



The Federal Redistribution 2006
NEW SOUTH WALES



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Dear Committee Members,

I have recently heard via the local media here that New South Wales will undergo a redistribution of Federal electoral boundaries as a result of your State's requirement to relinquish one of its Seats in the House of Representatives – notionally to Queensland. I understand there has been considerable speculation and innuendo – particularly in the more remote rural and regional areas of the State – as to which Seat will be abolished.

Currently NSW features 7 Federal Electorates that could be considered “remote” rural Seats – Calare, Farrer, Gwydir, Hume, New England, Parkes and Riverina. The current populations of two of those Seats (Gwydir and Parkes) are dramatically low (and declining) even before another Electorate is abolished, but I believe that the Australian Electoral Commission should, and very easily could, commit to maintaining the same number of remote Seats at the 2007 Election.

At the last NSW redistribution in 1999-2000, the Redistribution Committee very wisely decided to adopt Local Government Area boundaries as Divisional boundaries wherever possible, and I have maintained this in the suggested Divisions that I propose on the following pages. While I certainly don't expect to be regarded as an authority in electoral organisation by the other commentators on this redistribution (especially the major political parties), I do believe I have achieved the first aim I set myself when I devised these suggestions. I have shown that, if a relatively uninformed individual from the other side of the country can easily compose 7 Divisions given the paucity of data available to him, the Australian Electoral Commission has *absolutely no* reason or excuse to justify the abolition of one of the existing remote rural Divisions in New South Wales.

In case you have copyright problems associated with the public display of this suggestion, the accompanying map diagram was sourced from the NSW Department of Local Government website. The numbering is reflective of the order of the suggestions as follows. The enrolled populations referred to were current at 5pm on Friday 2 December 2005.

PROPOSED DIVISION 1.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
ALBURY CITY	30443
BERRIGAN SHIRE	5575
CARRATHOOL SHIRE - part	138
CONARGO SHIRE	1187
COROWA SHIRE	7773
DENILIQVIN MUNICIPALITY	5245
GREATER HUME SHIRE	6880
GRIFFITH CITY	14955
JERILDERIE SHIRE	1188
LEETON SHIRE	7269
MURRAY SHIRE	4272
MURRUMBIDGEE SHIRE	1549
NARRANDERA SHIRE	4385
URANA SHIRE	907
	<u>91766</u>

The "part" of the Carrathool Shire referred to is that part generally east of Wrights La, south of Tabbita La, west and south of the Griffith City Council boundary, and north of the Murrumbidgee River. I understand that this area is known by the Australian Electoral Commission as Geographic Database 71038.

Given that one of the AEC's guidelines for the naming of Divisions concerns the retention of Federation division names, I would propose that this Division be known as *Riverina* and be administered from Albury. Following the 1992 redistribution in New South Wales, much trumpeting was heard about the return of the "traditional" Division of Riverina – however, this was not accurate. The main part of the City of Wagga Wagga had never previously been included in the Division of Riverina (although the village of North Wagga had been part of Riverina from 1906-49).

The geographic designation "Riverina" refers to the agricultural irrigation areas around Griffith, Leeton, Coleambally, Jerilderie, Finley, Deniliquin and Moama; and these areas made up the Division of Riverina for the majority of the 20th Century before 1984. [Deniliquin and Moama were in the Division of Barrier from 1913-22, but they also remained in Riverina after 1977 when Finley and Jerilderie were transferred to Farrer.] Even though Albury has never been part of the Division of Riverina before, it would be effectively 'cut off' from the rest of the State if these areas were administered from Wagga Wagga.

The Shires of Lockhart and Wakool have also been administered from Albury in recent years, and I would have liked to include them in this proposal; however, their inclusion would have left other neighbouring proposed Divisions of Hume and Parkes with insufficient electors over the 7-year cycle of this redistribution given the slow nature of population growth in this area.

PROPOSED DIVISION 2.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
BOOROWA SHIRE	1783
COOLAMON SHIRE	2889
COOTAMUNDRA SHIRE	5532
COWRA SHIRE	8950
GUNDAGAI SHIRE	2621
HARDEN SHIRE	2775
JUNEE SHIRE	3561
LOCKHART SHIRE	2382
TEMORA SHIRE	4340
TUMBARUMBA SHIRE	2350
TUMUT SHIRE	7653
WAGGA WAGGA CITY	37235
WEDDIN SHIRE	2744
YOUNG SHIRE	<u>8179</u>
	92994

I've heard that the AEO for New South Wales is a keen student of electoral history, but I'm sure even he doesn't know that the Australian Electoral Commission is about to commemorate a sad, sad anniversary on 13 July 2006. On that date, it will be exactly 100 years since the abolition of the Division of Bland and, consequently, since Australia's Commonwealth Elections agency last administered a Federal Electorate from Wagga Wagga.

