



Suggestion 209

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MEMBER FOR GREY



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South Australian Electoral Redistribution

Submission to Australian Electoral Commission

Electorate of Grey

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

EXPANSION OF GREY ELECTORATE TO REACH ENROLMENT QUOTA

The Grey electorate covers an area of approximately 904 881 sq km from the Western Australian, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales borders to Marion Bay on the Yorke Peninsula and Eudunda in the south (92% of SA). Grey is one of the most diverse electorates in Australia and covers an area larger than the whole of NSW. It is the third largest federal electorate and currently encompasses 27 Local Government areas, 136 schools and 36 hospitals.

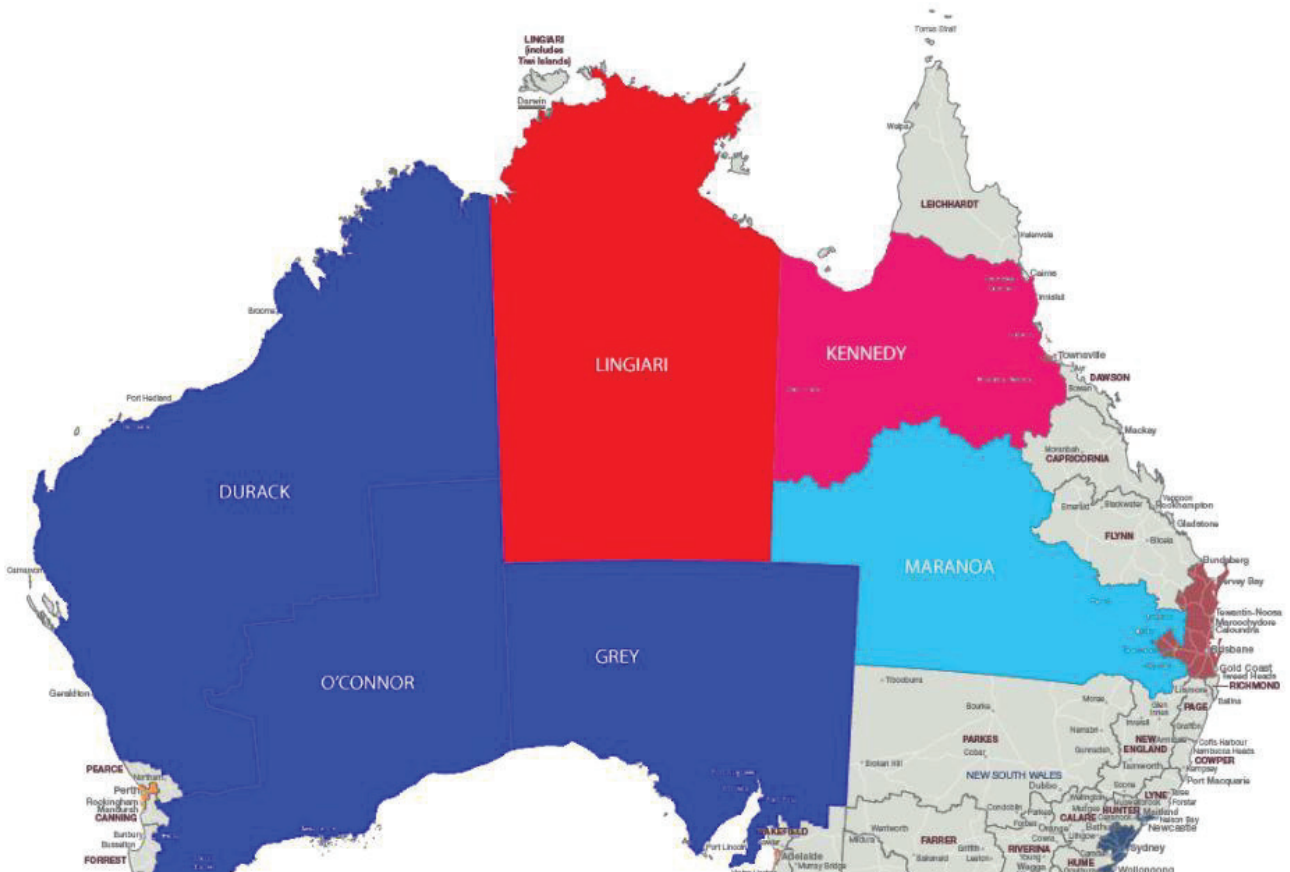


Fig 1: Map of 6 largest electorates.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-16/huge-electorates-a-mental-and-physical-challenge-for-australia/7310496>

Overview of Grey enrolment statistics

Source (AEC Essential information about the South Australian federal redistribution <http://www.aec.gov.au/Electorates/Redistributions/2017/sa/enrolment-quota.htm>)

Current Enrolment (2017)			
Current Enrolment 4 th Sept 2017	102,264	Projected Enrolment 2022	102,612
Lower threshold	Current quota	Upper threshold	
107,553	+/- 10%	131,453	

Projected enrolment (2022)			
Lower threshold	Projected quota	Upper threshold	
118,436	+/-3.5%	127,938	

Therefore allowing for the projected increase in enrollment in Grey by 2022 the quota required becomes a minimum gain of 15,824 additional electors. I suggest the size of the electorate warrants consideration of erring on the lower side of the quota given the enormous amount of travel required to service its physical size and constituents adequately.

