



The Federal Redistribution 2006  
NEW SOUTH WALES



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**Public Objection Number: 791**

**Name: Ms Leanne SWAIN**

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Via Gunnedah NSW 2380  
13th July 2006



Dear Sir Madam

I am a concerned Australian citizen who would like to voice my objection in the AEC's decision to abolish the seat of Gwydir. I am absolutely appalled that a sizable country electorate is being considered to be joined into the large area of Parkes and will plead for the Redistribution Committee to reconsider. In my letter I hope to draw your attention to a few of my concerns.

Firstly, I feel that country peoples' voices will be lost if Gwydir is incorporated into Parkes. I can not imagine how the needs and issues of a small community of Gunnedah can be heard when the federal member is 'representing' people across an area of north western NSW reaching across to South Australia. This will be an area of 380 00 square kilometres. Apart from the sheer number of people, diverse in occupations and lifestyles, the sheer physical distance across the states will be the key problem. Distances between towns, cities and rural communities in the proposed electorate are so great. How can one federal member fairly represent 47% of the state?

The concerns of the bush are often felt to fall on deaf ears in the city. To know that your federal member from your own area is there for you in Parliament, letting the city electorates know what is happening in regional Australia, is reassuring. Country people need to know that they are treated fairly and have not been forgotten about. What is fair about one federal member representing such a large area, when there are electorates such as the seat of Wentworth that are so much smaller – approximately 26 square kilometres? I believe this is incredibly unfair to regional Australians.

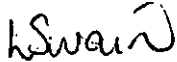
Another concern of mine that I would like to bring to your attention is that of the school children. I am a primary school teacher who has taught many Stage Three classes (Years 5 and 6) the NSW Board of Studies Unit on Federal Parliament. In this unit we are teaching values and attitudes towards our next generation of voters. I am deeply concerned that the next generation will not see the importance of their vote if they are not able to identify with a local member. Currently, Stage Three students visit Canberra on a school excursion and visit Parliament House. At times that visit to Parliament house has been highlighted by a personal welcome by John Anderson and this means a lot to children. In recounts of their trips away, children have written about meeting their Federal Member and it is often one of the first things they tell the other teachers on their return to school. To see the federal member makes it real to the children and easier to understand democracy in Australia.

In addition to the issue of the school children, school visits by our federal member are important to all involved in the school community. Whether it is to donate a new flag to the school, share a cultural event or open a new hall it is really important to our students to see the federal member and to make them feel valued. Furthermore it shows that success is achievable by country people. Seeing 'famous people' (using

shows that success is achievable by country people. Seeing 'famous people' (using children's terminology here) in 'real life' is necessary for children to know that goals and dreams can be achieved. Whether it is achievement in sport, journalism, music or politics, whether you're from Boggabri, Narrabri or inner Sydney, children in regional NSW need exposure to such speakers. Currently, our small school of 110 students at Boggabri Public School have been fortunate to share in this. After a visit two years ago by John Anderson, children told us of seeing John 'on the news' – making our children more aware of the world outside our township of Boggabri. How could a federal member visit so many schools in such a big electorate that is being proposed? It simply wouldn't happen.

I hope that you will consider these issues and decide to maintain the current electorate of Gwydir. I strongly believe that the future generation of voters need to know that country people are fairly represented and that they are valued voters in our federal level of government.

Yours sincerely,



Leanne Swain