

OBJECTION

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW



Objection Number 176

by

John Pyke

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From: John Pyke [j.pyke@qut.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 4 September 2009 4:30 PM
To: NSW Redistribution
Subject: Objection - removal of name of Reid from the elections map

Dear Commissioners, although I have no objection to the drawing of boundaries in your proposed redistribution of NSW, I do object to the deletion of the electorate name Reid. I can appreciate that one logical way of reducing the number of State electorates was to shift all boundaries progressively towards the Homebush area, and end up with a final electorate that was about half the old Reid and half the old Lowe – but Reid's name should be left there. Certainly it should not be replaced by the name of possibly the most ineffectual Prime Minister this country has ever had.

George Reid was one of those who contributed most significantly to the drafting of the Commonwealth Constitution and to the shape taken by our federal system. In view of the tactical game he played in the referendum campaign, he was derided as "Yes, No" Reid but a fairer nickname would be "Yes, but only on New South Wales's terms" Reid. His obstruction of the first referendum was his way of having the Constitution amended (by the Premiers' Conference of Jan-Feb 1899) to make it more directly democratic and rather more centralist. Believers in a balanced federalism may think this was bad, but he was doing his job as Premier of the most populous State and ensuring that the people of that State would have a bigger say in federal decisions as against the people of the less populous States. It is entirely appropriate that his name should stay on the electoral map of the State whose influence he fought for.

I note that of the other Founding Fathers there are still electorates commemorating the contribution of Deakin, Griffith, Barton, Kingston, Isaacs, Forrest, Braddon and Higgins – a pretty neat list of *most* of the most significant ones. (And there's an O'Connor, though it is named after a different O'Connor from the one who was a founding father.) I doubt that the Commissioners for the States that *they* came from would ever take their names off the electoral map. Reid should stay there too – his influence on the Constitution is up there with the other eight. Braddon is an interesting comparison – his main achievement was the inclusion of a section that the mainlanders referred to as a 'blot', but he was fighting for what he perceived as the interests of Tasmania and it is proper that he should be remembered in the name of a division of that State. Reid, who was responsible for the termination of the 'blot', should be remembered in *his* State for a similar reason.

Regards

John Pyke
Lecturer in Constitutional Law and History
QUT Brisbane

