three categories, sought to abolish a federation name and proposed a new name.

*Adelaide, Barker, Boothby, Grey, Hindmarsh, Kingston, Makin, Mayo*

The divisions of Adelaide, Barker, Boothby, Grey, and Hindmarsh all represent federation names in South Australia. All names were used at the first Commonwealth election in which South Australia was divided into electoral divisions in 1903, with the 1901 election having been contested on a statewide basis. The Australian Labor Party strongly welcomes their retention. In addition, the Australian Labor Party affirms the decision of the Redistribution Committee to retain the names of Makin and Mayo.

### *Port Adelaide*

Consistent with the position taken in opposition to the abolition of the division, the Australian Labor Party is disappointed that the name Port Adelaide has been discontinued, but accepts the Redistribution Committee's rationale for doing so.

### *Wakefield*

The Australian Labor Party advocated the retention of all six federation names in South Australia. This remains the position. In doing so, the Australian Labor Party strongly objects to the decision not to retain the name Wakefield, and urges the augmented Electoral Commission to restore the name Wakefield to the division that has been named Spence.

The guidelines for naming federal electoral divisions, as included in the proposed redistribution on page 86, make clear that "Every effort should be made to retain the names of original federation electoral divisions".

In the submission to the Redistribution Committee, the Australian Labor Party recognised that with the reduction of the number of divisions in South Australia, it might be necessary to allocate one of the federation names to a division of a substantially different character than the one it currently belongs to. The submission even noted the precedent involving the division known as Wakefield following the 2003 redistribution, which was substantially different from the division of the same name prior to the redistribution. The proposed division of Spence contains 93,051 projected electors from the existing division of Wakefield, or 75 per cent of the total projected enrolment of the new division. Accordingly, the Australian Labor Party disagrees with the assertion of the Redistribution Committee at page 29 of the proposed redistribution that the proposed division "differs significantly" from the existing division to warrant a change of name, especially whether the existing name is a federation name.

### *Spence and Sturt*

The Australian Labor Party does not contend that the name Spence is an inappropriate choice for the naming of an electoral division, nor that Catherine Helen Spence is not worthy of recognition. At page 29 of the proposed redistribution, the Redistribution sets out its arguments for the choice of Spence, with which the Australian Labor Party has no objection. However, it is not appropriate to propose the name of Spence in place of Wakefield, or of any other division with a federation name.

The Australian Labor Party proposes instead that the name Spence be given to the division currently known as Sturt. This name originates from 1949 but has no particular connection to the area and, in fact, is connected with many other areas outside the boundaries of the division that bears its name. Given the decision of the Redistribution Committee to retire the name Port Adelaide, which also originates from the 1949 redistribution, the Australian Labor Party calls on the augmented Electoral Commission to also retire the name Sturt and replace it with Spence, noting only 10 per cent more projected electors are retained by the proposed division of Sturt, which retains its name, than are retained by the proposed division of Spence from Wakefield, which loses its name.

The name Sturt derives from Captain Charles Sturt, most associated with being the first European to chart the River Murray. Whilst Captain Charles Sturt's status as an individual worthy of recognition is not in dispute, and indeed is appropriately reflected in many other places, it has limited links to the area currently covered by the division that carries the name and this creates possible confusion with electors. Not only is there no direct connection to the River Murray in a division that covers

the eastern and north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide, but the name is associated with a number of unconnected areas in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia.

For example, the Sturt Football Club is based in Unley in the division of Adelaide and with a zone that includes the Adelaide Hills and the Murraylands in the divisions of Mayo and Barker. The Sturt District Cricket Club is based at Mitcham in the division of Boothby. The suburb of Sturt is located adjacent to the River Sturt in the division of Boothby. The Charles Sturt local government area is located in the north-western suburbs of Adelaide in the divisions of Port Adelaide and Hindmarsh. The Sturt Highway, one of South Australia's principal national highways, runs through the Riverland and down to Gawler, through the divisions of Barker and Wakefield. Of the numerous other avenues, roads and streets named Sturt, less than a handful are located within the division of the same name and are not major roads.

The Australian Labor Party submits there is little merit in retaining the name of Sturt and that the name Spence should be used in its place. In 1877, Catherine Helen Spence was appointed to the School Board for East Torrens and she died aged 84 on 3 April 1910 in Norwood, which is within the boundaries of the proposed division of Sturt.