



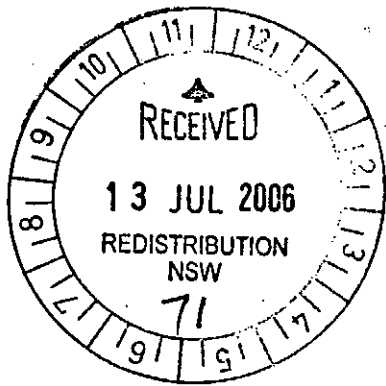
**The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES**



Public Objection Number: 71

Name: Mrs Prue HUTCHINSON

Page(s): 4



"Weatalibah"
Cryon Mail Run
Via WALGETT NSW 2832
July 10 2006

Redistribution Committee for NSW
P O Box 20014
WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002

Dear Sirs

I wish to object most strenuously to the abolition of the Gwydir electorate in the proposed redistribution of Federal Electoral boundaries in NSW.

Due to the sheer size of the proposed electorate, it will be impossible for one person to adequately serve the needs of an electorate that covers almost 48% of the area of NSW, an area which is 379,000 square kilometres, an area which is five and a half times the area of Tasmania who is guaranteed five federal seats.

The Gwydir electorate contains some of the most productive country in NSW and most towns in the area are experiencing a surge in growth and economy. The close attention and services of a local member, who is familiar with the community and the various issues for that community, is imperative for our electorate to have any hope of a say in Canberra. The area is large enough as it is now.

I have enclosed copies of a couple of articles in newspapers which reflect exactly my feelings about this proposal – it just won't work for the country people of NSW.

May I suggest that members of your committee, and in fact all members of the AEC, take the time to travel from:

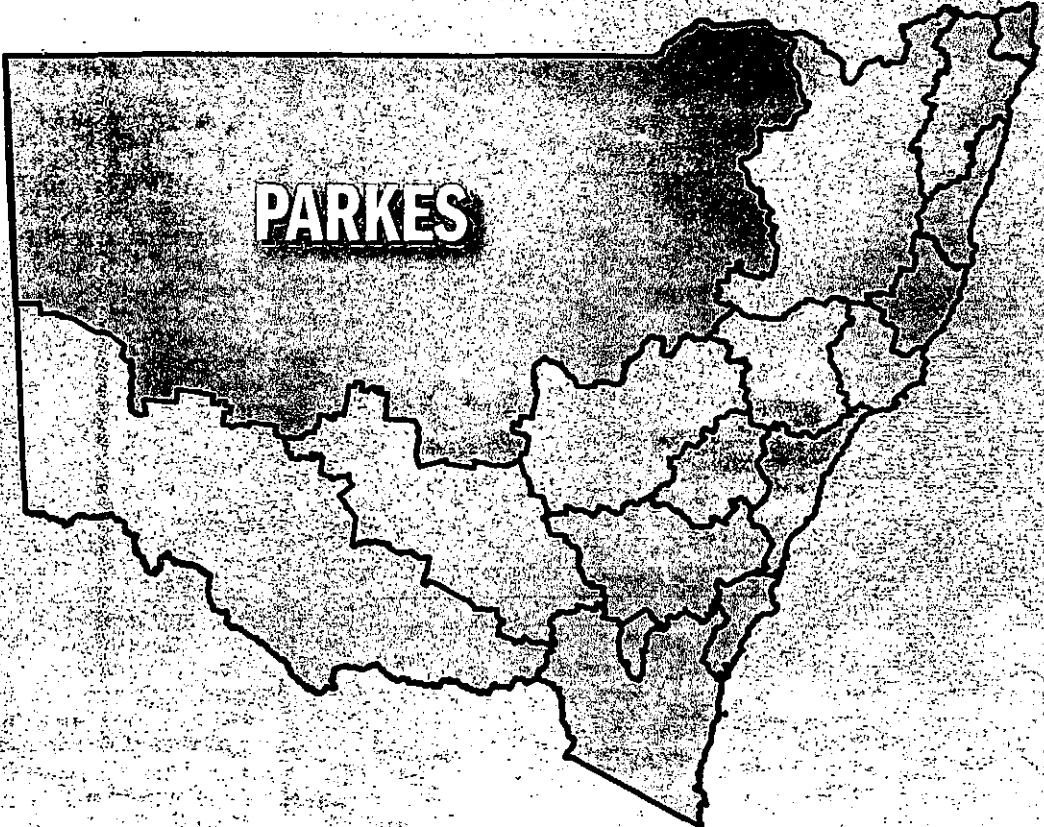
1. the outskirts of any Sydney electorate to that local member's office (you are welcome to take public transport), and having seen him/her, then visit each of the main shopping areas in that electorate; and
2. the outskirts of new proposed electorate – Tibooburra or even Cameron's Corner is a good place to start – to the proposed office of that local member – is it Parkes or Dubbo (you will need your own transport and don't go in wet weather) and having seen him/her, then travel to the main street / shopping area in each of the cities, towns, villages and communities in that electorate.

