

# **PUBLIC SUGGESTION**

The Federal Redistribution 2009  
NSW



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**Public Suggestion Number 107**

**by**

**Mrs Kay Hull MP**

**4 Pages**



27 April, 2009.

Redistribution Committee for New South Wales  
PO Box K406  
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Committee,

My purpose in writing today is to formally make a submission to the Redistribution Committee for New South Wales on the redistribution of a Federal electorate from that state to Queensland.

I would like to voice my full support to retain the seat of Riverina. I fervently believe due consideration needs to retain all seats in regional NSW.

The realistic fact of the matter is there has been considerable population shift from regional Australia to our coasts. We cannot pretend this sea-change phenomenon has not accelerated in the last decade, grossly compounded by eight successive years of drought. In the first instance, I would like to state that population projections from regional NSW must take into consideration the impact of this debilitating drought and the impact the end of the drought will have on population retention and growth.

The magnitude of the drought must not be underestimated, and I would implore the Committee to factor in the impact this has had on population drift. I believe wholeheartedly we will see the vast percentage points in projected population alter greatly when we experience more successful years. In interesting statistic to put this drought into perspective is the fact current conditions are worse than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 'worst case scenario' for the year 2050. In light of that, there is great promise in the regions, and I am of the firm belief we need to maintain appropriate access to our elected representatives.

The Riverina itself is a unique seat in the fact its name also reflects a geographical location. Riverina's current boundaries essentially reflect a broad community of interests in the sense of its agricultural characteristics. The extremities of its current borders mark stark changes in topography with the Snowy Mountains and the Great Dividing Range in the east, and the vast open Hay plains to the West. The 42000 square kilometres that lie within encompass some of the most productive land in the nation, and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area in the west of the electorate truly is the food bowl of Australia.

Although the Riverina encompasses many different industries and forms of agriculture, it does not differ greatly from one end to the other, and its people share much in common. Sheep, cattle, pigs, citrus, grapes, wheat and barley are grown in all corners of the electorate, which is distinguished from other agricultural electorates by the typical mixed farming enterprise found in the Riverina. Irrigation plays a pivotal role along the Murrumbidgee River, which spans the entire length of the current seat of Riverina and runs parallel with the Sturt Highway all the way to Wentworth Shire.

The Shires of the current electorate all share very similar issues and broadly reflect one another. The economic, social and regional attributes of the Shires that make up the Riverina electorate integrate exceptionally. Several neighbouring Shires have been in and out of Riverina in recent times, and I have personally represented Hillston and Hay within the seat, and would like to do so again.

Socially, the Riverina integrates as a defined area, and contains many sporting leagues spanning from Wagga Wagga to Hay in the west, West Wyalong to the north and Cootamundra in the east.

Economically, the Shires and towns that form the Riverina share much in common. Many of the Shires have been incorporated in recent times into a group known as the Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils. With the ongoing drought, RAMROC has had to focus much of its attention on representing the interests of its irrigation communities, but the Organisation aptly reflects the economic, social and regional bonds that differentiate the wider Riverina.

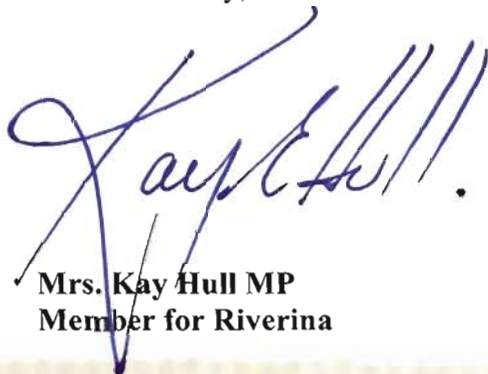
Whilst I am aware the Redistribution Committee is bound by S. 66 of the Act requiring population quotas to be met, appropriate consideration must be given to communication and travel in regional areas. Whilst my metropolitan colleagues can very nearly walk around their electorates, there are seats in regional NSW such as Calare that cover an area larger than Great Britain and the state of Victoria! Parkes alone covers an area five times the size of Tasmania, which is made up of five electorates!

The demands placed on those Members to represent their constituents in these scenarios are immense to say the least. The pressure to adequately perform the role of the local Member is made immensely difficult by the tyranny of distance, and whilst email and mobile phones do allow you to communicate with those in far flung corners of the State, it will never take the place of your demands as a Member physically.

It is often said NSW needs to mean more than Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. There are currently 15 regional electorates making up 98.62% of the State, with city electorates making up 1.38% of the State. I will not argue with the population statistics for those areas, suffice to say there needs to be a degree of rationality applied to the redistribution decision. In my mind it makes far more sense to alter the boundaries of a metropolitan electorate than it does to add tens of thousands of kilometres to another. I am arguing solely on the issue of appropriate access to your local Member in regional NSW.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kay Hull', with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

**Mrs. Kay Hull MP**  
**Member for Riverina**

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