



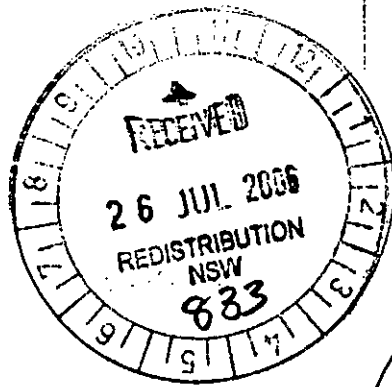
The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



Public Objection Number: 833

Name: TAMWORTH BRANCH of THE NATIONALS

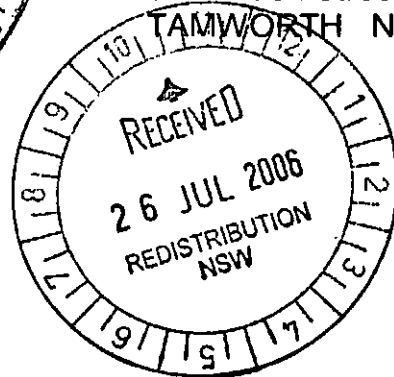
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Rachel Kingsford Smith
Chairman
Tamworth Branch, The Nationals
85 Garden Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Friday 21 July 2006

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



Dear Sir / Madam,

On behalf of the Tamworth Branch of The Nationals, I write to object to the current proposed redistribution of electorates in NSW and call on the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to redraw the boundaries.

The abolition of a rural seat is unacceptable, especially when there are other options available to the AEC. While no resident would be happy with the abolition of their local electorate, it would have far less impact on residents in a metropolitan seat than it would on those in a rural seat.

Under the initial submission process, both The Nationals and Liberal party argue strongly that there is a case for the abolition of a Sydney electorate. The abolition of the seat of Gwydir has not been proposed by any of the major parties.

Furthermore, we do not believe that the abolition of the electorate of Gwydir takes into consideration the major requirements for the making of a proposed redistribution, namely; community of interests; means of communication and travel; physical features and existing boundaries.

Community of Interests

The area covered by the proposed electorate of Parkes is unlike the other mega-seats in Australia such as Grey (South Australia), Lingiari (Northern Territory) or Kalgoorlie (Western Australia). These mega-seats have one or two major regional towns, with a large, sparsely populated area covering most of the electorate.

However, the proposed seat of Parkes has many smaller towns with very vibrant communities and economies. These small towns have very diverse concerns and issues, all of which would have to compete for the attention of their local member. There would be few towns in the north of the proposed electorate that would have any conceivable community of interest with towns in the south of the electorate.

The AEC proposed electorate of Parkes covers a massive 19 Local Government areas, 379,474 square kilometres (larger than Japan) and 47% of the state of NSW. Because

of the above-mentioned reasons, one Member of Parliament would not be able to fairly and equitably represent this electorate.

Means of Communication and Travel

Increasing the size of a rural electorate will also increase the cost to both the Member and their Constituency to interact with each other.

Methods of communication are far less reliable in rural and regional areas than in metropolitan areas. Access to broadband internet connection is not always available, mobile phone coverage is patchy and the cost of STD calls makes the tyranny of distance far more noticeable in a rural electorate. These factors all contribute to the difficulty of a constituent contacting and meeting with their local member in a proposed mega-seat.

The cost of travel must also be taken into consideration. In the proposed seat of Parkes, constituents might have to drive up to eight hours to visit the electorate office of the local Member. With the current cost of petrol, which seems unlikely to ease, this can become a very costly exercise. So too, would commercial travel, with airline ticket prices becoming prohibitively expensive for the average rural resident.

The argument to abolish a metropolitan seat rather than a rural one is at its greatest here, where a city constituent may only have to travel an additional 10 minutes to reach their new MP's office.

Physical features and existing boundaries

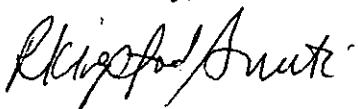
Plainly, the AEC in their proposed boundaries and redistribution have taken no notice of this requirement, especially in the case of the electorates of Parkes and Gwydir. The existing boundaries of many rural electorates have also been changed significantly.

The loss of representation in rural NSW could have devastating effects on our future. The voice of rural residents in NSW will be diminished if this proposal is to proceed, and we will not be provided with the fair and equitable representation that we, like all other Australians, deserve.

The Nationals support the retention and maintenance of the current level of representation of rural and regional NSW. Only when this occurs, will rural and regional NSW be able to grow. Regional development must be encouraged to boost both the rural economy and population. The AEC's current redistribution proposal does not assist to reach this goal.

I urge the AEC to redraw the boundaries for NSW to ensure that a rural seat is not abolished.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Kingsford Smith