Please let some common sense prevail – abolish a seat in western Sydney, and maintain the electorate of Gwydir in its present form.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Prue Hutchinson

PARKES



- The new "super-seat" of Parkes, to cover 47.3 per cent of NSW, will be bigger than Japan or Germany, and a half times the size of Tasmania, which is guaranteed five House of Representative seats
- By comparison, the size of the Eastern Suburbs seat of Wentworth is 26 sq km
- The smallest seat of Farrer has been expanded to include Broken Hill, formerly in Parkes
- Calare has been expanded to take in Mudgee, Karoola and Wellington from Gwydir and Parkes and Forbes from Parkes
- The new "super-seat" of Parkes, to cover 47.3 per cent of NSW, will be bigger than Japan or Germany, and a half times the size of Tasmania, which is guaranteed five House of Representative seats
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Why It Stinks

- Under the proposal, one vote in Tasmania is worth 29pc more than a vote in NSW - and removing Gwydir means every NSW voter has less of a voice in Canberra.
- It will reduce the number of rural regional seats in NSW from 15 to 7 - a total of 49
- It gives the bush just 28pc of the State's voting power in Federal Parliament

Common cry: nobody's happy

THE proposed boundary changes have added an element of uncertainty to the next federal election, with politicians of all persuasions claiming the new boundaries will cost them votes.

The Nationals and rural NSW voters have the strongest case for complaint given the proposal to amalgamate Gwydir with Parkes to form a mega-sized seat based in Dubbo.

The retirement of former Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, made Gwydir an easy target for the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), even though it officially says it approached the problem of removing one seat from NSW in the same way it approached creating a new seat in Queensland: by looking at the populations and growth rates of existing seats.

Canberra Comment

By Michael Thomson

Parkes and Gwydir were more than 10 per cent short of the average seat's population in NSW and had among the slowest growth rates of new voter enrolments - a consequence of the stagnation of rural economies depending solely on agriculture; yet in regions truly in need of strong political representation.

On the flip side, The Nationals seats of Dawson, Wide Bay and Hinkler were well above average seat size with fast enrolment growth thanks to sea-changers and booming coal towns, and so have been reduced in size to

redistribute populations into the new Central Queensland seat of Wright.

And what The Nationals will lose in the abolition of Gwydir, voting trends and party polling indicate they will probably pick up in Wright, a largely rural seat stretching from Winton in the west, but taking in the strongly Labor port town of Gladstone in the east.

The trouble is that both new seats are large, unwieldy areas of culturally and economically diverse communities - clearly not in keeping with the AEC's main considerations of ease of communications and travel between voters and their representatives, and to combine "communities of interest" within each seat.

Many towns are now separated from their logical

point of representation by arbitrary lines in the sand. For example, touristy Noosa is now part of Wide Bay, based in blue-collar Maryborough.

These strange collaborations could have been avoided if the AEC had followed the submission of all three major parties - none of which argued for the abolition of Gwydir and abolished a seat in western Sydney, allowing logical realignments as the consequences rippled outward.

The major parties will all make new submissions to the AEC before the changes are cemented, but any realistic chance of changing the proposal will depend on the degree of backlash from grassroots voters who want their MP to be local, accessible and have a sound understanding of local issues.

■ See Peppercom, p15.

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The Land 6/7/06

Super-sized stupidity

New Parkes would cover half of NSW

By LUCY SKUTHORP

THE North West electorate of Gwydir is preparing to do bloody battle with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), following a boundaries redistribution proposal to scrap the enormous federal seat and merge it with the even bigger Central West electorate of Parkes.

The Gwydir electorate council will meet today to plan a protest to the AEC proposal, calling on voters from all persuasions of politics as well as shire councils and community groups to mobilise and oppose the loss of another regional seat in parliament and reduced representation in the bush.

If the proposal goes ahead, the new boundaries of Parkes would cover 47.3 per cent of the area of NSW - larger than Japan or Germany, and five and a half times bigger than Tasmania, which is guaranteed five federal seats.

