

OBJECTION

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Objection Number **54**

by

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3 Pages



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25 August 2009

The Redistribution Committee for NSW
Sydney

Dear Committee Members

That was a very good proposal you have made to redistribute NSW into 48 electoral divisions.

However, I object to your proposal to eliminate the name "Reid" from the electoral map. Were you to persist with that it would have the effect that Sir George Reid would become the only deceased former Prime Minister not to be commemorated.

I enclose an article from "The Sydney Morning Herald" and I do so to indicate that I agree with Anne Fairbairn.

I propose the following:

First, the Division to which you have given the name "McMahon" should be re-named as "Reid".

Second, the Division to which you have given the name "Greenway" should be re-named as "McMahon".

That would mean two names would be eliminated from the NSW map, namely Greenway and Lowe. While they were worthy men I do not think the map needs to commemorate either Francis Greenway or Robert Lowe.

By contrast the NSW map should commemorate all deceased former Prime Ministers who came from New South Wales.

To have Chifley and McMahon adjoin each other would be exceptionally appropriate. In terms of their time in office they adjoined each other, being separated by Victorians Menzies, Holt, McEwen and Gorton.

If my proposal were to be adopted then Reid would be closer to his actual Division of East Sydney than it has ever been before.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Mackerras
Malcolm Mackerras

Un-Reid it and weep: taking a PM's name



Pride ... Anne Fairbairn, left, at the home of Martin Sharp, with a cartoon of Reid, whose bulging stomach and bushy moustache cartoonists exploited; a family portrait, above, belonging to Ms Fairbairn; and a formal portrait.



John Huxley

HE MAY have been the prime minister of Australia for only 10 months and 17 days but the late George Houston Reid is still fighting to hold on to the inner-western Sydney electorate named in his honour more than 80 years ago.

The Australian Electoral Commission wants to abolish the seat - which takes in suburbs such as Auburn, Homebush Bay and Merrylands - as part of a redistribution reflecting the continued population shift from NSW to Queensland.

If it happens, it will be over the dead body of his granddaughter, Anne Fairbairn, who yesterday described the recommendation as disgraceful.

"How dare they! He was a man

who rendered outstanding service to his country, a man who deserves to be called the true father of Federation," said Ms Fairbairn, a poet, artist and expert in Arabic culture.

She does not expect the seat to be saved, but insists her grandfather's name be retained somewhere on the electoral map.

Scottish-born Reid is the only Australian to have served in three parliaments: as NSW premier, Federal prime minister, from August, 1904, and member of the House of Commons in London, where he had two terms as High Commissioner to Britain.

As Ms Fairbairn points out, Australia has traditionally honoured its deceased prime ministers, with the exception of Joseph Cook and William McMahon, by naming seats after

them. In the case of Cook, there was a clash of names, with a seat named after Captain James Cook. And, in the case of McMahon, the Electoral Commission has added to the insult to her grandfather by proposing his name replace that

Ms Fairbairn has been rallying opposition to the [electorate's] name change.

of the Labor-held seat adjoining Reid, Lowe.

Ms Fairbairn learned much of George Reid, who was 50 when he married 20-year-old Flora Brumby, from her father, Clive. "Though I was born many years after he died, I'm sure we'd have understood each other well.

"He was idealistic, never mercenary. He was passionate

about education, and about helping indigenous people. He was a poet. He had a sense of humour. He also had a head for detail. He trained as a lawyer."

Critics of the prime minister - a large man, whose bulging stomach, bushy moustache and

forceful debating style were much exploited by cartoonists - accused him of indecision.

"They called him 'yes, no Reid'," Ms Fairbairn said. "But he said it should have been 'no, yes Reid'. No, to unseemly, zealous haste; yes, to reason full and clear." Such qualities helped him successfully navigate the zigzag road to Federation in 1901, and

led him to condemn British policy in the Dardanelles 14 years later.

Since being informed of the commission's recommendation by an ally, Peter Bastian, an associate professor of history at the Australian Catholic University, Ms Fairbairn has been rallying opposition to the name change, urging supporters to lodge objections with the Electoral Commission.

Yesterday she was drumming up support at the home of a long-time friend, near-neighbour and Reid sympathiser, Martin Sharp.

The artist is the proud owner of a 1906 "give a dog a bone" cartoon of the late prime minister, drawn by Livingston Hopkins of *The Bulletin*.

What does he think of Reid? "I'm sure he was a fine fellow."