



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



Public Objection Number: 861

Name: GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL

Page(s): 6

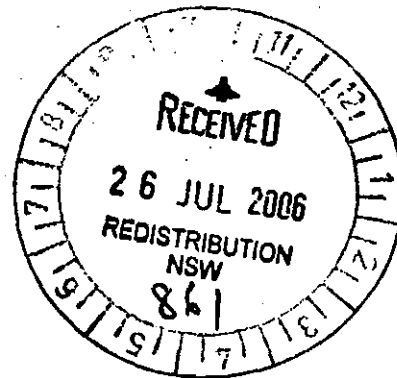


GWYDIR
SHIRE COUNCIL

25th July 2006

Mr D Farrell
Australian Electoral Officer
Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
PO Box 20014
World Square NSW 2002

nsw.redistribution@aec.gov.au



Dear Mr Farrell

Redistribution of Electoral Boundaries for Parkes and Gwydir

Gwydir Shire Council is writing in support of the joint submission lodged by the Councils of Brewarrina, Gwydir, Moree Plains, Narrabri and Warrumbungle.

The issues raised in the joint submission (copy attached); namely;

- Size of the proposed electorate
- Provision of a Regional Centre
- Community of interest
- Economic diversity
- Population loss due to drought
- Communication and travel throughout the electorate; and
- Loss of regional representation

are well articulated within the submitted document and endorsed by Gwydir Shire Council.

The Council seeks the assurance of your Committee that it will review the methodology used to create the current proposals and endeavour to create a proposal that enhances the equity of representation for remote and regional communities rather than diminish the opportunities for adequate representation.

This could be achieved if your Committee work out from the New Castle-Sydney-Wollongong basin rather in towards the population centres of the State.

Also, the Council notes, with interest, that the guidelines for the naming of electorates states that 'every effort should be made to retain the names of original Federation Divisions'. As you would be aware the seat of *Gwydir* was first proclaimed in 1901 and has been a Federal Electorate continuously from that date.

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL ABN 11 636 419 850

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Without diminishing the strength of our joint submission, it is Gwydir Shire Council's position that what ever the outcome of the review the electorate name of *Gwydir* should continue.

Thank you for extending the community the opportunity to express its views on your current proposals.

Yours faithfully



Max Eastcott
General Manager

24 July 2006

Mr D Farrell
Australian Electoral Officer
Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
PO Box 20014
WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002

Email: nsw.redistribution@aec.gov.au

Dear David

Re: Redistribution of Electoral Boundaries for Parkes and Gwydir

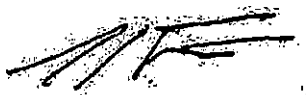
We the Mayors of the Shires of Brewarrina, Gwydir, Moree Plains, Narrabri and Warrumbungle are totally opposed to the proposed redistribution of boundaries for Parkes and Gwydir Electorates. We believe that the Electoral Commission needs to completely redefine the boundaries within the State of NSW to avoid creating a seat like the proposed seat of Parkes.

The proposed seat covers forty-seven percent (47%) of the State of NSW. We consider that this is an unfair outcome for Regional NSW. This area combines a number of Regions including nineteen (19) local government areas and seven (7) State seats. To represent an area of such diverse and important economic value to the Australian economy is a great responsibility and will be impossible for one Federal member to handle. The interests of the citizens within the electorate are therefore seriously under-represented by the proposal.

We respectfully invite the members of the Electoral Redistribution Commission to tour the proposed seat to comprehend the vast distances the member would need to travel to be an effective representative as well as the diversity of the electorate. There is no effective coordinated transport link throughout the whole seat; the southern area is linked through Dubbo while the north-western part of the seat is served through Narrabri and Moree.

Attached is a copy of the full submission prepared following our discussion this morning in Moree. Please consider the interest of our people and provide a more equitable solution to our Federal representation.

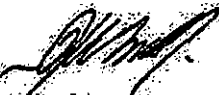
Yours sincerely




Wulf Reichler
DEPUTY MAYOR
BREWARRINA SHIRE



Mark Coulton
MAYOR
GWYDIR SHIRE



John Tramble
MAYOR
MOREE PLAINS



George Sevil
MAYOR
NARRABRI SHIRE



Peter Shinton
MAYOR
WARRUMBUNGLER SHIRE

Submission to the State Electoral Commission on the Proposed Redistribution of New South Wales Federal Electoral Boundaries

Introduction

A group of Mayors, Councillors and General Managers from the Shires of Brewarrina, Gwydir, Moree Plains, Narrabri and Warrumbungle met in Moree to discuss the proposed redistribution of electoral boundaries in New South Wales on the 24th July 2006. At the meeting proposed redistribution was discussed and this document expresses the concerns and comments of those present at the meeting.

