

COMMENT ON OBJECTIONS

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Comment on Objections Number 17

by

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4 Pages

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To: NSW Redistribution
Subject: Comments on Objections lodged re proposed redistribution

Redistribution Secretariat for New South Wales
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Dear Sirs

Having read the whole 280 objections, I wish to make three comments mostly not relating to any specific Objection.

COMMENT 1. REID To me it is clear that a very large number of Objectors directed their concern at the proposed abolition of this Division and/or the loss of the name from our electoral landscape.

Bearing in mind that a large number of them are from migrant backgrounds, I can only say how impressed I am at the passion they have for the retention of the seat, or its name and probably also their current Member. I do not expect any Redistribution Secretariat to take the lastmentioned issue into consideration and I am sure our migrant friends, though upset at the loss of their member, would be happy to see the **name** of the seat retained **at the very least**.

I also note that Malcolm Mackerras and two descendants of George Reid objected to this change of name and/or loss of the seat.

For all the above reasons, and as an ordinary member of the community (indeed one who can add that he was born in Auburn – which I think is part of Reid), I believe the abolition of the seat to have been unavoidable, but I believe the Commission has **erred seriously** in removing Reid and renaming Lowe as McMahon. If it is felt McMahon should stay, I **urge the extended Commission to find a place for "Reid"** somewhere on the political map.

I agree with the Objectors that as a name at least, it should stay.

COMMENT 2. GILMORE/THROSBY I notice that a large number of Objections from the late 100's to shortly before the end of the listed Objections relate to Divisions in the Wollongong/Wingecarribee/Shoalhaven areas. Almost invariably the same or very similar language is used in most of the objections. This smacks of a concerted campaign, and this is something which goes against my grain.

By contrast, the Reid objections seemed to have a greater degree of independence and, one might say, individual passion.

Yet once again I agree with the Objectors and for the reasons they give. That may be based, on my part, that the Shoalhaven area of the South Coast of NSW has been our family holiday destination for the last 60 years and the (generally) rural nature of the countryside (Nowra being the nearest to a large town) has always attracted us.

COMMENT 3 CALARE/PARKES Objection No 183 (The Nationals) In my view, this objection is based on the desire to retain two National Party seats – those referred to in this part of the Nationals'

Objection. There is no doubt a fear of the loss of Calare if Lithgow (especially) and Bathurst are transferred to it. I accept the right of any political party to seek to protect its own interests and to advance arguments it sees as supporting its case.

However, on p.5 I do not entirely agree with all the bulleted points. It is my view that the initiative of Dubbo's leaders has seen it develop as the "hub of the west".

Clearly, this objection is aimed at replacing Mudgee and environs in Parkes and Parkes (town) and Forbes in Calare. Since this part of The Nationals' Objection is itself almost 20 pages, I do not and cannot refer to all aspects of the Objection.

I simply say as follows:-

- (i) Community of Interest Whilst part of the former Gwydir and the current Parkes divisions, Mudgee has had little community of interest with Moree, Narrabri, Mungindi and the like, also in the same electorate. I acknowledge the tyranny of distance also led to problems in Community of Interest regarding the former Parkes division, which then included Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes and Grenfell as well as Broken Hill. The tyranny of distance did not apply to the former Calare, based on the Central West including Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange and Cowra but not Parkes and Forbes. It is correct that, with the loss of Gwydir, the western and northern part of the state was divided between Parkes and Calare. For the first time Parkes and Forbes became part of Calare and the tyranny of distance applied to Calare including Bourke, Wilcannia & Ivanhoe. Now that it is proposed to redistribute Calare to very much its original boundaries, the Nationals are unhappy to gain Lithgow, Bathurst and Mudgee and lose Parkes and Forbes. My point is that community of interest does not consist only of such things as the alleged Mudgee/Dubbo axis and the alleged Parkes/Forbes and Orange axis. Mudgee has always seen itself as a Central West town which at last it would become if the redistribution proposals proceed as anticipated.

(ii) Local Government

Centroc/Oroc The Objection correctly states that Mid-Western Regional Council (MWRC) (formerly Mudgee Shire Council) had been a member of Centroc. When the Council withdrew from Centroc it did not choose to join Oroc. Its reason for its withdrawal was "that we are not getting anything out of [our membership of] Centroc". This may have been true but I recall commenting "what did the Council **put into** its membership of Centroc?" For some considerable time this Council wandered around in no-man's land, not seeking to join any ROC. The issue resurfaced earlier this year when the question before Council was, effectively "rejoin CENTROC, join OROC or go it alone?" As the Objection correctly states, MWRC actually decided in favour of not joining any ROC whilst otherwise favouring OROC. But it is the history of MWRC's membership of CENTROC which shows where its heart truly lay. **It is of note that Wellington Council, with a common border to Dubbo City Council, previously a member of both CENTROC and OROC has withdrawn from OROC and committed itself to CENTROC. MWRC does not have a common border with Dubbo C C (it does adjoin Wellington). Also Wellington town is much closer to Dubbo than Mudgee is.**

(iii) Government Services

Generally, the Objection is correct in stating that Mudgee or the MWRC has been placed in the Orana Region although there is still much contact with Bathurst and Orange.

