



Suggestion 182

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3 pages

COMMENTS ON PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION IN SA

My submission relates to the possibility of the Federal electorate of Mayo being subsumed into other electorates, and recommends against it.

Sect 66 of the Electoral Act contains the following information:

“(3) In making the proposed redistribution, the Redistribution Committee:

.....

shall give due consideration, in relation to each proposed Electoral Division, to:

- (i) community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social and regional interests;
- (ii) means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;
- (iv) the physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division; and
- (v) the boundaries of existing Divisions in the State or Territory;”

The following table sets out the relevant figures as at the date the redistribution was proposed.

Permissible maximum no. of electors in an electoral division (Current enrolment quota + 10%)					131,453
Permissible minimum no. of electors in an electoral division (Current enrolment quota - 10%)					107,553
Electoral division	Number of electors	Electors above or below minimum	Electors below maximum	Area in sq. km	Demographic rating
Grey	102,264	-5,289	29,189	904,881	Rural
Sturt	104,727	-2,826	26,726	85	Inner metro
Barker	106,009	-1,544	25,444	63,886	Rural
Mayo	106,191	-1,362	25,262	9,315	Rural
Makin	107,636	83	23,817	130	Outer metro
Kingston	107,643	90	23,810	171	Outer metro
Boothby	107,939	386	23,514	130	Outer metro
Adelaide	110,351	2,798	21,102	76	Inner metro
Hindmarsh	112,511	4,958	18,942	78	Inner metro
Wakefield	114,533	6,980	16,920	6,407	Rural
Port Adelaide	115,227	7,674	16,226	181	Inner metro

As the table above makes clear, Grey, Sturt, Barker and Mayo have a shortfall of electors, and while the others have a surplus, they are well below the maximum permitted. (It is sorted into order by the third column, ‘Electors above or below minimum’, with the lowest figure first.)

Comments in relation to the potential redistribution of Mayo

Geography

Mayo is bordered on the west by Makin, Sturt, Boothby and Kingston, to the east and south by Barker, and shares a very small border to the north with Wakefield. A proposal to redistribute Mayo would no doubt see it being divided amongst all of these electorates, but that would not be consistent with the considerations stated in the Act (quoted above), for the following reasons.

Community of Interests

Mayo is rated as Rural, and includes the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. Its products and industries include: dairying, beef, sheep, apples, pears, cherries, smallgoods, forestry, natural spring water, wine, and cereals. In this, it has some aspects in common with Barker and a small amount with Wakefield, but almost nothing with Makin, Sturt, Boothby or Kingston.

Kingston's demographic rating is Outer Metropolitan, and its industries/products are described on the AEC website as "Construction, desalination plant, major retailing and various small industries in the northern part of the division including brickworks, optical lenses, clothing and engineering."

Makin also is Outer Metropolitan, with "Light manufacturing, commercial and retail industry, aviation, wineries, horse studs, hobby farmers, poultry, brick making and tourism."

Boothby, Outer Metropolitan as well, has "Major retailing, army camp and military barracks, tertiary education, several hospitals and various small industries" while Sturt is Inner Metropolitan with "University of South Australia campus, mainly residential with some commercial and retail activity."

Barker is also rural, like Mayo, with "Beef and dairy cattle, sheep, fishing, cropping, forestry, timber, paper products, wine, fresh and dried fruit, vegetables, transport and tourism."

Although Barker could theoretically increase its elector shortfall by taking over part of Mayo, the rest of Mayo would have to be divided between four suburban seats with which it has virtually no community of interest.

Means of Communication and Travel

A few of the towns in Mayo, such as Crafers, Stirling, Aldgate, Bridgewater, Hahndorf and Mount Barker are served by reasonable public transport, Littlehampton and Nairne a little less well. Strathalbyn has a bus service to Mt Barker, and other outlying areas including the south coast have four buses to Adelaide a day (two morning, two afternoon) on weekdays only.

With the office of Mayo's Federal MP being in Mt Barker, as it has been for many years, most residents of Mayo can at least access their MP with a car journey of an hour or less. A change to a suburban location, if Mayo was redistributed, would be a great inconvenience for most residents.

A portion of Mayo is served by an excellent local newspaper, the Mt Barker Courier, which reports on local and political happenings. The Weekender-Herald, based in Crafers, does likewise, as do the Strathalbyn 'Argus' and Victor Harbor's 'The Times'. While these newspapers would of course continue if Mayo was redistributed, residents would not find such coverage of a suburban-based MP.

Physical Areas and Features

Mayo is a large electorate, compared to any of the suburban ones, although much smaller than Barker or Grey. The western border of Mayo extends down the flanks of The Adelaide Hills a very little way in the northern reaches, and in the south, it extends westward to take in the McLaren Vale region, but apart from that, mainly comprises the Adelaide Hills, the agricultural areas to the north (including some of the Barossa), east almost to Callington, and south to include the entire Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. It is difficult to envisage most of this rural and agricultural area happily merged into some suburban electorate, particularly not Kangaroo Island.

THE ALTERNATIVE: REDISTRIBUTION OF A SUBURBAN ELECTORATE

As Grey and Barker both need to increase their elector numbers, these could be easily drawn from areas of Wakefield, leaving a shortfall in Wakefield which could be made up by taking over some of Makin and Port Adelaide.

Mayo could easily pick up more than its 1,362 shortfall from Boothby, around the north-eastern edge of that electorate; Kingston could take areas such as Aberfoyle Park and Flagstaff Hill from Boothby; and Boothby, Adelaide, Hindmarsh, Pt Adelaide and Makin could between them subsume Sturt.

Other ways to merge suburban electorates could be designed to redistribute different seats, or Adelaide could potentially be merged into the five electorates that surround it.

In any of these possible scenarios, these electorates have smaller areas, contiguous transport, and a great deal more community of interest with each other than with Mayo.

Yours sincerely,

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