

Ref: 11953

18 May 2020

Mr Bruce Green  
Boundaries Commission  
GPO Box 2329  
Adelaide SA 5001



Dear Mr Green

**Re: Structural Reform Proposal**

I advise that at the Light Regional Councils Ordinary April meeting held on Tuesday, 28 April 2020, Council resolved to proceed with a submission to the Boundaries Commission, for structural reform.

Light Regional Council

The Light Regional Council includes 46% of the famed Barossa Valley (Seppeltsfield, Marananga, Greenock, etc) and is located to the north of the greater metropolitan area of Adelaide. The region enjoys the benefits associated with the Barossa Valley together with the richness in mining heritage and premier farming country.

Encompassing the townships of Kapunda, Freeling, Greenock, Roseworthy, Wasleys, and the suburb of Hewett, the Light Regional Council is a progressive, growth, regional Council. It takes in a diverse and thriving area of broad acre farming, viticulture (eg. Seppeltsfield) and appealing rural-urban living options.

The Council continues to attract important viticultural and agricultural development to the area, along with associated support industries (eg. Ahrens Group, Amcor). Significant industrial growth contributes to creating additional opportunities for employment and economic development in the area.

Light Regional Council's Population as of 2019: 15,359

Area: 1,278 km<sup>2</sup>

Background

Two of our neighbouring Councils have lodged proposals with the Boundaries Commission:

- 17 October 2019, The Barossa Council - Stage 1 Boundary Realignment proposal,
- 4 December 2019, the Town of Gawler – Stage 1 Boundary Change proposal.

Both Stage 1 proposals were accepted by the Boundaries Commission and confirmation to proceed to Stage 2 was provided by the Commission.

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12 Hanson Street, Freeling, SA 5372

Light Regional Council at its Tuesday, 10 December 2019 ordinary meeting resolved that letters be sent to The Barossa Council and the Town of Gawler, requesting both Councils defer or withdraw their Boundary Reform Proposals. Preferring all Councils to redirect their time and resources, to collaborate and pursue a Regional Vision, presented to and supported by Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains Inc at their Board meeting of 14 August 2019, so as to benefit the region as a whole. The Regional Vision is discussed further below within this proposal.

On the 18 February 2020, The Barossa Council resolved not to *undertake a formal (stage 2) general submission to the SA Local Government Boundaries Commission at this time but continue to engage with stakeholders informally.*

The Town of Gawler on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, at its February Ordinary meeting resolved to *confirm its intention to strategically progress with its proposed Boundary Reforms in demonstration of its commitment to delivering services to its communities of interest.*

Light Regional Council, at its Tuesday, 28 April 2020 ordinary meeting, resolved to proceed with a submission to the Boundaries Commission, for structural reform, citing that the proposal by the Town of Gawler *is not in the Region's economic interests* and the following resolution being passed:

*Moved Cr Grain*

*Seconded Cr Kennelly*

- 1. That the presentation from the Chief Executive Officer titled Boundary Proposals – "Update" be noted and supported.*
- 2. That Light Regional Council acknowledge and appreciate the decision by The Barossa Council (18.2.20) not to undertake a formal (stage 2) general submission on boundary reform in favour of other Regional priorities at this time.*
- 3. That Light Regional Council express its disappointment of the Town of Gawler's decision (25.2.20) to progress its boundary reform proposals to Stage 2 despite several requests for them to withdraw or defer in the interest of progressing the Regional Vision.*
- 4. That Light Regional Council considers the decision by the Town of Gawler to proceed to be insular and self-serving and not in the Region's economic interests particularly given the recent adverse economic impacts to Australia and our Region due to China-US Trade Conflicts, bushfires, drought and now the emerging effects of COVID-19; demanding a positive Regional response as being articulated in the draft Regional Vision by the Councils of Adelaide Plains, Barossa and the Light Regional Council*
- 5. Given that the Town of Gawler has decided to proceed with its flawed boundary proposals, the Chief Executive Officer of the Light Regional Council is instructed to lodge a (Stage 1) submission to the Boundaries Commission proposing "Regional Structural Reform" in support of the Regional Vision.*
- 6. The 'Regional Structural Reform' proposal from Light Regional Council to divide the Local Government area under the jurisdiction of the Gawler Council between The Barossa Council, City of Playford and Light Regional Council applying the natural water courses of North and South Para and Gawler Rivers as logical boundaries (see Map – Appendix 13.1G of the Agenda Report)*
- 7. That Light Regional Council considers the 'Regional Structural Reform' package by redeploying the assets and resources currently under the jurisdiction of the Town of Gawler will generate Regional opportunities, enhance efficient and effective Regional decision-making and create a more productive use of the Town of Gawler's assets and resources in the interest of the entire Region.*
- 8. That Light Regional Council emphasise that this proposal is to support the residents and ratepayers of the current Town of Gawler, as the Town of Gawler and its heritage will continue and remain a significant feature of the Region's fabric; whilst its local government jurisdiction will be spread over 3 Councils; Playford, Barossa and Light Regional Council, providing efficiencies and productivity in the communities and Region's interest.*