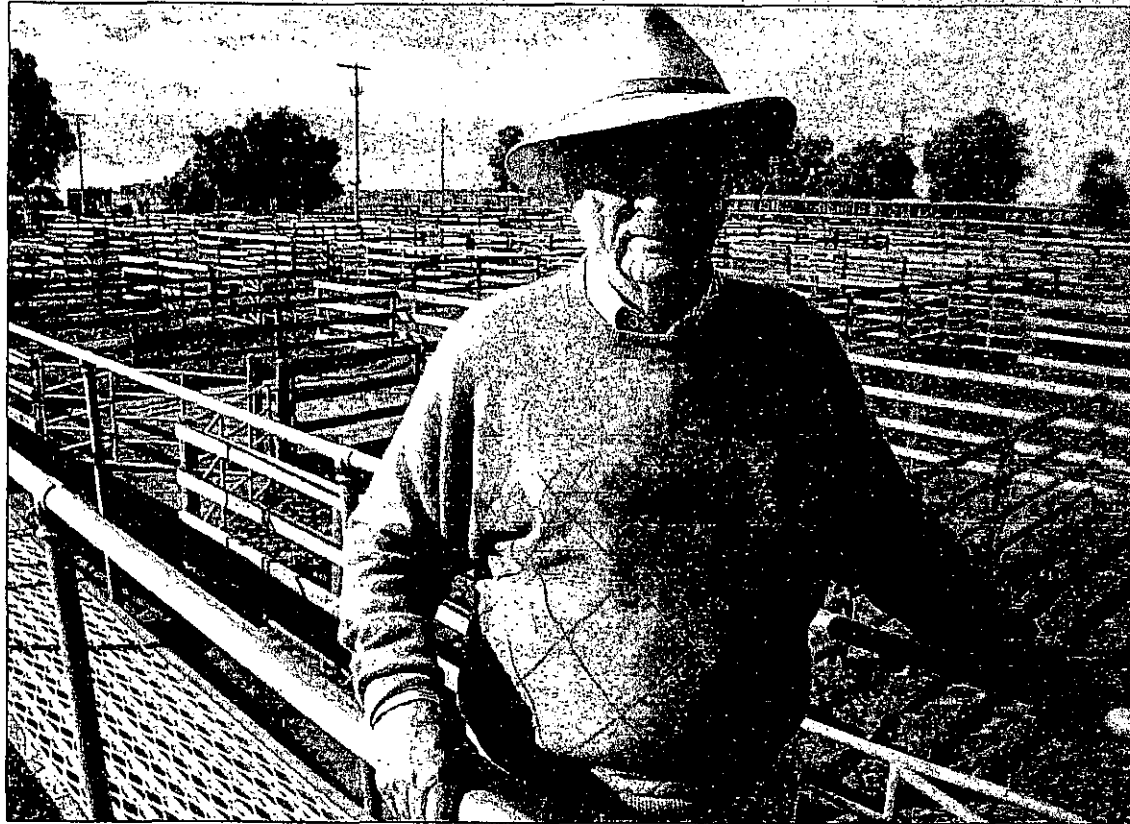
The proposal, which could be in place for next year's federal election, is attributed to a "population shift" in country NSW, with regional Queensland picking up an extra seat and NSW's 50 MPs cut back to 49.

But The Nationals' State director, Scott McFarlane, says the Western Sydney seat of Blaxland should have been the one lost, and Sydney metropolitan boundaries adjusted, which would have had much less of an impact on the representation of constituents or their access to the local member compared to the Gwydir/Parkes proposal.

Mr McFarlane said The Nationals, who have long held sacred the prized seat of Gwydir, would strongly oppose the redistribution plan during the final consultation period which ends on July 28.

The AEC, although a government body, works independently and parliament has no power to reject or amend the final determination.

While some commentators have said Gwydir may have been an easy seat for the electoral commission to drop



because the present sitting member, John Anderson, is bowing out of politics at the next election, an outraged Mr Anderson has vowed he is "no soft target" on this issue.

He was "profoundly disappointed, disgusted and angry" by the AEC proposal and insisted it be abandoned with the boundary adjustments made in Sydney instead, which would retain the "one vote, one value" principle.

While there were vast, sparsely populated electorates in Western Australia and South Australia "this is simply not the case in rural NSW, and shouldn't have to be".

"This outcome is a disaster and there are other seats in Sydney which are further under the (population) quota than Gwydir or Parkes," Mr Anderson said.

It was "outrageous and incomprehensible" that voters would have to cross "the equivalent of several European countries" to see their federal member, yet in Sydney, constituents might have to travel one or two suburbs.

"This is further marginalising the bush voice, and reducing the representation of regional people in Cabinet," he said.

"I would hope people of all political persuasions will stand up and oppose this."

Former Member for Gwydir and The Nationals "elder states-

'Just bloody ridiculous'

UNLESS local members are given helicopters to get around their electorate, Moree stock and station agent, Ronald Hunter (pictured), cannot see how the needs of country people could ever be met by the redistribution proposal.

Mr Hunter, a through and through Gwydir man, said the proposal to create an electorate the size of England, Scotland and Wales was "bloody ridiculous", and there should be "revolution" among country people to ensure it never went ahead. "I don't know how

something like this could ever be proposed, it's crazy," Mr Hunter said.

"We need to get back to an electoral system which guarantees a certain percentage of representatives in country areas.

"Years ago there was an allowance for this to happen, we have got to get that back.

