

OBJECTION

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Objection Number **172**

by

**Matt Thistlethwaite, General Secretary, Australian Labor Party,
NSW Branch**

6 Pages




Mr Tjoen San Lauw
Acting Australian Electoral Officer for New South Wales
AEC New South Wales
Level 3, Roden Cutler House,
24 Campbell Street,
Haymarket. NSW 2000

Dear Mr Lauw,

On behalf of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party, I have attached our objections to the proposed boundaries for Divisions of the Redistribution Committee for NSW.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Thistlethwaite
General Secretary
Australian Labor Party, NSW Branch

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH)

OBJECTIONS TO NSW REDISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE'S PROPOSALS

SUMMARY

The Redistribution Committee for NSW proposals, on any reasonable measure have poorly fulfilled the community of interest criteria of the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

Furthermore, the only way to correct such woeful mistakes of the Redistribution Committee would be to propose significant and substantial objections. Such a proposal would require drastic changes to the boundaries that would virtually lead to the entire State of NSW needing to be redrawn.

We are realistic enough to acknowledge the unlikelihood that the Augmented Commission would drastically change the Committee's proposals.

Therefore, the ALP has only two objections--- one of which involves fewer than 600 electors and the other proposing a simple transfer of 5 280 electors from Macarthur to Hume and 1432 electors from Werriwa to Macarthur.

We now shall outline what we believe are the main flaws in the proposed boundaries.

Where the NSW Redistribution Committee went wrong

- **Malapportionment**

The Committee appears to have completely misunderstood its obligations with respect to discharging its duties to meet the strict numbers test.

The 11 north of Sydney coastal Divisions running from Robertson to Richmond are collectively 17 931 or almost a fifth of a quota short of what their average should be. This is in its extremity simply malapportionment.

Certainly, Committees should have some latitude and we are not saying that electors in certain regions must balance exactly. These matters are ones of degree.

So that the Commissioners might better understand us let's examine the original suggestion of the ALP and that of the Liberal Party (LP) with regard to the Division of Hunter. Both political parties assumed both that the Hawkesbury River and the Great Divide would not be crossed in the 11 north of Sydney coastal divisions. (Aside from a transfer of 1 094 electors from New England into Page, the Committee took the same assumptions in framing its proposed boundaries).

Leaving aside the differences between the parties regarding particular Divisions, both the ALP and the LP recognised the need to transfer significant numbers of

electors from rural regions to the NSW north coast. Both the ALP and LP suggested transferring at least all of Mid Western Regional LGA (15 308 projected). Our only difference concerned which electors *in addition to* Mid Western Regional should be transferred.

What did the Committee do? It transferred (taking into account the transfer to Page) fewer than 3 000 electors (the ALP had proposed 16 700 and the LP 21 000). No reasons have been given for the blatant failure to more closely balance the numbers.

As a result of the north coastal divisions being consistently placed at the low end of the projections it then becomes impossible without enormous changes to the Committee's proposal to make an objection aimed at improving the community of interest of particular Divisions.

Hence, we consider it unrealistic to now advance an objection that would seek to incorporate all of Mid Western Regional LGA into Hunter, as such a change would have major flow on effects to more than a dozen proposed Divisions.

On the other hand, due to the paucity of numbers we are also unable to object to the placement of Rylstone and Kandos (both are in mid western Regional LGA) into the Hunter Division. Were these towns removed from Hunter then that Division would be below the minimum projected enrolment.

Similarly, we also are unable to propose an objection to the boundary between Dobell and Shortland purely due to the lack of numbers. The Commissioners might recall that during the suggestions phase both the ALP and the LP proposed the exact same northern boundary for Dobell. Both parties were minded to unite the suburb of Gorokan in the same Division as well providing clearer and more identifiable boundaries. Unfortunately, to enact such a change now would leave Shortland short of numbers with both Newcastle and Charlton unable to supply.

Finally, had the Committee included all of Mid Western Regional LGA into Hunter then it could then have added Broken Hill into Parkes. Instead, the Committee retained the rather unsatisfactory inclusion of Broken Hill in an Albury dominated Division.

- **Other anomalies**

The Redistribution Committee's decision to revert the Division of Macquarie to its pre 2007 boundaries is a major disappointment and was against the recommendation of all three major parties. As outlined in the 2006 suggestions of the ALP the Blue Mountains does not fit into a Division with the Hawkesbury.

Further poor decisions based on community of interest by the Redistribution Committee are evident in the inclusion of Revesby into Hughes; Auburn into McMahon and the Southern Highlands into Throsby.

Auburn has never been in the same Division as Strathfield since Federation. The Council boundary, Rockwood cemetery, and the stadium (previously the

brickworks) have hitherto been a barrier. Auburn should have been placed in Blaxland where it was prior to 1969. Revesby should also have been included in Blaxland.

During the suggestions and comments on suggestions phase, the ALP went to some length detailing the recent history of Illawarra Divisions and explained why it would be desirable (given that new territory must be taken) to maintain the current arrangement whereby the Liverpool LGA supplies any shortfall.

