



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

MEDIA STATEMENT

Monday 16 December 2019

PROPOSAL PUTS RESIDENTS AND THE REGION AHEAD OF COUNCILS' SELF-INTEREST

Residents and the entire region take preference over local councils and self-interest under a proposal by Light Regional Council.

A meeting last week of Light Regional Council strongly endorsed a proposal to invite the Barossa Council and Town of Gawler to join Light to consider options superior to their boundary change proposals to the South Australian Local Government Boundaries Commission.

Mayor Bill O'Brien has written to both councils to share the proposed approach and invite their consideration and cooperation.

"We think there is a better way to serve the interests of the entire region and all its residents," Mayor O'Brien said.

"Our three councils owe it to our communities to put aside parochial self-interest and pursue the shared best interests of all residents.

"Should the Barossa and Gawler councils' boundary reform proposals be approved, Light Regional Council would be decimated and unsustainable. This would be to the detriment of our residents and all that we have worked for over recent years, both within Light and regionally."

At its meeting on 10 December, Light Regional Council adopted three resolutions to:

1. Confirm Council's preference to maintain the existing council boundaries and restore the highly successful collaborative model for the region covered by the councils.
2. Invite the Barossa and Gawler councils to defer or withdraw their boundary proposals in favour of a shared Regional Vision with restored regional collaboration. Light will ask the two councils to respond by 28 February 2020.

Postal Address:

PO Box 72, Kapunda, South Australia 5373

Telephone: (08) 8525 3200

Email: light@light.sa.gov.au

Website: www.light.sa.gov.au

Principal Office

93 Main Street, Kapunda, SA 5373

Branch Office

12 Hanson Street, Freeling, SA 5372

3. Propose an alternative structural reform package if Barossa and Gawler decline to defer or withdraw their boundary applications. In that event, Light Regional Council will be forced to consider at its March meeting its own proposal to the Commission. This would see most of the existing Barossa and Light Regional councils merged. If Council is forced to proceed to this alternative, it would undertake thorough community consultation at every step. To inform open and transparent government, Light will publish its proposed alternative on its website and provide copies of it to Barossa and Gawler councils, as well as the Board of Regional Development Australia Barossa Gawler Light and Adelaide Plains.

“The current approach of the Gawler and Barossa councils comes up short because it results in too few winners and too many losers,” Mayor O’Brien.

“Under Light Regional Council’s options, there are only winners.”

Mayor O’Brien said his Council wants the other councils to carefully consider Light’s proposal and adopt the path of greatest universal benefit.

“Light Regional Council stands ready to work with its neighbours in the best interests of all residents and our shared region.”

Background

Last week’s three resolutions (10 December) follow a meeting of regional council Mayors and Chief Executive Officers at Gawler in the previous week (2 December). It was attended by Light Regional Council Mayor Bill O’Brien and CEO Brian Carr, Barossa Council Mayor Michael ‘Bim’ Lange and CEO Martin McCarthy, Town of Gawler Mayor Karen Redman and CEO Henry Inat and Mid Murray Council Mayor Dave Burgess and CEO Ben Scales.

Mayor O’Brien presented to the other Mayors and CEOs a draft outline of Light Regional Council’s regional and economic vision to seek preliminary support from neighbouring councils and to highlight what is at risk. He invited Barossa and Gawler to join in a cooperative regional vision.

Following Light Regional Council’s meeting and resolution on 10 December, Mayor O’Brien will now formally engage Barossa and Gawler Mayors in writing.

Mayor Bill O’Brien