

COMMENT ON OBJECTIONS

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Comment on Objections Number 12

by

David Aber, General Manager, Moree Plains Shire Council

6 Pages



3rd September 2009

Australian Electoral Officer
Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
PO Box K406
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

To Whom it May Concern

REDISTRIBUTION PROPOSAL FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

I wish to advise that at the Council meeting held on the 27th August 2009 the Moree Plains Shire Council discussed the proposed redistribution of Federal Electoral boundaries and requested that I express the disappointment of the Council with the proposed redistribution.

The Council would like the following concerns expressed regarding the proposal for creating the seat of Parkes;

1. The seat does not take into account the various communities of interest in the north western half of the state.
2. The seat comprises almost 50% of the State and therefore will be a very difficult for a member to maintain local contact with its constituents.
3. Travel within the electorate will be expansive and costly for the member to undertake.
4. It devalues the importance of the regional areas of the state in comparison to the urban electorates. The areas within the proposed electorate are suffering from population decline and the subsequent loss of services. These communities need significant changes in government policy to address these issues.

I would appreciate your consideration of the Council's comments regarding the proposed changes to the electoral boundaries.

Yours faithfully



David Aber
GENERAL MANAGER

**Submission to the Australian
Electoral Officer for New South Wales**

**On the Redistribution of Federal Electoral Boundaries in
New South Wales**

Moree Plains Shire Council

Introduction

The Moree Plains Shire Council is concerned that the proposed redistribution will reduce the quality of representation for the electorate because the member will be required to represent a large and diverse seat and it devalues the importance of the regional areas of the state in favour of the more populated urban areas.

The Council's Concerns

Following is a summary of the Council's concerns regarding the proposal for creating the seat of Parkes;

1. The seat does not take into account the various communities of interest in the north western half of the State. The area is geographically diverse with differing communities of interest and these communities of interest are based on different regional centres. The assumption that all areas west of the divide are the same is false and the proposed seat fails to bring together an area of common community interest.
2. The seat comprises nearly 50% of the State and therefore will be a very difficult for a member to maintain local contact with constituents. This will require significant travelling for both the member as well as for the constituents to see their member. Contrast this with urban areas where the community can have access to their member within 10kilometres.
3. Travel within the electorate will be expansive and costly for the member to undertake. It is also outside the normal routes for air transport with many towns without access to a commercial air service.
4. It devalues the importance of the regional areas of the State in comparison to the urban electorates. Rural areas within the proposed electorate have suffered population decline in recent years and subsequent loss of services. These communities need significant changes in government policy to address these issues and need a member with the time and capacity to understand and work with the many communities for proper representation.

Communities of Interest

The area is a geographically diverse, with differing communities of interest. The proposed electorate includes seven (7) State seats, and seventeen (17) Local Government bodies. This will provide a heavy workload for any member to communicate effectively.

A more closely aligned boundary system to the State boundaries would be preferred as it will reduce the liaison needed for a Federal Member with the State Members. The large number of councils contained within the proposed electorate will also require significant liaison and communication for a sitting member.

The Pilliga area provides a physical barrier through the middle of the electorate. Local Government areas below Pilliga are developing stronger ties to Dubbo while to the north of Pilliga the residents of the Shires have no reliance or ties with Dubbo. These communities are more self sufficient and Tamworth is the nearest major regional centre. For Moree Plains Shire Toowoomba is also a regional centre even though it is located in Queensland.

The proposed electorate is bisected by the Barwon, Gwydir, Namoi, Lachlan, Bogan, Macquarie and river catchments each forming different geographical area and characteristics. These catchments provide natural boundaries as they flow north-west across the State to join the Darling River system. Communities of interest tend to follow these catchment areas along with the major transport corridors.

Size of the Proposed Electorate

The seat comprises 47% of the State and therefore will be a very difficult for a member to maintain local contact with the constituents. The area is greater than Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT combined. It is also larger than the nations of Japan, Germany and England.

This will require significant travelling for the member as well as for the constituents to see their local member. The primary mode of travel is by necessity a motor vehicle.

Travel

Travel within the electorate will be expensive and costly for the member to undertake. There is no regional air or rail service that allows travel throughout the area. The elected member would be required to undertake extensive car travel to cover the needs of the constituents. Up to eight (8) hours driving will be required to travel from an electoral office to the outer reaches of the electorate. Multiple electoral offices will need to be maintained to provide accessibility to the electorate.

The current management of health services within the proposal is split between Newcastle and Dubbo. Narrabri, Gunnedah and Moree are currently managed by the Hunter New England Health Services from Newcastle. The remainder is under the Greater Western Health

Service managed from Dubbo. The alignment of the Health Service boundaries better reflects the concept of transport corridors as described in the Commission's report.

Regional Importance

It devalues the importance of the regional areas of the State in comparison to the urban electorates. The proposed electorate has suffered from population decline in recent years in the rural areas. There has been a subsequent loss of services in the smaller towns because of this loss of population.

These smaller communities need significant changes in government policy to address these issues and need a member with the time and capacity to understand and talk to these many communities for proper representation.

The removal of an elected member from the western area of the State further reduces the capacity of the area to be represented at a Parliamentary level. To advocate policies that will improve and achieve the potential of the proposed electorate will be difficult because the balance of representation has a stronger emphasis on the city and coastal areas leaving regional area like ours to further decline. This is a time when we need greater representatives not less.

It would be preferred that the seat was lost in the more populated areas like Sydney. We would be keen to see the areas west of the Great Dividing Range linked with the coastal areas of NSW as this would allow more members to be better acquainted with the western and regional issues and give the people a stronger voice in parliament as well as provide more voices to represent them.

Conclusion

The need for the redistribution is acknowledged and understood by Moree Plains Shire Council. It is important that strong representation is maintained for the people living in the region. Moree Plains Shire and the other Shires included in this electorate have played a productive, strong and significant role in Australia's history. Moree Plains Shire is the most productive agriculture producing Shire in Australia and has a very different community of interest to the southern part of the electorate this must be reflected in the proposed distribution.



2008
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1916
PROPOSED BOUNDARIES AND NAMES FOR FEDERAL ELECTORAL DIVISIONS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Redistribution Committee for New South Wales has made its proposed redistribution of the federal electoral boundaries for New South Wales. The map is one of a series of four that show the names and boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions.

Interested persons or organisations may lodge written objections against the proposed redistribution with the Australian Electoral Commission. Objections must be received by the Australian Electoral Commission before 5.00 p.m. on Friday 4 September 2008.

Objections should be addressed to the Australian Electoral Commission
Voting Redistribution Section PO and delivered to:

By Hand	PO Box 4406	By Email
Level 3	Haymarket NSW 1240	www.aec.gov.au
Access Code: 1000		
24 Campbell St		
Haymarket NSW 2000		

Persons or organisations making objections to the proposed redistribution are urged to take account of the requirements of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1916.

Dr Gillian
Electoral Commissioner

Timothy Lane
Acting Australian Electoral Officer for New South Wales

Richard Watkins
Surveyor-General, New South Wales

Peter Ackland
Auditor-General, New South Wales

2008
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1916
STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES
Map of the Proposed Federal Electoral Divisions of
**CALARE, COWPER, EDEN-MONARO,
FARRER, GILMORE, HUME, HUNTER,
LYNE, NEW ENGLAND, PAGE, PARKES,
PATERSON, RICHMOND and RIVERINA**

Names of 10 Boundaries of Existing Divisions: **CALARE**
Names and Boundaries of Proposed Divisions: **CALARE**
Names of 10 Boundaries of Local Government Areas

SOURCES
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