

## Hon Geoff Brock MP

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Local Government

Thursday, August 10, 2017

### **Council boundary adjustment Act passes in State Parliament**

An Amendment Act reforming – and simplifying – the process for changing local council boundaries in South Australia was passed in State Parliament this week.

The Local Government (Boundary Adjustment) Amendment Act establishes a simpler and broader process allowing boundary change proposals to be initiated by a single council or the Minister.

The Boundary Adjustment Act includes the use of an independent commission to undertake initial assessments of boundary change proposals and to make recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

The Act also establishes a process to investigate significant boundary change, amalgamation or significant structural reform proposals, by one or more investigators with the relevant expertise.

There's also a provision for creating a simplified pathway for minor boundary change proposals that can be used to remove historical or smaller anomalies in council boundaries.

The changes will come into effect on 1 January 2019. In the meantime, the Local Government Grants Commission will develop the range of guidelines the Boundary Adjustment Act requires it to publish that details the specifics of the new system.

### **Background**

Legislative provisions governing council boundary changes have not changed since the *Local Government Act 1999* came into operation.

At this time, the Boundary Adjustment Facilitation Panel was established to refine council boundaries following the council amalgamations that occurred in South Australia in the late 1990s.

The Panel was abolished in 2015 following the State Government's reform of Boards and Committees.

The Panel's functions were transferred to the Minister for Local Government. The State Government made a commitment at that time to review the provisions in the Act relating to council boundary changes.

The State Government and the Local Government Association have worked together to create the new framework, which will allow for a more effective way of proposing and considering submissions for council boundary changes.

### **Quotes attributable to Local Government Minister Geoff Brock**

I believe the Boundary Adjustment Act will create the nation's most independent and flexible system, and one that will drive positive outcomes for communities across our state.

We have now put a better process in place – one that deals with minor boundary changes efficiently, and also enables freer debate and discussion on more significant structural reform opportunities.

The new approach provides an opportunity to remove the limitations and inefficiencies in the current boundary change processes.

Importantly, the changes include other amendments that require councils to more readily consider regional collaboration and partnerships – such as shared services.

### **Quotes attributable to LGA President Mayor Lorraine Rosenberg**

The LGA worked closely with the Government on this Bill to provide a more transparent and independent process for assessing proposals for council boundary changes.

This legislation means that decisions about council boundaries must be evidence-based and provide clear benefits to the community.

The LGA will continue to work with the sector and the Government to develop clear guidelines and policies that will provide transparency and certainty to the process.

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