



**The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES**



Public Objection Number: 13

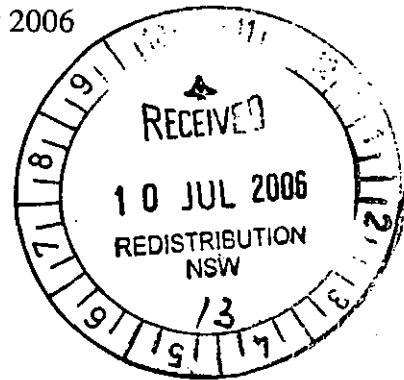
Name: Mr Rob SMITH

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24 Napier Street
Bathurst 2795

6 July 2006

The Secretary
Redistribution Committee for NSW
Australian Electoral Commission
P O Box 20014
World Square NSW 2002



Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Redistributions of Calare and Macquarie

I am a resident of Bathurst and am currently enrolled to vote in the Calare electorate. I wish to raise the strongest objection possible to the proposal to transfer Bathurst and its surrounding areas to the Macquarie electorate.

As seems to be the drift in the Committee's report and as I always understood, the positioning of electorate boundaries is based on a "community of interest". In no way can it be argued that Bathurst has a community of interest with the Blue Mountains area of NSW. I consider that there are no "diminishing historical constraints imposed" by this geographical region (paragraph 75 of the report).

The Committee might consider that Bathurst, Lithgow, Oberon and the Blue Mountains share a community of interest (paragraph 94) but I have seen no evidence of it. I also do not understand how you can argue that there is a tenuous community interest between Calare and Dubbo. In my opinion this is a spurious argument which does not stand analysis.

It is interesting to note that, as late as 5 July 2006, Lithgow Council has objected strongly to the proposal. It is also interesting to note that, although I take a particularly keen interest in political matters and can name members of parliament (including senators) to the west of the state, I had to look up the name of the current member for Macquarie.

To place areas west of the "sandstone curtain" with areas to the immediate west of Penrith totally misses the point that you are mixing people with very different concerns and, indeed, needs. This approach puts together people from an outer metropolitan region with country people. People from the Blue Mountains area work in and identify with the general Sydney area.

Bathurst has always been viewed as a part of the Central West and this is particularly evident in the way in which we act as a community. For example, you only have to listen to and view our radio and television news to know that it relates to the area from Lithgow towards the west. No mention is ever made of matters in the Blue Mountains area – except to report causes of delays in transport routes to Sydney. ABC Regional Radio acts to provide support to local communities and Central West Radio (formerly 2CR) covers the area from Lithgow to the west of the state. A further

example is that both Rugby League and Rugby Union teams from Bathurst and Lithgow, with a long history, participate in competitions focused towards the west.

I consider that some of the argument put forward in the Committee's report is rather spurious. I think that it would have been better to simply say that there had to be a juggling of numbers and this is what the Committee came up with. In my opinion, to try and dress the redistribution up with waffle is to lower the credibility of the Committee.

This juggling of numbers view is reinforced by the fact that, because of the movement of Bathurst and Lithgow to Macquarie, a substantial number of existing electors, with a far greater relationship to the area, have been moved out of Macquarie.

Major road and rail transport has to pass through somewhere to get to the coast. Where else can it go but through the Blue Mountains? This, however, does not create any argument for the redistribution.

There certainly is a blending of geographical areas (paragraph 74) but, to me, it is the same as blending oil and water.

The Committee makes the comment at paragraph 95 that Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon were previously in the electorate of Macquarie. Did it ask itself why they had previously been removed from the electorate and moved west? I would think that the main argument would have been that these areas had a different community of interest.

Surely, common sense will prevail and the Central West area currently in Calare will remain in that electorate.

Yours sincerely



Rob Smith

cc Mr P. Andren, MHR, Member for Calare

cc Mr K Bartlett, MHR, Member for Macquarie