Given that one of the AEC's guidelines for the naming of Divisions concerns the retention of Federation division names, I would propose that this Division be known as *Hume* and be administered from Wagga Wagga. *All* of the above areas – with the exception of the Lockhart Shire – have been included in the Division of Hume at one time or another since 1949. I would have liked to include the Lockhart Shire in my proposed Division of Riverina, but that would have left proposed Riverina with a population of over 94,000 and proposed Hume with a population of just over 90,000 – inappropriate solutions for Divisions in an area of relatively slow population growth.

PROPOSED DIVISION 3.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
GOULBURN MULWAREE REGIONAL	17953
UPPER LACHLAN SHIRE	5360
WINGECARIBEE SHIRE	29113
WOLLONDILLY SHIRE	26172
YASS VALLEY SHIRE	<u>9182</u>
	89780

This proposed Division – the only one of my proposed Divisions with an initial population of fewer than 90,000 – is based on the rapid-growth areas of the New South Wales Southern Highlands. The incorporation of these areas in a single Federal Electorate would mirror to an extent the prevailing population shifts recognised by the NSW State Elections Office in its recent redistribution – where a District in the South-West was abolished and a new District created in the Southern Highlands.

I would propose that this Division be known as *Macarthur* and be administered from Goulburn. This would allow the Redistribution Committee to remove an existing Division from the Sydney Metropolitan Area and facilitate the expansion of the remaining City seats to accommodate the requisite number of electors.

PROPOSED DIVISION 4.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
BATHURST REGIONAL	23302
BLAYNEY SHIRE	4575
BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY – part	14500 (approx.)
CABONNE SHIRE	8867
LITHGOW CITY	13728
ORANGE CITY	24039
OBERON SHIRE	<u>3416</u>
	92427

This is my proposed Division of *Calare*. I would propose that the existing Division be extended eastwards into the City of the Blue Mountains to accommodate the removal of Cowra to the proposed Division of Hume. The Blue Mountains share considerable Community of Interest with the western cities of Bathurst, Lithgow and Orange through regional business affiliations, sporting contact, rail transport and major motorways.

The City of the Blue Mountains is rather unfortunately situated in this time of need to reduce the number of NSW's Federal Electorates by 1. In addition to providing 14,000-15,000 electors to *Calare* in order to allow the number of remote rural Divisions to remain unchanged, I would envisage that, had my proposals extended in that direction, a further 6000-8000 electors would need to be transferred to the Division of Lindsay to make up the shortfall of electors in that Electorate.

PROPOSED DIVISION 5.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
BALRANALD SHIRE	1637
BLAND SHIRE	4285
BOGAN SHIRE	1946
BROKEN HILL CITY	13909
CARRATHOOL SHIRE - part	1766
CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE	1234
COBAR SHIRE	3005
DUBBO CITY	24378
FORBES SHIRE	6544
GILGANDRA SHIRE	3075
HAY SHIRE	2312
LACHLAN SHIRE	4729
NARROMINE SHIRE	4531
PARKES SHIRE	9883
UNINCORPORATED FAR WEST	540
WAKOOL SHIRE	3018
WENTWORTH SHIRE	<u>4161</u>
	90953

This is my proposed Division of *Parkes*. The Federal Electorate encompassing the Far West of NSW has always been regarded as the most problematic Division in the State for Redistribution Committees to maintain. Based upon the current population of the existing Division of Parkes, around 10,000 electors will need to be transferred into the Electorate if it is to be maintained beyond the next election.

The most logical areas from which to obtain these electors for the Division of Parkes are the Far Western areas of the existing Divisions of Farrer and Riverina. These areas have long histories of inclusion in the former Divisions of Barrier and Darling and, although it doesn't make a great deal of sense for the AEC to administer them from Dubbo, the fact that the Commission no longer maintains an office in Broken Hill is no reason to reduce the number of remote rural electorates in New South Wales.

I have also proposed that the City of Dubbo and the Shire of Gilgandra be reunited in this Division. These Local Government Areas have been situated in the same Federal Electorate – either Darling or Gwydir or Lawson – for the vast majority of the 20th Century. Their infrequent electoral separation by the AEC has usually resulted in considerable community consternation in both areas.

The “part” of the Carrathool Shire referred to is the remainder of the LGA to that part included in the proposed Division of Riverina.

It should also be remembered that the AEC's second guideline for the naming of Divisions says that “every effort should be made to retain the names of original Federation Divisions”. I'm sure I don't need to remind the keen electoral scholars on the Redistribution Committee that Parkes was the name of an original Federation Division – the fact that it was the name of the Federation Division encompassing the Western Suburbs of Sydney is completely irrelevant.

