

8 March 2022

Mayor Karen Redman  
Town of Gawler  
PO Box 130  
GAWLER SA 5118

By email to: [mayor@gawler.sa.gov.au](mailto:mayor@gawler.sa.gov.au)

Dear Mayor Redman

### **Town of Gawler Boundary Change Proposal - Inquiry Timing and Cost Estimate**

Thank you for your response to the Boundaries Commission's (the Commission) letter of 10 December 2021 regarding the timing and cost estimate for an inquiry into the Town of Gawler's (the Council) Boundary Change General Proposal (the Proposal).

The Commission considered the Council's correspondence at its 23 February 2022 meeting.

The Commission acknowledges the Council's concerns that the inquiry into the Proposal will not commence until January 2023, and your preference that the inquiry should proceed as soon as a cost estimate is approved by the Council.

The Commission remains of the view that an inquiry into the Proposal would not be able to be completed prior to the 2022 local government periodic elections. I enclose an outline of the timeline of actions to date on this Proposal, together with the Commission's view of the likely timeline for its completion.

In light of the Council's concerns, the Commission confirms that, subject to receiving Council's formal approval to proceed with an inquiry based on the Commission's cost estimate, the Commission could commence aspects of an inquiry as soon as practicable.

The Commission remains of the view that it is not appropriate to undertake public consultation on an inquiry during a time that is likely to coincide with the 2022 periodic local government election timeframe, as this could have a deleterious effect on the affected Councils' preparations for the election, the functions of the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) and participation in the election by candidates and voters.

In that context the Commission believes that should an inquiry begin during this time, it should focus on more technical aspects of the necessary investigation, prior to beginning the more 'public focused' aspects of the inquiry in early 2023.

The enclosed timeline indicates the matters that may be usefully investigated during the pre-election period, including financial matters, land use and planning matters, and potentially matters relating to council employees.

Gathering this information over this period will also enable community engagement on this significant proposal to utilise this information to inform and engage with local communities when this is started in early 2023.

Should an inquiry proceed, then community engagement would start in early 2023, including representation and community and service matters.

The Light Regional Council and the City of Playford have council ward structures in place, which must be considered as part of any inquiry into the Proposal. The Commission believes that this part of an inquiry should be undertaken after the 2022 periodic elections.

At your request the Commission is seeking a cost estimate/s for the inquiry in accordance with *Guideline 8 – Cost for General Proposals initiated by Councils* through a Request for Information process. Whilst we will endeavour to provide this in a timely manner, the Commission is reliant on suitably qualified consultants/contractors providing a cost estimate/s for all relevant matters to be considered in an inquiry.

The Commission will advise your Council of the expected inquiry costs in due course. The Council will then need to formally confirm whether or not to proceed with an inquiry.

As stated in Guideline 8, a decision to proceed with an inquiry will be considered final. Notwithstanding any position of a newly elected Council after November 2022, the Town of Gawler would be committed to the reasonable costs incurred in respect of the inquiry into this Proposal, in accordance with s 32B of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

As the matters raised directly impact the three other potentially affected Councils, I have provided a copy of this letter to each Council for their information. Furthermore, this correspondence together with your Council's letter of 31 January 2022 have been published on the Commission's webpage.

If you have further questions, please contact Peter Ilee, Executive Officer at the Commission on 7109 7164 or [boundaries.commission@sa.gov.au](mailto:boundaries.commission@sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Rob Donaldson

**CHAIR**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

Cc: Mayor Docherty, Mayor O'Brien and Mayor Lange

Attachment 1: Town of Gawler Boundary Change General Proposal Inquiry Process Timeline

Attachment 2: Town of Gawler Boundary Change Proposal Inquiry Plan