Given Grey's already enormous diversity in industries and communities and the member's job to be across all the associated issues, an effort should be made to try to stick to the grain farming communities in the south and not add extra complexity by adding market gardening and vegetable production.

I propose the electorate expand by taking in the whole of the Local Government Area (LGA) of Clare and Gilbert Valley, together with the whole of the Wakefield LGA. In addition to this, I suggest the boundary also include the grain farming agricultural areas in the Adelaide Plains and Light LGA's in a geographical line south of the town of Dublin but north of Two Wells running east near Freeling and further east to the south of the township of Kapunda. I will discuss my preference for these areas further below.

DISCUSSION TO SUPPORT PROPOSAL

As the Member for Grey for the last ten years I have an almost unique understanding of the physical and mental challenges of servicing the electorate and I am considerate of the impost the electoral boundary changes will have on any future member.

I currently drive around 80,000 to 90,000 kilometres per year to ensure I visit as many communities as possible in the electorate on a regular basis. This is in addition to a significant number of air charter trips I undertake especially to the more remote communities. With the 18 weeks spent in Canberra and other committee work interstate the role of Member for Grey is enormous.

I also note the diversity of the electorate which includes almost all of South Australia's mining operations including iron, gas, oil, copper, uranium, gold, mineral sands and opal. Grey's biggest industry is agriculture, but it is incredibly diverse ranging from the arid pastoral zones to the north, to the extensive non-irrigated cropping areas to the south. It is also home to all of the remote indigenous communities in SA, hosts the biggest fishing fleet in the Southern Hemisphere, aquaculture, steel making and a complex zinc smelter, extensive tourism, forestry, 30 percent of Australia's wind generation, four regional cities, 24 District Councils, and many more local communities. Like other electorates health and aged care require constant attention, but have the added complication of isolation.

So while South Australia is to lose a seat during this boundary redistribution, if due consideration is given to the challenge it can be designed to minimize the extra load on the Member for Grey.

I believe it is unadvisable to expand further south into the LGA areas of the City of Playford or east to the Mid Murray LGA areas as this would encompass many new industries to represent in Grey adding intensive industries including horticulture and vegetable production. Giving due diligence to these industries would considerably grow the work load. The communities in the south western areas near the Gawler River contain a much greater horticultural and diverse industry element and are better serviced through the Wakefield electorate. Expanding east into the Murraylands which are significantly isolated from the rest of Grey would add considerably to travel time for the member and necessarily erode service to the rest of the electorate. I do not believe expansion east into these areas is feasible and they should be retained in the Barker electorate.

In that case I propose the only practical solution is via the southern boundary but in a geographical way that blends in with the issues already encountered in the electorate

Extending the current southern boundary of the electorate by including all of the Wakefield LGA, the Clare and Gilbert Valley LGA's, the northern part of the Light LGA and northern part of Adelaide Plains Council will see a geographical "square off" of the southern boundary. This will be advantageous because as the member I currently travel directly across areas of the Wakefield electorate through the Clare and Gilbert Valley LGA area to reach the south eastern communities in Grey near Eudunda. The northern area of the Wakefield LGA is already contained within Grey and this proposal would see the full council area within the electorate simplifying matters for that local government organisation.

The electorate offices of Grey are located in Whyalla, Port Pirie and Kadina. I regularly travel from the electorate to Adelaide Airport en route to Canberra for the sitting of parliament via Highway 1 through Port Wakefield which traverses through both the Wakefield and Adelaide Plains LGA areas or through Clare traversing the Clare & Gilbert Valley LGA area which would mean that I (or any future member) could coincide visits to these communities best utilising my time.

I have already referred to the huge range of the economy in Grey and expanding the electorate to include the LGA areas proposed would see similar industries retained meaning the member has “like” sectors to represent.

Already the two local newspapers at the south of my electorate, being the Plains Producer and Northern Argus are papers I contribute to and carry Grey Electorate news; they also provide coverage to the new LGA areas I propose which makes it a homogeneous fit. This can be correlated via

<http://www.newspapers.com.au/SA/>.

In Summary – whilst I am reluctant to see an expansion of the geographical size of the electorate of Grey, South Australia’s relative population decline dictates that we have no choice. To facilitate this, **I support a proposal of expansion of Grey that takes in the whole of the Local Government Area (LGA) of Clare and Gilbert Valley, together with the whole of the Wakefield LGA. In addition to this, I suggest the boundary also take in the grain farming agricultural areas in the Adelaide Plains and Light LGA in a geographical line south of the town of Dublin but north of Two Wells running east near Freeling and further east to the south of the township of Kapunda.**