



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



Public Objection Number: 959

Name: Mr and Mrs S and T Morgan

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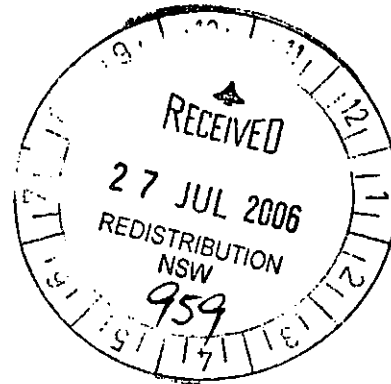
"Kensal Green"

282 Masmans Rd

GUNNEDAH 2380

26th July 2006

NSW Redistribution Committee
PO Box 20014
WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed Abolition of Gwydir Electorate

I am writing to register my strong opposition to the proposal of abolishing the electorate of Gwydir and incorporating it into the new 'mega' sized electorate of Parkes.

I am totally stunned that the Commission would even consider such a ludicrous idea. It is my understanding that in a truly democratic society all members of the community should have 'equal' access to political representation. If the proposal to combine over 47% of the State into one 'mega' electorate is adopted, then how, in all honesty, can a person in this area gain easy access to their local member? Are we expected to drive three to six hours each way to visit the local member? I wonder how Sydney residents would react if they had to face such immense distances to access their local member? How is the local member expected to service all towns in this incredibly huge area equally? Needless to say, the unfortunate Member for Parkes would never be home and the 'burn-out' rate for regional politicians would increase dramatically (and we all know that it is a very difficult job already).

It is my understanding that a declining population in regional electorates and the need to create a new electorate in Queensland is the impetus behind the proposal. However I strongly suggest that perhaps one of Sydney's smaller electorates could be abolished instead of merging the regional electorates. This would mean that a city resident may have to travel two or three suburbs further to meet with their local member, which is certainly more practical than the alternative of forcing regional residents to travel hundreds of kilometers to seek political representation.

You are no doubt aware of the extreme geographical and agricultural diversity of the area you are considering to merge into Parkes. It is a case of trying to mix oil with water - it simply just does not mix. Each regional electorate has distinct and unique issues that need to be considered individually.

I strongly urge you to look beyond the 'quick fix' philosophy of many in today's society and recognize the need for regional Australia to have an equal access to political representation. The creation of the 'mega' electorate of Parkes would simply be disastrous for all regional Australians in this half of the State.

I implore you to look to other alternatives and enclose for your information a clipping of our local paper which sums up the collective feeling of people in Gwydir.

Yours faithfully,



Scott Morgan



Tonia Morgan

It's not bigger than Texas – but it nearly is. Gunnedah's new Federal electorate will be almost twice the size of Victoria and more than five times the size of Tasmania.

MEGA-SEAT MADNESS



JOHN Anderson is retiring from Federal Parliament at the 2007 election. But if he changed his mind, he would have to look for a new seat – his electorate of Gwydir has been abolished in new boundaries proposals released by the Electoral Commission.

GUNNEDAH is set to become part of a Federal electorate almost twice the size of Victoria and five times larger than Tasmania.

The Australian Electoral Commission has "wiped" the Gwydir electorate in its recommendations on alterations to Federal electorate boundaries.

Gwydir will disappear from the map, the bulk of its area absorbed into the electorate of Parkes.

The new lines on the electoral map drew an angry response yesterday from the Member for Gwydir and former Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, who called on electors to protest over the planned changes.

Speaking from his Gunnedah office, Mr Anderson said the "mega-seat" in NSW would make it virtually impossible for a Federal Member to keep in touch with constituents.

The electorate will cover 379,474 square kilometres and extend from the Queensland border to the Northern Riverina and to the South Australian border.

Gunnedah will be on the north-eastern fringe of the electorate.

In the far south-west the electorate will extend to the outskirts of Broken Hill.

Mr Anderson, the former National Party leader, said he was "appalled" by the redistribution.

"I concede that NSW had to lose a seat to Queensland, because of population changes, but it should be a Sydney seat that goes," he said.

"One Member will be covering an area that takes up 47 per cent of NSW.

"The electorate will be bigger than Japan, bigger than Germany, nearly twice the size of Victoria and five-and-a-half times the size of Tasmania.

"It's farcical to assume that such a huge area can be adequately represented by anyone.

"It also means that whoever represents Gwydir in the future will have virtually no chance of taking up a portfolio – just representing the electorate would be a massive task alone.

"I would prefer Gwydir to be represented by the Labor Party than to see it struck out this way.

"If a seat had to go, it should have been one in the city – that would cause much less disruption and loss of representation for voters."

Mr Anderson, who entered Federal Parliament as the Member for Gwydir in 1989, does not intend re-nominating for the seat at the next election, scheduled for the second half of 2007.

He agreed with commentators who felt that the abolition of Gwydir was an "easy solution" to the problem of reducing NSW representation by one.

"This issue is not about politics, it is about ensuring that people in far-flung regional areas are given reasonable access to their Federal Member.

"It crosses party lines and is above politics.

"I would hope that the Labor Party views this in the same way.

"What makes it even more disappointing is that Gwydir is one of the few Federation seats, formed in 1901 when the first Parliament was elected.

"History is being discarded."

The redistribution would mean that Gunnedah would no longer be the head office of the local Member.

The office will probably go to Dubbo, although it is also right on the eastern boundary.

The geographic centre of the proposed electorate of Parkes would be north of Cobar.

Mr Anderson urged electors to register their disapproval with the changes to the Australian Electoral Commission by 6pm Friday, July 28.

"The proposed outcome was not recommended by any of the parties but will become a fact of life unless there is a public backlash."

• Submissions should be sent to: Redistribution Committee for NSW, PO Box 20014, World Square NSW 2002.