

Submission for Transition Arrangements - May 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the allocation of Members under the recently announced redistribution.

As the Member for Apsley it is important for me to initially convey to the Tribunal the degree of uncertainty, anxiety and confusion that this redistribution has caused in both my electorate and the electorate of Western Tiers. This has been exasperated by the dissolution of Apsley and Western Tiers and the creation instead of McIntyre and Prosser.

Electors struggle to understand a change of this magnitude. Using numbers to tell people that the person they have voted for, talked to, developed a relationship with, built a trust in, and worked with for many years, may not be their elected Member especially when they have only recently voted for their return to Parliament, has been difficult for many people to understand.

Since the announcement of the proposed changes to the Division of Apsley a number of constituents have expressed to me their concern and dismay. This reinforces the need for dialogue, stability and continuity. Ideally we must do whatever we can to "take the people with us" in whatever changes are to be made. Our democracy is a hard-won institution, and I believe that we must do all we can to respect the wishes of the voters.

As the Tribunal will fully appreciate, elected representatives work hard to develop credibility and respect in an atmosphere marked by cynicism towards politicians. The electors in Apsley have struggled to understand that their carefully considered votes are being redistributed without a level of appropriate communication.

My father, the late Colin Rattray OAM, was the first Member for Apsley from 1998 until 2004. I have served as the Member for Apsley since 2004 and was returned unopposed in 2010 and by a substantial majority in 2016. It has been an honour to serve the constituents of Apsley and I am keen to continue in my role until my current elected term expires in 2022.

Over the 13 years representing Apsley I have formed excellent community relationships with the people and the local government areas of Apsley which include all or parts of Dorset, Break O'Day, Northern Midlands, Flinders, Glamorgan-Spring Bay, the Southern Midlands and Launceston.

In relation to the question of which Member will represent either McIntyre or Prosser I put forward the following comments.

I was born, raised and have worked in the north east of Tasmania all of my life. I have had the privilege of representing this community in various levels for the past 21 years. I currently live at Bridport having recently built a new home. I have my electorate office in Scottsdale. My Electorate Officer for the past 13 years, Melissa Partridge, also is a local, residing in the Scottsdale district. While it has been an honour to represent the people of the South-East of Tasmania through the Division of Apsley, and I have formed many excellent relationships and friendships over my terms, the reality is that my heart belongs to the north east of Tasmania. With those aspects in mind I trust that it would be understood that my preference would be to represent the electorate of McIntyre.

It is my sincere hope that the present electorate boundary redistribution will be the last major change for this region of Tasmania for many years. The people of Apsley have undergone a great deal of disruption to their lives in recent times and it is imperative that they now be provided with certainty and stability for years to come.

I look forward to continuing to represent the people of Tasmania in the Legislative Council and thank you for your work with the Tribunal in relation to what has been a difficult and complex task.