

PUBLIC SUGGESTION

The Federal Redistribution 2009
NSW

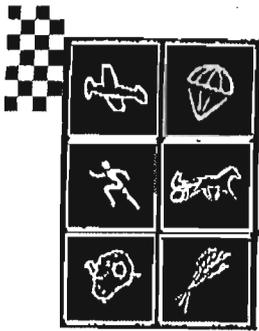


Public Suggestion Number 102

by

Temora Shire Council

3 Pages



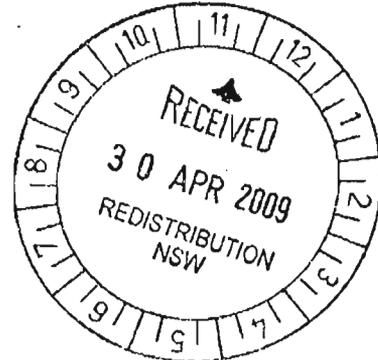
TEMORA SHIRE COUNCIL

Our reference:

GCL:ATR:E/03/04

30 April 2009

Redistribution Committee
PO Box K406
HAYMARKET NSW 1240



Dear Sir

RE: 2009 NSW ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

Temora Shire Council is deeply concerned at the potential ramification of the proposed electoral redistribution to be undertaken in NSW.

Details from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) website indicate that NSW will lose a seat in the federal redistribution to Queensland, based on population figures and formulas in the Electoral Act.

Background

The Australian continent is diverse with high population density in capital city locations and significant portions of the coast line also have denser population than inland Australia.

This is particularly evident in NSW, where 34 metropolitan electorates represent only 1.38% (11,046sq km) of land volume. The remaining 15 electorates cover 98.62% (790,330sq km). This representation is based solely on population and does not reflect other issues.

Trends

The trend in Australia presently (and for several generations) has been for rural areas to be depopulated as technology becomes more prevalent in agriculture and agriculture becomes relatively less important and employs fewer people.

The trend has seen a shift of seats for rural areas to urban areas. The impact of this is that inland rural areas are becoming larger and correspondingly representation to rural areas is decreasing.

Submission

Logically any system that is fundamentally based on population alone is flawed. Simply a member of parliament representing an electorate of 42,021sq km (Riverina Electorate), cannot possibly give constituents the attention that an electorate of 30sq km (Wentworth Electorate).

Our local member, Kay Hull, has worked tirelessly for the community and is required to travel hours daily to tour her electorate. Increasing the size of these electorates only exacerbates the problem.

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The Electoral Act is specific on the calculation of electoral entitlement. There are however many examples where the unique geographic nature of Australia has been considered. Notably, the representation at local government level is based on service delivery and equity, not population or other flawed methodology. Equity is not always related to statistics.

Indeed the Electoral Act recognises this fact by providing Tasmania with a minimum 5 seat representation despite not being supported by population.

Temora Shire Council urged the AEC to carefully consider the issues of equity and representation in their deliberations on this matter. Please consider the possibility of removing a metropolitan seat, not take the simplistic option and base the decision on population which will eventually lead to the removal of a rural seat.

At a purely local level, our Council area has been successively moved from electorate to electorate at both state and federal level. Our current situation is difficult for a local member however we feel adequately represented by a hard working local member. Removing Riverina or significantly altering it would make that representation all the more difficult.

Yours faithfully



GC Lavelle
GENERAL MANAGER