Instead the Committee chose to add part of Bankstown LGA (Revesby) to Hughes as well as the Southern Highlands to Throsby. At least in the latter case there is some precedent. As recently as 2001, Throsby contained Bowral. We acknowledge that Bowral has a better connection with the Shellharbour area than it does with Nowra. But coastal areas still align better than highland/coastal areas.

ALP OBJECTIONS

1. Transfer that part of Wollondilly LGA presently in the Division of Macarthur to the Division of Hume.

Hume

The importance of community of interest leads to a strong case for the transfer of part of Wollondilly LGA presently in the Division of Macarthur to the proposed Division of Hume.

The 2009 Report of the Redistribution Committee for NSW (par 64) stated, "*Local government and regional boundaries were used extensively in rural and regional areas as indicators of community of interests. The Committee adopted this approach based on the prominent role that local government plays in providing a significant range of services to, and in representing the interests of their communities in rural and regional New South Wales.*

The 2009 Report of the Redistribution Committee for NSW further noted (par 74), "*A number of local councils and community organisations made submissions based on the criterion of community of interest. These submissions sought unification of LGAs within one electoral division; relocation with neighbouring LGAs in another electoral division; and consideration of the impact of large electoral divisions in terms of elector disadvantage, the lack of a community of interest, and concern that local issues may be overtaken by issues of more populous parts of the electoral division.*

These principles set out in the General Strategy would support the proposal to align the communities of interest of Wollondilly (A) with the electoral Division of Hume. These geographical areas are still rural residential areas that share the same associations and interest with the towns of The Oaks and Mt Hunter.

Furthermore there is the risk that separating these areas into separate Electoral Divisions while being in the same LGA threatens to allow the local issues to be overtaken by the more populous areas of Campbelltown.

This view is supported by the Wollondilly Shire Council who submitted to the Redistribution Committee a request that argued that services and representations are more difficult to attain when spread across multiple local Federal Members of Parliament.

Macarthur

To keep Macarthur within an appropriate range for quota you would transfer parts of Liverpool (C) West LGA (Austral) into Macarthur.

This again would reflect the communities of interest between Austral and Rossmore as semi-rural residential areas with similar lifestyle patterns. An issue already acknowledged by the 2009 Report of the Redistribution Committee for NSW (par 193), "*The Committee therefore, recognising the similarity in semi-rural characteristics between Cobbitty, Oran Park and Theresa Park already in Macarthur, and the areas surrounding Bringelly, Rossmore, Badgerys Creek, Wallacia and Warragamba in the Division of Fowler, proposes to transfer 9 470 electors from these latter areas into the Division of Macarthur.*"

Effect of change:

<u>DIVISION (as proposed)</u>	<u>19.02.09</u>	<u>16.07.12</u>
<u>1. MACARTHUR</u>	88 665	101 484
<u>Less</u> Wollondilly (A) (part) <u>To Hume</u>	-4 539	-5 280
<u>Plus</u> Liverpool (C) West (Austral) <u>Ex Werriwa</u>	+1 432	+1 488
<u>TOTAL</u>	85 558	97 692
<u>2. WERRIWA</u>	89 091	97 021
<u>Less</u> Liverpool (C) West (Austral) <u>To Macarthur</u>	-1 432	-1 488
<u>TOTAL</u>	87 659	95 533
<u>3. HUME</u>	92 874	96 456

Plus <i>Wollondilly (A) (part)</i>	+4 539	+5 280
Ex Macarthur		
TOTAL	97 413	101 736

2. Transfer Lake George: Palerang (A)- Part B (part) from Hume to Eden Monaro

Eden Monaro

Since the 2007 Federal redistribution, the communities of Bungendore and Bywong have been separated due to the redrawn boundaries that were implemented post the 2007 Election.

The redrawn boundaries have caused inconvenience for both communities by creating significant distances to travel for residents in these communities by shifting their point of access to their elected representative up to 70 kilometres further than it had been post 2007.

The communities of Bungendore and Bywong hold strong societal and cultural ties through their sharing of government provided public amenity and community centred activities based in Bungendore.

Bywong and its surrounding localities have no direct nor indirect involvement with the community of Goulburn (the next closest regional centre) and it would reflect the communities best interests in returning these areas to Eden Monaro so they can serviced by the elected member in Queanbeyan.

<u>DIVISION (as proposed)</u>	<u>19.02.09</u>	<u>16.07.12</u>
<u>1. EDEN MONARO</u>	<u>94 873</u>	<u>101 506</u>
Plus Palerang A Part B (Lake George: CCD 1200106, 170601A,170601D, 170505)	+529	+576
Ex Hume		
TOTAL	95 402	102 082
<u>2. HUME</u>	<u>92 874</u>	<u>96 456</u>
Less Palerang A Part B (Lake George: CCD 1200106)	-529	-576
TOTAL	92 345	95 880