Summary of Issues

The following points were raised by those at the meeting to be relevant to the proposed redistribution and potential creation of the seat of Parkes;

1. Size of the Electorate
2. Provision of a Regional Centre
3. Community of Interest
4. Economic Diversity
5. Population Loss Due to Drought
6. Communication and Travel throughout the Electorate
7. Loss of Regional Representation

Size of the Electorate

The creation of an electorate that contains 47% of the State's area, which is greater in size than Tasmania, Victoria and the ACT combined, is not supported by the group. A local member would be unable to represent the interests of such a large area effectively because of the travel needed to effectively represent the proposed electorate.

Provision of a Regional Centre

Under the current seat of Gwydir there is no one regional centre dominating the electorate. The need for a regional capital in the electorate as put forward in the report is rejected. Currently all the major towns in the electorate work cooperatively together. This spirit of cooperation will continue without the need for a large regional centre to be included in the electorate.

Community of Interest

The proposed electorate includes 7 State seats, and 19 local government bodies this will provide a heavy workload for any member to communicate effectively. A more closely aligned boundary system to the State boundaries would be preferred.

The Pilliga provides a physical barrier through the middle of the electorate. Local Government areas below the Pilliga are developing stronger ties to Dubbo while to the north of the Pilliga the residents of the Shires are not reliant on Dubbo as a regional centre, are more self sufficient plus Tamworth is the nearest major regional centre.

The proposed electorate is bisected by the Barwon, Gwydir, Namoi and river catchments each forming different geographical area and characteristics. These catchments provide natural boundaries as they flow north west across the state to join the Darling River system.

The indigenous community and Lightning Ridge have significant populations that are not registered to vote. These are a latent group of potential voters that are not currently included in the calculations.

Economic Diversity

The proposed electorate is economically diversified. The Moree Plains and Narrabri Shires are the two most productive shires in Australia. There is a growing mining industry in the Gunnedah and Narrabri Shires. This is going to have significant impact on the future population of the northern part of the proposed electorate.

Population Loss Due to Drought

As the drought eases population will return to the region from broad scale grazing to intensive irrigation farming and mining. There has been a recent drift away because of the recent severe drought. This is a trend that has been observed following the last two droughts. Efficiencies gained in farming techniques will mean that less people will be required to return however, there has always been a recognisable recovery in population after a drought as families return to the area.

Communication and Travel throughout the Electorate

The people of the proposed electorate travel 3 or 4 different ways to access services. Groups within the electorate have an affinity to Armidale, Tamworth, Toowoomba, Dubbo and Broken Hill as major regional centres. Under this proposal the regional areas for Government don't align with the new proposal.

Further the current management of health services within the proposal is split between Newcastle and Dubbo. Narrabri, Gunnedah and Moree are currently managed by the Hunter New England Health Services from Newcastle and the remainder is under the Greater Western Health Service managed from Dubbo. This better reflects the concept of transport corridors as described in the Commission's report.

There is no regional air or rail service that unites the area. The elected member would be required to undertake extensive car travel to cover the needs of the constituents. Up to 8

hours driving will be required to travel from an electoral office to the outer reaches of the electorate. Multiple electoral offices will need to be maintained to provide accessibility to the electorate.

Loss of Regional Representation

One of the greatest concerns that this group has is the loss of regional representation. The continued population drift from the regional areas to the coast and the slow loss of services from western regional areas is a major concern of the people. Positive action is needed to address this situation.

The removal of an elected member from the western area of the state further reduces the capacity of the area to be represented at a Parliamentary level. To advocate policies to improve and realise the potential of the proposed electorate will be difficult because the balance of representation has a stronger emphasis on the city areas and the coast. It would be preferred that the seat was lost in the more populated areas and the less populated areas linked to the more populated areas. This would allow a number of members to be better acquainted with the western and regional issues and give the people a stronger and multiple voices in parliament.

Conclusion

The need for the redistribution is acknowledged by the group. However, it is important that strong representation is maintained for the people living within the electorates of Parkes and Gwydir. Gwydir is a federation seat in the Parliament of Australia and has played a productive, strong and significant role in Australia's history.

To reduce the quality of representation for the people of both Parkes and Gwydir by proposing to amalgamate the western areas of the two seats to form a mega-seat is not in the best interests of the people. The group recommend that if a seat is to be lost, that it be taken from a more populated area in Sydney and redistributed out rather than taking the easier option of amalgamating such a large area as the proposed seat of Parkes.