"How can one person possibly be expected to capably represent an area that size. It is difficult for the local members as it is.

"They would need a helicopter just to try and get around."

man", Ralph Hunt, said while it had been said "boundaries must take into account community of interests, communication and transport links, how can they propose to extend the boundaries into regions where access to the member becomes even more difficult?".

The abolition of Gwydir would raise questions about the political future of Peter Corish, the Goondiwindi farmer and former president of the National Farmers Federation, widely tipped as a likely successor to John Anderson.

But while the location of his

"Mundine", Goondiwindi, property within the present Gwydir electorate made him a logical candidate for The Nationals pre-selection, he could also be a starter for any new seat in Queensland, as his newly acquired Emerald cattle property would be within the proposed new seat.

FOR full details of the proposal visit www.aec.gov.au. Submissions are open until July 26 and can be sent to: Redistribution Committee for NSW, PO Box 20014, World Square, NSW, 2002.

TERRY MILLER

The Land 6/12/06

Letters to the Editor

Redistribution process 'flawed and unfair'

The proposed Redistribution of Federal Electorate Boundaries in New South Wales is flawed because it is transparently unfair and discriminatory.

It fails to effectively address the requirement of "one vote - one value". That requirement has two components; to achieve relatively equal

numbers of voters in each electorate; and to enable elected representatives to give relatively equal value in access and service to all constituents. Redistribution is not a mindless numbers game of juggling votes; it is about real people seeking fair and equitable representation. It is the apparent rejection of this second principle by the Commission which has created such a flawed and discriminatory proposal.

Because of huge separation distances it is already difficult for people and communities in inland NSW to gain physical access to their elected representatives - as it is for those Members to adequately service their huge electorates.

In a redistribution the Commissioners have a rare opportunity to alleviate, but not totally overcome, those problems. Yet sadly the opportunity has been squandered in the proposed redistribution.

The abolition of the Federation Electorate of Gwydir, and the absorption of much of its area

into the already oversized Electorate of Parkes, is just one example of the Commission's insensitivity to geographic disadvantage.

The massive proposed Electorate would stretch from Gunnedah west to the South Australian border, and from the Queensland border south to Lake Cargelligo and the outskirts of Broken Hill.

It would contain literally dozens of Local Government Areas, and hundreds of diverse communities. By contrast the proposed boundaries for some Sydney Electorates cover only a few square kilometres, and are smaller than a single Local Government Area.

It is a fact that, because of demographic change, New South Wales must lose a seat to Queensland. This represents a 2% reduction, which if spread over the remaining 49 Electorates, should be achievable without creating significant community disruption.

To redraft the redistribu-

tion maps to achieve minimal disruption, the Commissioners would probably need to start by realigning the boundaries of say the six innermost Sydney electorates into five. Changes may be only a kilometre or so and thus equitable access and service should not be issues.

The ripple effect would then spread evenly outwards, with minimal community impact until it reached the huge rural electorates.

In these cases it may require the addition of sizeable centres to bring them up closer to quota. As an example a Hunter Valley population centre may need to be moved into Gwydir.

There is, of course, no perfect solution, but the Commissioners must accept the challenge of finding solutions which retain Gwydir and are less discriminatory than their first attempt.

Ralph Schulze,
Narrabri

Former Member objects

If the proposed new electorate of Parkes is brought into effect, the constituents and their Federal Parliamentary representative will certainly experience the 'Tyranny of Distance'.

As a former Member for Gwydir representing the seat for 20 years, I am fully aware of the difficulties in giving fair and equitable representation to the constituents of such an extensive electorate.

It is stated in the Sun Herald July 2, that "the boundaries must take into account community of interests, communication and transport links".

How then can they propose to extend the boundaries into regions where access to their Member becomes even more difficult?


I would also like to object to the proposal to name the 'new' electorate Parkes.

The name Gwydir has survived since Federation, and causes no confusion with a township which is outside the proposed boundaries.


The Hon. Ralph J.D. Hunt AO,
former Member for Gwydir,
4 Longworth Avenue,
Point Piper, NSW, 2027

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Topical


□ During the school holiday period, the following quotation may give comfort to parents:

'Every age has its pleasures, its style of wit, and its own ways.'
-Nicholas Boileau Despreaux

□ According to the Bureau of Meteorology, the North West is experiencing one of its coldest winters for a while. The rate at which Topical is lowering the wood pile, we can well believe it.

□ So, the Germans were pipped at the post by those Italians in the last gasp of the World Cup semi-final match!? The result certainly raises the nagging question of the dodgy last second-win by the Italians over Australia once again, doesn't it? ...If only....!?

Brass Tacks
From the Narrabri Ministers' Fellowship
(by Peter Westman, Narrabri Christian Fellowship)



I'm still reading Genesis and have been achieving our full potential in all areas

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