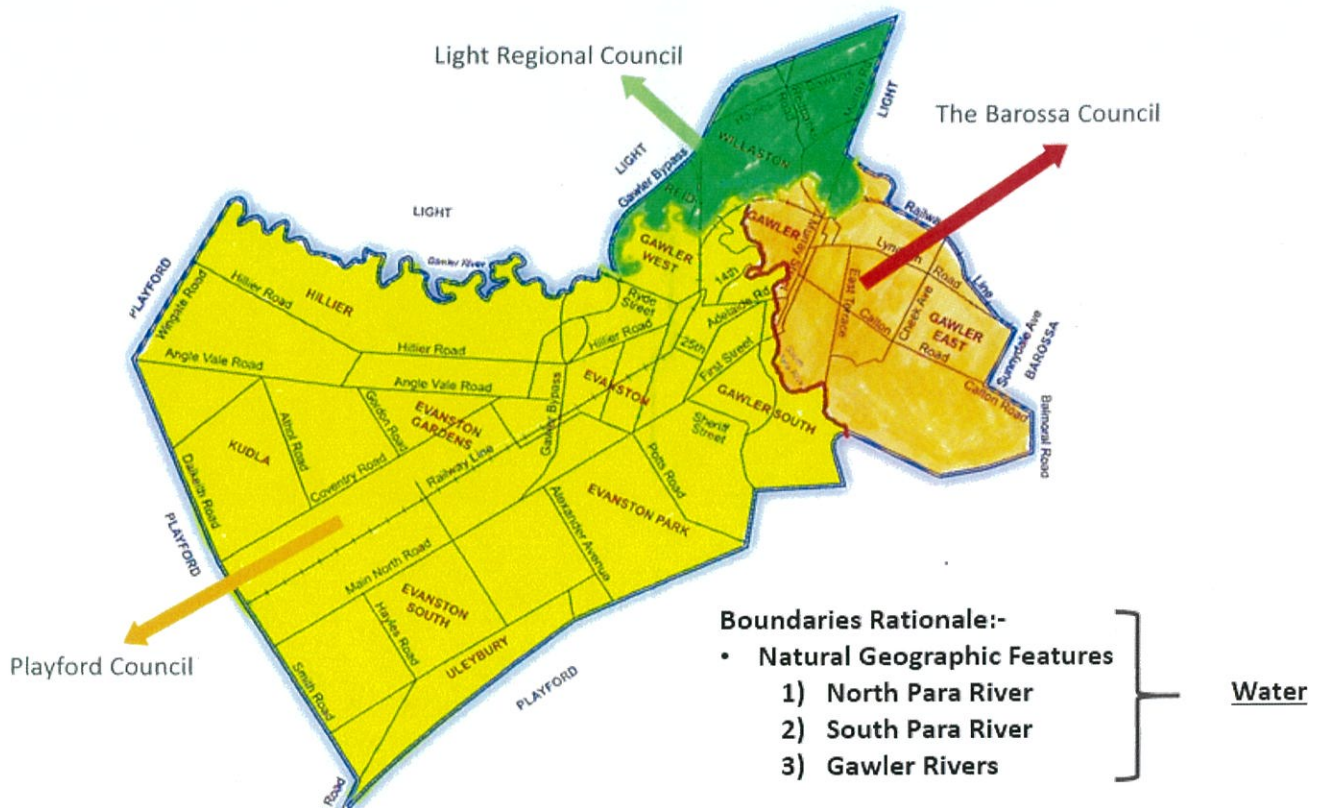
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### Light Regional Council Submission

