



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



Public Objection Number: 620

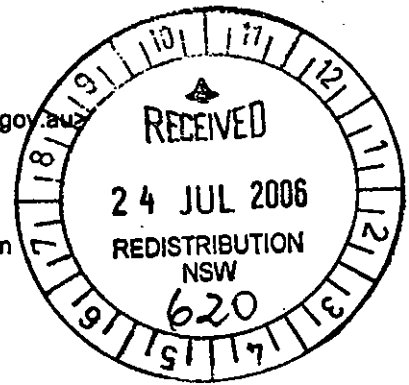
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 Subject nsw electoral redistribution
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to comment on the Electoral Commission proposal for redistribution of federal seats in NSW.

I have read the report with interest and not a little disbelief at some of the assumptions made.

I live currently in Blayney in the electorate of Calare and I note the proposed changes move the centre of this electorate westwards, to be centred on Orange. Orange is very much part central Tablelands region, along with Bathurst and Lithgow, rather than the Slopes region. Indeed it is hard to determine how the "community of interest" criterion is arrived at! Orange and Bathurst were integral parts of the defunct "central tablelands growth area" of the Whitlam govt. Both are in the Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses of Bathurst and many Tablelands communities travel to both as Service centres - it seems unnatural to divide them.

It is also interesting to consider the proposal with regard to Gwydir and Parkes. It seems to me that Parkes is the "catch what's left after the other changes have been made" electorate. In area it now comprises some 40% of the state, and has little sense of common community of interest. Parts of the proposed seat of Parkes and in the Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses of Armidale, parts in Bathurst and parts in Forbes Wilcannia, parts in the the education authority of New England/North West, parts in Western. Similarly for health, parts are in the New England/North West authority parts in Greater Western. Parts receive local TV from Tamworth, parts from Orange. As well significant parts of northern NSW look more to QLD and Brisbane than to Sydney for services. Why should FEDERAL seats be limited to State borders?

The philosophy that each electorate must have a regional city, so moving Dubbo into the electorate of Parkes is a strange one. The current electorate of Gwydir has several large towns such as Moree, Narrabri, Gunnedah and Mudgee. Is it desirable to have every country electorate dominated by one centre in the same way that state affairs are dominated by the capital city? I don't think so.

It is also interesting to look at the growth projections. According to the report the current seat of Gwydir is projected to have population growth of 1.85% in the next ten years. In contrast, the central Tablelands area (current Calare) in which I live is projected to grow by 8.5% in the same period. Both areas have been drastically affected by drought in the last 5 years and the downturn of agricultural industries in those years. It would be interesting to examine the basis for such a big difference. Much of the growth in population in the recent past in the central tablelands has been the result of political decisions of the State Government, especially the decision to relocate the Dept of Primary Industries headquarters in Orange, but also the building of new hospitals and schools at Bathurst and at Orange, together with the expansion of the Cadia gold mine. This has offset the decline in manufacturing (eg downsizing at Electrolux, Nestle Friskies and closing Blayney galvanising) and agriculture in these areas. Coal mines in the Gunnedah and Narrabri basins have thus far not been given permission though the reserves there are supposedly as large as those in the Hunter valley. New mines are also possible at Mudgee (currently in Gwydir), but all these rely on approval from the State government.

The essence of the House of representatives is surely representation. Consequently Tasmanian federal seats have a smaller population base requirement than other states. In my opinion rural areas of mainland states have just as strong a case for such special consideration. Otherwise we face the danger that only capital city interests that are focussed on.

Incidentally,with regard to name, why not call the new merged electorate Sydney? This is to honor

Lord Sydney and his influence in early colonisation, and would have nothing to do with the city on the coast?

Sadly, it seems pretty obvious that this proposal could only come from city based bureaucrats who know little of living in rural NSW.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Myers