



**The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES**



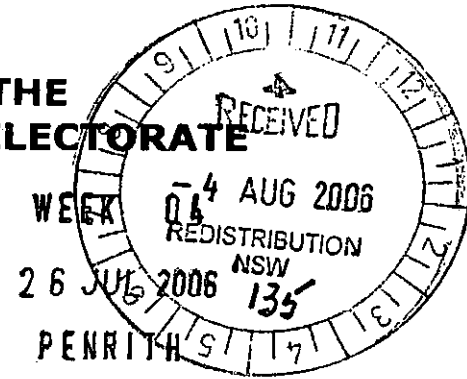
Comments on Public Objections – Comment No: 135

Name: NARRABRI ROTARY CLUB

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**NARRABRI ROTARY CLUB OBJECTION TO THE
PROPOSED ABOLITION OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORATE
OF GWYDIR**

**AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION
REDISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE FOR NSW**



Dear Commissioners,
The Rotary Club of Narrabri strongly objects to your proposal to abolish the electorate of Gwydir.

We understand that it would be quite uncommon for an organization like ours to lodge an objection. Our club, of over 60 members, includes members from a wide section of the Narrabri community including the business and professional sectors. Rotary Clubs traditionally avoid involvement in politically partisan issues, and ours is no exception. But we are focussed on helping our local community and see your proposal as having the potential to harm and disadvantage that community.

The proposal to amalgamate a large part of Gwydir with a large part of Parkes would result in the creation of a mega electorate. A high proportion of people and communities in that huge area would be too far distant from their elected representative to have any reasonable access to that person. In the same way that representative would have great difficulty in visiting them to discuss and address their needs. Distances, and travel time, to connect the widespread centres, would be far greater than in the current already huge Gwydir. To drive from Boggabilla along the Barwon-Darling roads to Wilcannia would take several days, providing the weather was dry.

In the proposed expanded electorate there is no common community of interest. The artificially created region is very diverse, with the needs of people in different communities, differing greatly from those in other distant and unrelated communities. Many of the roads, and other lines of communication, connecting the widespread communities are very poor, indirect and sometimes impassable for long periods. As a result we feel that the people would be disadvantaged, and that the standard of representation would decline.

We recognise that Gwydir is an historic Federation electorate, but our concern is not with history; it is for the wellbeing of this and future generations. If the Commission goes ahead with its proposal to eliminate Gwydir, it will be these people that needlessly suffer.

Narrabri Rotary contains members from a range of businesses, vocations and professions, all which need adequate access to and from their Federal Member –as does every member of the community. The many issues include; health and hospital services, opportunities for young people and aboriginal people, new emerging industries, transport (road/rail/air), disability matters, all levels of education, decentralisation (dis)incentives, sustainable natural resources including equable access to water, farm viability, the flow on impact of drought on the full community, and many, many more.

We also recognise that the Commission has a range of options to consider in reducing the number of electorates in NSW by one. Again we recognise that the problems facing the people of Gwydir, particularly regarding access to their elected representative, and vice versa, are generally shared throughout the inland parts of the state. We would not seek any remedy which could further disadvantage those people. With them we share similar problems including poor access to health facilities, government services, and the erosion of infrastructure. We would recommend that the Commissioners use the tolerances allowed to them to draft electorate boundaries which cause the least disruption to all- including those in Gwydir.

It would seem more logical in redrafting boundaries to start at the centre and work outwards – in a similar way that a town planner may work in designing a new city, or a new road or rail network.

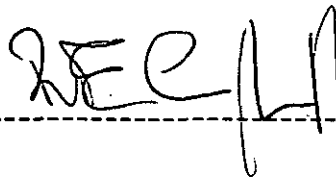
If it is possible we would encourage the Commissioners to visit Gwydir, to meet the people and discuss their concerns. Gwydir is already a large electorate (e.g. a return trip from Bourke to Boggabilla (or Mudgee) would mean over 10 hours driving and an overnight stay. It would therefore be preferable to visit several different centres.

Finally we would appeal to the Commissioners to reconsider their proposal to abolish Gwydir. We would ask them to use the redrafting opportunity to seek an outcome which helped to reduce (rather than increase) disadvantage.

Yours sincerely



----- President



----- Secretary.