The Light Regional Council would like to proceed with a general proposal, as set out under Chapter 3, Part 2 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

The intent of Light Regional Council's boundary proposal has a focus on structural reform, providing for regional productivity improvements and strengthening the regional governance and economies of the area by redistributing the Town of Gawler Council area and assets, between the neighbouring Councils of The Barossa Council, City of Playford and the Light Regional Council. The boundaries would then follow the natural geographic features of the North Para, South Para and Gawler Rivers:



Distribution of the Town of Gawler's small area into the aforementioned adjoining Councils will result in their increased capacity, allowing regional productivity improvements via better use of Gawler assets and Local Government economies of scale. The proposed structural reform strongly supports the Principles in section 26 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act). Primarily:

- (c) (i) *the resources available to local communities should be used as economically as possible while recognising the desirability of avoiding significant divisions within a community;*
- (ii) *proposed changes should, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers;*
- (iii) *a council should have a sufficient resource base to fulfil its functions fairly, effectively and efficiently;*
- (v) *a council should facilitate effective planning and development within an area, and be constituted with respect to an area that can be promoted on a coherent basis;*
- (vi) *a council should be in a position to facilitate sustainable development, the protection of the environment and the integration of land use schemes;*
- (xii) *a scheme that provides for the performance of functions and delivery of services in relation to 2 or more councils (for example, a scheme for regional governance) may improve councils' capacity to deliver services on a regional basis and therefore offer a viable and appropriate alternative to structural change;*

It will also facilitate in strengthening the outcomes of The Barossa Council, City of Playford and the Light Regional Council, as outlined in Section 7, functions of a Council, in the Act. In particular:

- (a) *To plan at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of its area;*
- (b) *To provide services and facilities that benefit its area, its ratepayers and residents, and visitors to its area (including general public services or facilities (including electricity, gas and water services or facilities), health, welfare or community services or facilities, and cultural or recreational services or facilities);*
- (g) *To promote its area and to provide attractive climate and locations for the development of business, commerce, industry and tourism*

Structural boundary change, along with delivery of the Regional Vision, aims to deliver beneficial outcomes to the community in a more strategic and efficient way.

Efficiencies, productivity and effectiveness can be demonstrated. For example:

