

OBJECTION TO THE INITIAL REDISTRIBUTION PROPOSAL FOR THE DIVISION OF RUMNEY

It is submitted that the Initial Redistribution Proposal for the Division of Rumney (**“the Proposal”**) is not in the public interest and inconsistent with democratic principles.

It is also submitted that rather than create a new Division of Prosser, a ‘minimalist’ approach be adopted by maintaining the existing 15 Divisions to avoid significant boundary changes and the negative impact this would have on current electors within the respective Divisions and especially the Divisions of Rumney, Apsley and Western Tiers.

As an illustration, the Proposal seeks to ‘transfer’ 9850 current electors from the Division of Rumney almost entirely into the proposed new Division of Prosser notwithstanding that there is a current election for the Division of Rumney scheduled to be held on Saturday 6 May 2017. Voting is compulsory and candidates are currently outlining their vision, ideas and pledges to the electors.

If the Proposal was accepted and after the transitional arrangements expired, 9850 current electors would be denied being represented by the new Member for Rumney and their democratic rights impinged. Put differently, removing 36% of current electors from the Division of Rumney is material to the credibility of the current election in terms of the legitimacy and mandate for the new Member of Rumney.

For example, there are presently three declared candidates for the Division of Rumney. Hypothetically, were each candidate to receive approximately 1/3 of the popular vote in three different geographic areas (Tasman Council, Sorell Council and Clarence Council), it is conceivable that the winning candidate could be elected as the new Member for Rumney from a predominate geographical area that will no longer form part of the Division of Rumney under the Proposal. Such an outcome would not reflect the ‘will of the people’ and the credibility of the election result may be in doubt. Moreover, electors’ trust and confidence in the election process may cast a shadow on whoever

becomes the new Member for Rumney and be contrary to the principles and objectives outlined under the *Legislative Council Electoral Boundaries Act 1995*.

Furthermore, of the 15 Divisions, only the Division of Rumney currently deviates from the 10% 'plus' or 'minus' threshold by a mere 0.15 at 10.15%. No other Division falls outside the deviation range and indeed, 14 of the 15 Divisions have deviations less than 7% (see Appendix 1, page 18 of the Proposal).

Consequently, an obvious question must be posed:

What is the underlying public interest benefit to fundamentally altering the composition of electors within the Division of Rumney if it is currently the only Division to slightly exceed the 10% threshold and given that the current electors are scheduled to vote for the new Member for Rumney on 6 May 2017?

In addition, enrolment projections at 31 March 2021 highlight that the Division of Rumney would still remain the *only* Division to exceed the 10% threshold on the current boundaries (see Table 1, page 5 of the Proposal).

On a related matter, the creation of the new Division of Prosser would also be material to the Divisions of Apsley and Western Tiers (with the creation of a new Division of McIntyre) even though the current electors of Apsley had an election on 7 May 2016 – less than 12 month ago.

Accordingly, there is no public interest benefit to substantially changing and reducing the composition of the current electors of Rumney as well as abolishing the Divisions of Apsley and Western Tiers to create a new Division of Prosser. Instead, minor boundary changes in each existing Division would ensure that a minimum amount of disruption would result by transferring small numbers of current electors into other Divisions to satisfy the 10% 'plus' or 'minus' thresholds as projected for 31 March 2021 (see Appendix 1, page 18 of the Proposal).

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