



TOM VENNING MP

Member for Grey



MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY REJECTS AEC PROPOSED CHANGES TO GREY

AEC SUBMISSION DATA: <https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/2025/sa/objections.html>

The people of Grey, councils, and relevant stakeholders have delivered a rejection of the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) proposed changes to the electorate, with figures formed using publicly available AEC submissions revealing near-unanimous community opposition. The data shows that 97.93% of public respondents and 100% of local government submissions formally opposed the AEC's plan to expand the regional electorate's boundaries into outer-metropolitan areas. The community has made it clear that Grey is already vast enough, and the incorporation of metropolitan suburbs would dilute the voices, economies, and unique priorities of rural, regional, and remote South Australians.

This community pushback is backed by enrolment data, which indicates the boundary expansion is not required. While the AEC projected Grey would reach 132,595 electors by 2030, actual enrolment as of April 2026 has already hit 130,852. The electorate is projected to surpass the AEC's projections before June 2027 and organically reach over 137,000 electors by the end of the decade, satisfying requirements without absorbing outer metropolitan populations.

The proposed renaming of the Federation-era electorate was similarly rejected by the community, with 75.18% of public respondents and 77.78% of local councils against the change due to the loss of established identity and financial transition costs. Crucially, while many constituents, and current Federal Member for Grey Tom Venning, expressed profound respect for the legacy of Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, the overarching consensus is that her contributions should be honoured in other ways, rather than by undertaking an expensive electorate rebrand and overwriting a century of local history.

Data Summary:

- **The AEC received 415 submissions in relation to South Australia's redistribution:**
 - Of the 241 submissions addressing the proposed redistribution of Grey, 236 opposed and 5 supported the proposal (97.93% opposed). Of the 282 submissions addressing the proposed renaming of Grey, 212 opposed and 70 supported the proposal (75.18% opposed).
 - The AEC received 11 submissions from local governments regarding the proposed redistribution and renaming of Grey. Of the 11 submissions addressing the proposed redistribution of Grey, 11 opposed and 0 supported the proposal (100% opposed). Of the 9 submissions addressing the proposed renaming of Grey, 7 opposed and 2 supported the proposal (77.78% opposed).
- **AEC Projections Query:** Current enrolment of 130,852 is on track to surpass the AEC's 2030 projection of 132,595 before June 2027.



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Quotes from the community in official AEC submissions:

Submission OB111 - Nimalan Sivakumar

"...I do not believe that Grey, an outback electorate, should extend into the Playford LGA, which is a metropolitan council. This concern is heightened by the fact that Virginia is expected to urbanise in the coming years."

Submission OB118 - Geniene Gordon

"Australia has more important matters to deal with at the moment"

Submission OB120 - Anonymous 16

"Rather than re-naming existing electorates (and having to justify the change - as change is always controversial) why don't you reserve the name for a new electorate (when one becomes available)."

Submission OB131 - Bronwyn Mumford

"We get forgotten enough as it is in the country let alone making it bigger."

Submission OB142 - Jodi Russack

"...is this reclassification effectively a way to present expenditure as being directed to regional communities, when in reality it is being spent in outer metropolitan locations?"

Submission OB147 - Gavin McElroy

"I believe that the altering of the Grey electorate as suggested would disenfranchise the current regional communities it currently represents. Bringing the fringe Metropolitan suburbs into the electorate would significantly skew the population towards Metro interests and away from the already underrepresented regional interests."

Submission OB152 - Brendan

"Retaining continuity in electorate names is important for preserving electoral identity, public understanding, and historical context particularly in a seat as large and diverse as Grey."

Submission OB155 – Nicola

"Country voices are already disproportionate to those of the city's and to combine them by incorporating areas such as Riverlea would further dilute funds desperately needed for our rural electorate."

Submission OB159 – Jasmine

"Regional areas rely heavily on industries such as agriculture, mining, transport, and regional services. If metropolitan suburbs were added, the priorities of city voters such as urban infrastructure and congestion could overshadow key regional issues like drought support, regional health access, and distance education. This would reduce the effectiveness of representation for rural communities."

Submission OB183 - Mark Eden

"How would someone on the out skirts of Adelaide face the same issues as someone in Ceduna?"

Submission OB196 - Anonymous 29

"...a name change is an unnecessary financial expense at this time. A ridiculous waste of taxpayer money during the current economic climate."

Submission OB233 - Ruth Robinson

"Whilst acknowledging the contribution by Dr O'Donoghue, I think a renaming of Grey is not necessary or wise. Electors get confused enough already between state and federal seats, and with any boundary changes."

MORE HERE: <https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/2025/sa/objections.html>



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Quotes attributable to Tom Venning MP, Member for Grey:

"A 97.93% rejection rate from the public and unanimous opposition from our local councils proves that the people of Grey, the people that really matter in this discussion, are ready to protect their distinct regional identity."

"Absorbing outer-metropolitan suburbs will introduce competing priorities and dilute the needs of farmers, fishers, steel and heavy industry workers, businesses, and remote towns."

"The enrolment data also casts doubt over the AEC's rationale for expansion, our numbers are projected to exceed their 2030 projections within the next year, meaning Grey easily meets the requirements exactly as it is."

"Throughout this process, it has been my priority to ensure the conversations around renaming remain respectful, and I will be the first to say that there is widespread respect across our region for Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, but the community consensus is that her name deserves to be honoured in other ways, and perhaps as my AEC submission suggests, as the namesake of a new electorate rather than overwriting one of the few remaining Federation seats."

"As the Member for Grey, I will be submitting further documentation in response to this feedback. Once this is done the onus will be on the AEC to reflect, revisit and revise their proposal. It is plain to see...the people of Grey have spoken in no uncertain terms."

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