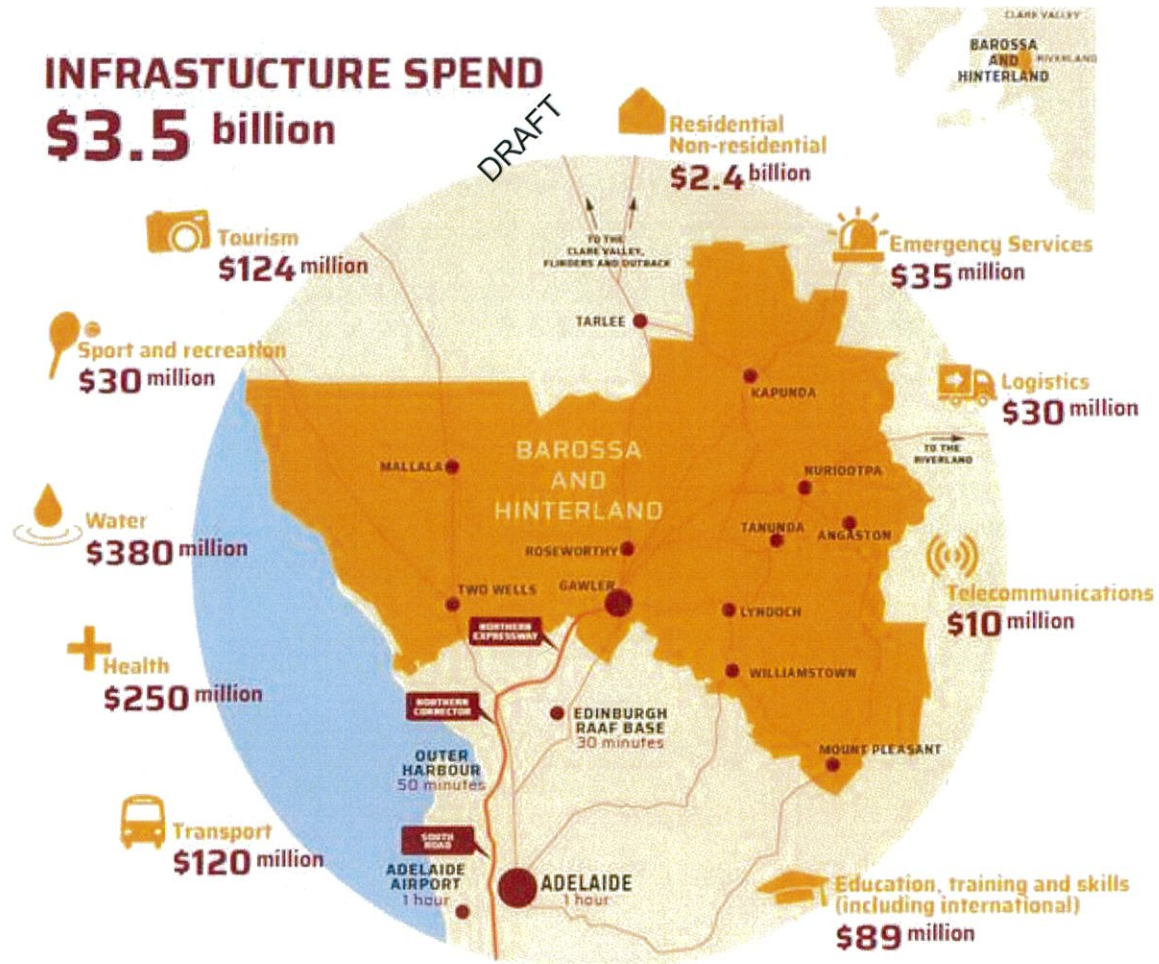
- With regional support, the function of the Gawler Main Street could be vastly improved and repositioned as the 'Gateway to the Barossa'.
- The current Civic Centre could be converted to a regional Headquarters for major business and as a technical centre for the entire region
- The City of Playford, with its Regional Commercial Centre could easily absorb the delineated Gawler suburbs (marked yellow on the map) and more effectively and efficiently deliver local government services
- Light Regional Council currently delivers exceptional local government services to the Hewett community and with the incorporation of Willaston could deliver those same services more effectively and efficiently to that community.

### The Regional Vision

The objective of the Regional Vision is to partner with the State and Federal Governments, for investing in an envelope of economic stimulus projects over a 15-year period (2020-2035) that will achieve 3-4% annual economic growth. This is in line with the State Government's "Growth State" plans and would boost the local economy which has averaged only 0.6% annual economic growth over the past decade.

The draft Regional Vision focusses on water infrastructure, agriculture, viticulture and tourism industries and leverages significant private sector spend in these sectors as well as planned residential growth (Roseworthy Township Expansion). The total public and private infrastructure spend in the plan is estimated at around \$3.5b and would achieve 5.6% annual economic growth, creating up to 40,000 jobs over the 15 years to 2035.





On behalf of the Light Regional Council I respectfully seek support for this Stage 1 proposal. Your approval to proceed to Stage 2 will facilitate a comprehensive consultation process to be undertaken by Light Regional Council with the effected/adjointing Councils related to meaningful structural reform in the economic and productive interests of the Region.

Should you wish to discuss this submission further, please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone 8525 3200 or Brian Carr, Chief Executive Officer on 8522 3200 or via email at [bcarr@light.sa.gov.au](mailto:bcarr@light.sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

**Bill O'Brien**  
**Mayor**

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