



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

# Comment on Objections 228

Christopher McLelland

3 pages

Chairman  
New South Wales Redistribution Committee  
Australian Electoral Commission

25 July 2024

**Subject: Comment on Objections to the AEC draft redistribution plans  
- In particular relating to abolition of the federal seat of North Sydney**

Dear Committee members

I am Christopher McLelland. I live in the Kirribilli neighbourhood in the North Sydney electorate.

I fully support the initial suggestion to the AEC lodged by my Federal Member Kylea Tink MP (Suggestion 22). This retains the Division of North Sydney within a curtilage wholly includes its constituent LGAs (North Sydney, Willoughby, Lane Cove and Hunters Hill) extended as necessary to meet its projected quota. It also retains the North Sydney - Crows Nest - St Leonards spine as its focal axis and hence the essential integrity of the Division.

Any geographic expansion deemed necessary should logically be outwards to align as closely as possible with the bounding perimeters of its component LGAs, which are the principal determinants of the character and cohesive qualities and shared interests of a community and, collectively, the entire Division itself. This is also reinforced /enhanced by the natural geographic features of the Harbour, the Lane Cove River and natural parkland and bushland that surround it.

Minimal sections of straight roads make clear definitions with abutting Divisions and LGAs. One of these appropriately is called Boundary Road. In determining the realignment, careful reassessment of projected demographic growth would also need to be undertaken of the present divisions of North Sydney and the Divisions to its north and east - Bradfield, Warringah, and Mackellar; one that draws on a range of data sources. Not just the crude ABS extrapolation which has already been overtaken by reality. This will reveal that, of these Divisions, North Sydney is the only one likely to fulfil its population target.

North Sydney has a growing population not a diminishing as the AEC projects. The AEC's own electoral data gathered as recently as May this year will confirm this as is the obvious visible reality. Development has been planned and undertaken over the last decade with numerous residential projects along the spine completed or commencing. Major infrastructure projects, most recently the new Metro line linking Chatswood, St Leonards, Crows Nest and North Sydney (Victoria Cross) to Barangaroo and the city's CBD, together with the legislated rezoning laws will ensure this residential intensification in the area will persist.

**Radical Realignments counter to community interests.** The most striking aspect of the proposed redistribution is the illogicality of it:

- Taking a clearly evident thriving and growing Division with the potential to continue this trajectory and redistribute it in such a way as to sustain the evidently flagging trajectories of McKellar, Warringah and Bradfield and enhance Bennelong.
- No social benefits to the community are apparent. The severances and disruptions work to the detriment of community interest. North Sydney has had an established proclivity form an Independent to represent them, dating back to the 1990s with the Hon Ted Mack, considered father of the modern trend toward Independent representation.
- Contorted and arbitrary street by street boundaries have had to be drawn to achieve the outcome sought.

The elimination of the division of North Sydney and the proposed profile of the redistribution to its adjoining Divisions to bolster their demographic projections bears a marked similarity to that proposed by the Liberal Party for the Divisions on the north side of the harbour (Suggestion 47).

The existing and projected growth statistics for these Divisions put forward by the AEC are also closely aligned. Neither of these sets of numbers can be mathematically reconciled. Nor are they consistent with the equivalent data provided by the corresponding LGAs that comprise the respective electorates of North Sydney, Warringah and Mackellar.

While numerous other objections have been lodged drawing attention to where legislated guidelines for setting boundaries may have been transgressed, such as severing areas of established instances of shared community interest, the Liberal Party's observations are extremely supportive of the AEC's proposal excepting some minor detail (Objection 578). The AEC's report on the decision to abolish North Sydney notes that the Nationals (who to my knowledge have never run a candidate in that seat) supported the abolition. The AEC's report did not mention the Liberal Party's proposition to retain North Sydney in name only by substituting it for the name Warringah. Meanwhile carving the existing Division of North Sydney into three parts shoe-horned into adjacent electorates with no consideration of the strong interlinkages within the existing electorate. The political objective is plain to all.

Steggall Suggestion 42: Extend into North Sydney and cede a portion to Warringah. This ignores the incongruity of the values and objectives of Warringah's key constituency and those of an inner metropolitan area. This would give rise to conflict as to who the elected representative should represent: of the Warringah Expressway changes, represent the core of that electorate, who saw it as facilitating their access to the city, or represent the grafted-on portion of the electorate, who has lost many acres of scarce open space and radical diminution of tree cover.

Tink Objection 686: This is a significant departure from her initial proposal (suggestion 22) which reflected the expectations of her constituency. It now disenfranchises a significant element of this constituency and likewise, no doubt those who been disenfranchised from Bradfield. The simple reality is that Warringah, Bradfield and McKellar as they stand are not likely to achieve their

respective quotas and rely on the successfully developing Division of North Sydney to justify their continued existence. It is perverse not to recognise North Sydney with its long-established community networks for what it is in its own right, and let the other peri and outer metropolitan divisions that share many common values decide the redistributions within their own overall zones.

## **Conclusion**

The most logical and straightforward redistribution would be as follows:

- Retain the inner metropolitan Division of North Sydney with its boundaries determined by the LGAs it encompasses.
- Hunters Hill, which is its own distinct enclave could be transferred between North Sydney and Bennelong to balance the quotas of each depending on their respective realistically projected rates of development.
- Extend Warringah and Mackellar westwards as necessary into their respective hinterlands, retaining Pittwater Road as their nominal shared boundary line.
- Consider amalgamation of Bradfield and Berowra as their commonality is around the North Shore rail line to achieve their required quotas.

I would appreciate you giving the matters I've raised serious consideration.

Yours faithfully

Christopher McLelland