



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



Public Objection Number: 1876

Name: Mr Robert McLeod

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001876

Redistribution Committee for NSW
PO Box 20014
WORLD SQUARE
NSW 2002

Dear Sir,

I/we object to the electoral boundary changes proposed for the **Division of Calare** in the NSW Federal Electoral Redistribution 2006.

I/we understand that NSW must lose one federal electorate to Queensland due to population trends and that the NSW electoral boundaries must be redrawn to equalise, as far as possible, the number of electors in the remaining 49 federal electorates in the state.

However, I/we believe that the Committee has contravened many of the basic priority principles for electoral redistributions and delivered a flawed, Sydney-centric proposal resulting in the abolition of a country seat – Gwydir – with significant, negative impacts on the remaining six country NSW electorates.

My/our objections relate to three main points:

1. **The abolition of the seat of Gwydir.**
2. **The transfer of the eastern section of Calare, comprising of the Lithgow, Oberon and majority of Bathurst Local Government Areas (LGAs) to the proposed Blue Mountains seat of Macquarie.**
3. **The increased geographic size of the proposed Calare and other country NSW electorates.**

Abolition of Gwydir

I/we object to the abolition of Gwydir, which reduces the number of country electorates west of the Great Dividing Range from seven to six. This measure undermines the federal parliamentary representation of country NSW.

The same geographic area is now to be represented by only six MPs which has resulted in significant increases in the size of the remaining six electorates to unmanageable levels.

The most obvious of these is the proposed seat of Parkes, which absorbs most of Gwydir and is some 100,000 square kilometres larger than the already huge existing seat of Parkes.

Increasing the size of the country electorates makes it impossible for any elected member of parliament to deliver quality service and properly represent the interests of their constituents.

Eastern Calare to proposed seat of Macquarie

The transfer of the eastern section of the existing Calare electorate – comprising of Lithgow, Oberon and the majority of Bathurst Regional LGAs – to the proposed Blue Mountains seat of Macquarie completely ignores the **community of interest** principle of electoral redistributions.

As Central Tablelands communities, Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon share a very strong and historical community of interest across the board.

Bathurst Regional, Lithgow and Oberon City Councils are members of CENTROC – the Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils – which focuses on local government issues and cooperation relevant to the Central Tablelands and Slope and Plains regions of NSW.

Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon have interdependent economies, including significant numbers of people commuting for employment in major local industries that also provide demand for financial, business administration and legal services, commercial transport and apprenticeship and training services throughout this area.

Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon are also part of the central west regional and rural media footprint, as well as sharing the telecommunications needs and problems – including access to broadband internet – that are unique to regional and rural areas.

Sporting links between these three LGAs are extremely strong, with any number of teams entrenched in Central Tablelands or Central West NSW based competitions, including all forms of football, cricket, field hockey, netball, tennis, athletics and horse racing.

The Western Region Academy of Sport, based in Bathurst, essentially services the entire existing electorate of Calare and some regions further west, recognising the strength of the region's sporting affiliations

There is little significant sporting interaction between the Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains communities.

There is also a very strong community of interest between Bathurst and Orange – which have been separated under this proposal.

Bathurst is the base campus for Charles Sturt University which recently absorbed the former Sydney University campus of Orange, with both campuses working through the post-amalgamation process with the help of a common federal member.

Further, the proposed transfer of this eastern section of Calare to Macquarie splits the Bathurst Regional LGA such that the northern and southern parts will be in separate federal electorates, in blatant contravention of the community of interest principle.

Proposed new seat of Calare

There is very little **community of interest** between the Weddin Shire in the south-west (centred on Grenfell) and the Mid-Western Regional Shire (centred on Mudgee) in the north-east, yet both are proposed to be included in the new seat of Calare.

The number of large and medium population centres has increased from four (Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange and Cowra) in the existing Calare electorate, to seven (Orange, Mudgee, Wellington, Parkes, Forbes, Cowra and Grenfell) in the proposed seat.

It would be extremely difficult for the local member to provide the appropriate level of service to constituents in all of these centres on a regular basis.

With similar increases in size for all country seats, this scenario that will face country MPs and result in a much lesser service for their constituents compared to Sydney city and suburban electorates which would have more readily absorbed the abolition of a Sydney metropolitan seat without such adverse consequences.

Conclusion

I/we strongly urge the committee to withdraw its decision to abolish the country NSW seat of Gwydir and maintain the existing electoral boundaries of the seat of Calare in recognition of the fact its projected voter population is comfortably within the range required for this redistribution.

Yours sincerely,

Robert McLeod
RM

Date: 20 7 06

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