



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



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Name: Coonabarabran High School Council

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COONABARABRAN HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL

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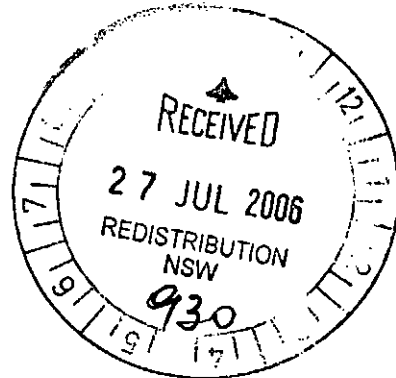
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Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
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21 July 2006

Loss of the Gwydir Electorate

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this letter is to convey our serious concerns regarding the proposal by the Australian Electoral Commission to effectively abolish the Gwydir electorate in New South Wales. These concerns include the following:

- The reduction in representation for regional areas in New South Wales from 15 to 14 out of 49 possible seats. It is very obvious that the rampant development and increase in population along the New South Wales coastal strip needs to be balanced by regional development beyond the ranges, and reducing representation from this area will severely hinder this.
- The size of the proposed electorate. Forty-seven percent of the state (379,474 square km) is an unreasonable area to be fairly represented by one person. Comparisons with other areas (twice the size of Victoria, five times the size of Tasmania, etc) make this clear.
- The loss of a Member within reasonable distance of the local community. It will be extremely hard for a Member to be available to constituents across such a huge region. Having your Member close enough to attend important functions and meetings, and live within a reasonable distance of your community builds the confidence of residents that they are being fairly represented and that the government is taking their concerns into consideration. Without this, people can become easily disillusioned with government decisions.
- The loss of 'community of interest' provisions. It will be impossible for any representative to cater for the broad range of matters of concern across such a huge electorate. It will incorporate too many diverse communities with different needs and expectations.

- The abandonment of a historical political seat. Gwydir is one of the original Federation seats and hence has a long and distinguished history of representation. Although population redistribution has determined that changes be made, it is not clear that alternative boundary changes could have achieved this without the damage to regional communities that are inevitable with this proposal.

Opposition to these electoral boundary changes is widespread. It crosses all political parties and people from all communities in the region. All staff and parents of students at Coonabarabran High School are united in this position, and urge the Australian Electoral Commission to reconsider their proposal.

Yours truly,



Wendy Baldock

President