PROPOSED DIVISION 6.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
BOURKE SHIRE	1915
BREWARRINA SHIRE	1007
COONAMBLE SHIRE	2805
GUNNEDAH SHIRE	8068
GWYDIR SHIRE	3956
LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE	5444
MID WESTERN REGIONAL	14660
MOREE PLAINS SHIRE	8396
MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE	9510
NARRABRI SHIRE	8910
UPPER HUNTER SHIRE	9038
WALGETT SHIRE	4013
WARREN SHIRE	2069
WARRUMBUNGLE SHIRE	7044
WELLINGTON SHIRE	<u>5620</u>
	92455

This is my proposed Division of *Gwydir*. As is the case with the existing Division of Parkes, the existing Division of Gwydir currently features a relatively low enrolled population and will require an influx of around 10,000 electors if it is to survive beyond the 2007 Federal Election. And I would certainly concede that Gwydir is a difficult electorate to maintain, as it is not constructed around a single regional city as the other country electorates are.

However, by transferring the Muswellbrook Shire from the Division of Hunter, most of the shortfall in the enrolled population can be accommodated. Muswellbrook shares considerable community of interest with a number of neighbouring communities currently contained in the Division of Gwydir – such as Aberdeen, Scone, Murrurundi, Quirindi, Merriwa, and even Kandos and Mudgee.

The remainder of the necessary electors are sourced by reuniting the Warren Shire in a single Division, and by uniting the newly created Gwydir Shire in a single Division. The former Bingara Shire is currently contained in the existing Division of New England, but, if the residents of this area felt that sufficient community of interest existed to warrant amalgamation with the former Yallaroi Shire, then sufficient community of interest must also surely exist to warrant the transfer of the area to the Gwydir electorate as well.

PROPOSED DIVISION 7.

<u>L.G.A.</u>	<u>ENR. POP.</u>
ARMIDALE DUMARESQ CITY	15013
GLEN INNES SEVERN SHIRE	6147
GLOUCESTER SHIRE	3616
GUYRA SHIRE	2942
INVERELL SHIRE	10571
KYOGLE SHIRE	6246
TAMWORTH REGIONAL	36588
TENTERFIELD SHIRE	4487
URALLA SHIRE	4077
WALCHA SHIRE	<u>2332</u>
	92019

Finally, my proposed Division of *New England*. After allowing for the transfer of the former Bingara Shire to the proposed Division of Gwydir, and for the fact that, on 2 December 2005, the enrolled population of the existing Division of New England was around 2000 electors under the revised quota of 87,931, the above total enrolled population is achieved by transferring 2 other Local Government Areas into this Division.

I would propose that the Kyogle Shire be transferred from the existing of Page - which would then be in a position to accept more of the Ballina Shire from the existing rapidly growing Division of Richmond. I would also propose that the Gloucester Shire be transferred from the existing Division of Paterson, which could then be moved southwards to incorporate more of the metropolitan area of greater Newcastle.

NOMENCLATURE – DIVISION OF COOK

As a suggestion separate to the above, I would also like to propose that the naming of the Division of Cook be amended to include, or reflect entirely, the contribution to this nation's political history of Sir Joseph COOK (1860-1947), Member of the NSW Legislative Assembly 1891-1901, Member of the House of Representatives for Parramatta 1901-21, and Prime Minister of Australia 1913-14.

After migrating to New South Wales from his native England in 1886, Joseph Cook worked as a coal miner and union organiser in Lithgow. He was elected to the NSW Parliament in 1891, and was promoted to the leadership of the Labor Party by 1893. However, he left the ALP to be appointed Postmaster-General in Free Trade Premier George Reid's government the following year, and it was under the Free Trade banner that he was elected as the first Federal Member for Parramatta in 1901. Cook assumed the parliamentary leadership of the Free Traders in 1908, and the deputy leadership of the Fusion Liberal Party in 1909. Following Alfred Deakin's retirement from politics in 1913, Cook contested that year's Federal Election as Leader of the Opposition and was ultimately successful. However, his government lasted only 16 months in the face of a single-seat majority in the House and a hostile Senate.

Cook continued as Leader of the Opposition until 1917, and then served as Minister for the Navy and Treasurer in W.M. Hughes' Nationalist government. He resigned from Parliament in 1921 to serve as Australia's High Commissioner until 1927. His last major public role was as chairman of a Royal Commission investigating a claim by the South Australian State Government for special financial aid from the Commonwealth.

He passed away at his Bellevue Hill home on 30 July 1947, aged 86.

CONCLUSION

I hope and trust that the AEC's Redistribution Committee accepts the above proposals in the spirit with which they are submitted – that it should be a relatively simple task for the Committee to retain 7 Federal Electorates in the more remote regional areas of New South Wales.

Successive Redistribution Committees have treated rural New South Wales well – the Division of Darling was maintained for more than 75 years with a population much lower than other divisions, while the 1992 Redistribution Committee actually abolished 2 divisions in Sydney and created a new division in the country when New South Wales was last required to relinquish one of its Seats in the House of Representatives.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, in the unlikely event that this redistribution is not completed before the next Federal Election is called, the existing divisions of Blaxland and Reid would be the ones to be amalgamated to accommodate the loss of a Seat.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate, however incidentally, in the Federal redistribution process. I wish the Committee well in its deliberations over the upcoming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J E Lush', written in a cursive style.

John E. Lush