(iv) Labour Markets

To my mind, it is clutching at straws to endeavour to mount even part of the Objection on where people work. For a lengthy period of time I worked in Lithgow, but neither that fact nor where others work is really significant in a redistribution. However I find it unbelievable to assert that "more residents of (MWRC) work in (Sydney) than in any LGA in the proposed Division of Calare". Whether I mix in the wrong circles in Mudgee, I do not know, but I am yet to meet any.

(v) Water

Parkes and Forbes (towns) were in the Division of Parkes before the 2006 redistribution. The reference to the Macquarie River on which Bathurst is situated and to Lakes Burrendong

and Windamere damming the Macquarie or a relatively small tributary of it have little weight when it is acknowledged Parkes and Forbes are in the Lachlan catchment. Both the Cudgong River (dammed by Lake Windamere and Lake Burrendong at its junction with the Macquarie) and the Macquarie (dammed by Lake Burrendong) rise in the Central

Tablelands in the proposed Division of Calare and both largely flow through it. Beyond this the argument as to Water has little relevance.

(vi) Communication & Transport

I receive local ABC 2WPR (Western Plains based in Dubbo) and 549AM (Central West based in Orange). I prefer the latter. Most of the advertised local attractions are in towns

generally not too distant. 2WPR is Dubbo centric with additional reference to events further distant. I cannot help the ABC's and WIN's decisions referred to in the Objection but in

any event I watch Prime & ABC TV. Prime seems to me to be based in Orange.

I see little point in commenting on road distances. In rural/regional Australia we drive for as long as is necessary to reach our destination.

As to public transport, the best train service is Sydney to Dubbo. There is a Parkes evening Countrylink which leaves Lithgow at 7.20pm. being the same time as my Mudgee service. Both arrive at their destination at the same time. The Parkes service calls at Forbes on its way. Little more can be said about public transport except that Countrylink coaches cover much of the western areas of the state and no real support as to redistributions can be obtained from the services offered or the direction they travel.

(vii) Physical features/Area

I will not comment on the issue of Area. Regarding Physical features, it is correct that the terrain between Mudgee and Dubbo is the flattest. That between Mudgee and Orange

is correctly stated as being the most rugged. However, even though the distance between Mudgee and Orange is longer than that between Mudgee and Dubbo, the Mudgee people I know still see Orange as part of their world. At this point I might note that in the State Parliament Mudgee is in the **Electoral District of Orange** currently held for The Nationals

by Russell Turner MP. Mudgee was previously part of the State Electoral District of Upper Hunter, but at the last State redistribution it was seen we were not really part of that

District. Even now it had been thought by some that Mudgee should become part of the Division of Hunter in the current redistribution, having previously been located in the former Gwydir, and now Parkes. The fact that it is now proposed that Mudgee become part of Calare, tells me that some decision makers simply do not know what to do with Mudgee.

(viii) Other issues

(a) Mudgee is part of the Central West for sporting purposes having last Sunday defeated Lithgow in the Group 10 Grand Final. Other teams in the competition were Bathurst

Panthers, Bathurst St Pats, Cowra Magpies, Lithgow Workies, Oberon Tigers, Orange CYMS and Orange Hawks. Junior teams included Lithgow, Blackheath, CSU-Mitchell, Kandos, Portland, Wallerawang, Bloomfield and formerly Blayney. Dubbo does not appear in Mudgee's Group!

(b) St Johns Anglican and St Marys Catholic churches in Mudgee both come within the respective Dioceses of Bathurst. Much of the Central West is governed by the Diocese of Bathurst in the Anglican Church.

(c) The regional organization of The Uniting Church in Australia is a Presbytery. It is known as the Macquarie Darling Presbytery made up of the combination of two previous Presbyteries, the Central West and the Far West Presbyteries. The combined Presbytery stretches from Lithgow/Mudgee in the east to Broken Hill. Its meetings (twice a year) are always held in Dubbo no matter where one comes from. On another two occasions the Central West and the Far West have their own meetings. The Central West Area includes Lithgow, Mudgee, Bathurst, Parkes, Forbes, Dubbo, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Wellington, Orange, Cowra and Grenfell and numerous other places in that radius. The church I attend is Mudgee. We frequently receive visits from the Presbytery Minister (based in Orange) and also a Minister from Bathurst. No Minister based in Dubbo is allocated to us.

I do concede that despite differences – distance, terrain etc, we in Mudgee have an affiliation with all three western regional cities.

I urge the Redistribution Secretariat to retain the proposal for Mudgee to become part of Calare and to consider Comments 1 (especially) and 2 above.

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