



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



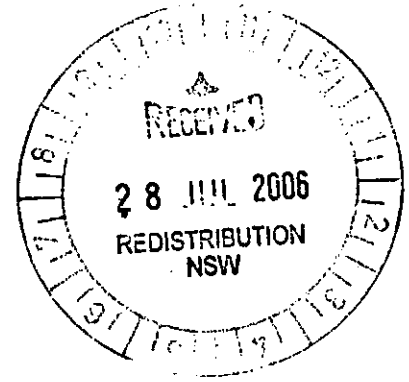
Public Objection Number: 1981

Name: Ms Beth HODGE

Page(s): 3

1575

Fax



001981

To: Redistribution Committee
for New South Wales

9212 2208

From: Elizabeth Hodge

6744 1239

Date: 28/07/2006

Elizabeth Hodge
54 Edward Street
Gunnedah 2380
27/7/06

Redistribution Committee for New South Wales,

I write to lodge a strong objection to the proposed redistribution of electoral seats in NSW leading to the elimination of the seat of Gwydir.

I fully understand the concept of proportional representation. I teach the mandatory democracy unit to stage 3 primary school students and carefully explain the equitable distribution of federal seats of parliament to them. We travel to Canberra to show them where our members go to represent our needs. It wasn't until this year that I realised the concept is so seriously flawed. It is an antiquated presumption that one man, one vote is fair. To the bean counters it is, to the humanitarians, it isn't.

The proposed redistribution in NSW is not fair. To expect one representative to cater for the needs of 47% of the most populous state in the nation is ludicrous. The needs of that 47% are disproportional to the needs of the remaining 53% of the state. Many adjoining electorates have similar needs. The stakeholders in the electorates have shared concerns and which several members can represent. When one representative has to serve the diverse needs of the constituents of 47% of the state's land area, it is not fair.

Parliamentarians of geographically small electorates can service the needs of their electorates with relative ease in terms of meeting with their constituents. A day's travel will allow the member to visit any part of the electorate and be home in time for tea. Tell me how the sitting member for Parkes will be able to meet with constituents in Gunnedah and be home for tea. The electorate will be immense and there is no way our representative could spend the time to have a thorough knowledge of the issues in all corners of the electorate and successfully represent us in parliament. This is not fair.

The bush is suffering. The loss of services is a major concern for its citizens. Local governments are continually looking for ways to lure business and people to the bush while our federal government is undermining these initiatives by withdrawing health and community services, train lines, allowing roads to deteriorate to the point of being dangerous and now taking our representation to fight for our needs. What use is a tree change when all we will be left with is trees?

20 JUL 2008 16:15 FROM TO 92122208 P.03

May I suggest that those who think this proposed redistribution is fair and equitable leave their city offices and come and visit the seat of Parkes. But before they do, let me offer the following advice:

- ✓ Clear your diaries for a week, it will take that long.
- ✓ Bring a map. Your city street directory does not extend beyond the Hawkesbury, the Blue Mountains or Wollongong.
- ✓ Don't wear your suits; you will be travelling along a lot of unsealed roads and the dust shows.
- ✓ Check your will. The chances of dying on a country road are high.
- ✓ Check your health insurance. Hospitals are few and far between and have limited services.
- ✓ Bring your credit card. Fuel prices are very high and the distances are great so you won't want to carry the wad of cash required to pay for your fuel.
- ✓ Leave your mobile phone behind. The chances are you won't get any reception.
- ✓ Leave your calculators behind; we deal in people rather than numbers.

The tyranny of distance is alive and well.

The proposal to eliminate our electorate is a soft option no doubt fuelled by the fact that we are too far away to matter. Under the proposal 53% of the land area of NSW will be served by 48 parliamentarians. Wentworth has a land area of 26 Sq Kms, Grayndler has 29 Sq kms, while Parkes will have 45,4278 Sq Kms in its electorate. Surely there is a fairer way to redistribute seats. I propose you send your bean counters back to the abacus to redistribute the geographically close and homogenous seats between Newcastle and Wollongong so that 47% of our state can be fairly served by more than 1 parliamentarian. Even to include part of Gwydir in the New England electorate would make more sense.

I am angry. As a tree changer who has moved from the seat of Dobell to the bush for employment purposes I see the enormous contrasts of services between the two electorates. I want fair representation from a parliamentarian who is able to have the chance to know the needs of my community.

Yours in protest,



Beth Hodge