



Date: 29 May 2019	Embargo: None
Pages: 1	Publication: All local media

Council to Investigate its Boundary

Council resolved to strategically investigate the Town of Gawler's Local Government Boundaries at last night's Council Meeting.

"The issue of boundary reform is quite relevant to Gawler with major developments planned and happening on Council's doorstep with ongoing pressure for service delivery from Council within a limited rate base going forward," said Mayor Redman. "There is growing concern among Gawler residents and more broadly that Council's boundaries need to change, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that residents and businesses of areas such as Hewett, Concordia, Kalbeeba and Gawler Belt may support such a change."

On 1 January 2019 the Local Government (Boundary Adjustment) Amendment Act 2017 came into effect. The Act provides a new process for initiating and reviewing council boundary reform proposals. These Proposals will be reviewed, administered and ultimately investigated by an independent body, the Boundaries Commission, which will then make recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

When considering any boundary change proposal, the Commission must refer to the objects of the Act as a whole, and in particular, the Principles contained within section 26 of the Act. The Principles guide the Commission in balancing various council and community interests. While general in nature, they address a range of considerations, including communities of interest, effective governance, operational capacity, delivery of services, effective planning and development, accessibility, and adequate and fair representation. Consideration will also be given to regional activities that may offer a viable and appropriate alternative to boundary change.

"The Section 26 Principles emphasise the importance of ensuring that boundary changes enhance the capacity of local government within the area to continue to deliver results to local communities in a more strategic and effective way," said Mayor Redman. "With the new laws now in place, the time is right for Council to explore its options and set a strategic long-term course for our community's future."

"The new boundary reform process allows Council to plan for its future, show strong leadership in its region and effectively lead the conversation as it relates to key issues such as understanding what communities of interest exist and the associated impacts on residents and services," continued Mayor Redman. "Council's decision last night provides a step by step approach to this important yet complex process with opportunity for the community to have a say in this important initiative. Taking this leadership action demonstrates that Council is serious in setting the community of Gawler up for success into the future but also applying a sensible approach that allows Council to make informed decisions on behalf, and in the best interests, of our community."

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The media may wish to make contact with: Mayor Karen Redman on 0421 839 359