

OBJECTION

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Objection Number **33**

by

June Whittaker OAM MA

1 Pages

From: Merv & June Whittaker [jmfairview@bordnet.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 24 August 2009 1:52 PM
To: NSW Redistribution
Cc: mike.kelly.mp@aph.gov.au
Subject: changes to Eden Monaro electorate boundaries



FOR: Australian Electoral Officer for NSW
FROM: June Whittaker, OAM MA

As a senior citizen and retired Commonwealth public servant and senior lecturer in History and Government, I feel impelled to lodge a protest against the Commission's decision to excise Tumbarumba LGA from the Eden Monaro Electorate, and append it to the Riverina Electorate.

I use the term "append" advisedly, for that will be its precise position and condition under the new arrangement: a tiny area of less than two thousand voters hanging off the extreme eastern end of an electorate which quickly drops from the Alpine Divide to the vast wheat and sheep plains stretching to the Far West. Having lived in the Riverina over many years, and currently spending my retirement years in the Tumbarumba Shire, I can assure you that Tumbarumba LGA has nothing in common with any part of the Riverina electorate or, for that matter, the Farrer electorate. Yet, before each of the last three Federal elections, Tumbarumba LGA has been moved from one electorate to another, so that voters are now quite confused.

When I moved to Tumbarumba in 1993, I became, like my co-electors, part of the Federal electorate of Farrer. In the subsequent State election, we were moved from Wagga Wagga to Hume electorate; then, just before the last Federal election, we were moved from Farrer to Eden Monaro. Now, hardly having got used to the last change, we have been moved from Eden Monaro to Riverina.

Geographically, the South West Slopes of this State with its mountains, snowfields, tall timber, vineyards and orchards and timber mills could not present a greater contrast to Riverina proper. This region's climate, which determines its agriculture, industries, infrastructure and recreational activities - all of which in their turn fashion the interests and needs of its population - guarantees that the S.W. Slopes will continue to be viewed by the rest of the Riverina electorate merely as a distant tourist venue.

No social geographer would consider the alpine region of Tumbarumba LGA to be a natural part of Riverina, for good reason: no common ground exists with regard to **geographical features, transport, communication or interests** - all criteria used by the Electoral Commission in its decision-making about changes to electoral boundaries. **Tumbarumba LGA, on the other hand, does have a community of interest with its eastern neighbour, the South East Slopes.**

When Tumbarumba LGA was sensibly married to the Eden Monaro Electorate, it was assumed that this community of interest had been finally recognised by the EC. In the less-than two years that have elapsed, the suitability of that marriage has been proved by the considerable benefits that flowed, to the general satisfaction of the electors who, hitherto, had not known what a Federal politician looked like. Now that this LGA has been moved once again - this time out of its electoral comfort zone - Tumbarumba people are understandably of the opinion that this most recent decision by the Commission has nothing to do with established criteria, and everything to do with, at best, a determination to get the numbers and equations right at the expense of a just and democratic outcome for the people of Tumbarumba LGA.

I respectfully request that the Electoral Commission review its decision to excise Tumbarumba LGA from Eden Monaro Electorate.

June Whittaker
24 August 2009