



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 184

Jane Hearn

3 pages

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1 July 2024

Dear AEC

Objection to Proposed Abolition of the Federal Seat of North Sydney

I am a long term Waverton resident and elector of North Sydney and object to the proposed abolition of the Federal seat of North Sydney. The reasons for this objection are explained out below.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute real world “on the ground” understanding of how North Sydney localities operate. In particular, I am concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the:

- identity and interests of the electors and residents of North Sydney;
- natural features and barriers that militate cohesion and access to electorate services;
- project population growth and existing development plans; and
- cultural, economic and social interconnections within the North Sydney locations.

Importantly, it also appears that both major parties have made submissions that are in their own interest. The major political parties have significant political interests at stake and concerns about North Sydney’s historic sense of identity. While both of the major parties are entitled to express their view, neither represents this electorate. Their submissions should be viewed with extreme caution.

There is a historically strong sense of identity in North Sydney and the seat cannot be abolished without creating an equally strong sense of “disenfranchisement”. This sense of a type of “disenfranchisement” will exist despite not losing their right to vote. The existence of compulsory preferential voting *per se* is not a substitute for a sense of belonging, participation and access to one’s Federal Member of Parliament.

Abolition will dislocate and disconnect vibrant localities from the heart of their electorate to the fringes separated by major arterial roadways and Middle Harbor. These major roads and natural features already separate communities. The abolition of North Sydney will exacerbate rather than mitigate these physical barriers. These barriers are already the reason why there is limited to no cultural or social cohesion between residents of the seat of North Sydney and residents across middle Harbor and Manly.

In my circle, the movement of people is within and across North Sydney, Wollstonecraft, Waverton, St Leonard’s and Crows Nest. To go shopping people will go to Chatswood, use medical and dentistry services locally or along the North Line – not across Middle Harbor.

The Warringah Expressway, Military Road and Middle Harbor are already significant barriers that dissect the community. The Expressway and Military Road alone is a major disincentive to travel up towards Manly or across to the northern beaches. The Pacific Highway also dissects Chatswood. Bearing in mind these major barriers other options could be considered that, while not perfect, make more sense from a North Sydney perspective.

In practice, resident electors of Waverton travel up and down the North Sydney Line for medical appointments, shopping, schools, community activities, work and family. Also, as older people

downsize from upper north shore houses, they are moving into lower north shore apartments. These areas are also populated by young renters and young families who work in North Sydney and the CBD and use Lane Cove National Park for recreation.

In my own immediate area, there are numerous and strong community-based connections, for example, through local community centers (such as North Sydney Community Centre) and the Coal Loader Centre, reserves like Balls Head and Berry's Bay. These areas have been fought for by local residents, who have a long history of participation in protecting the environment and social issues. no connection to locations like Manly.

How would these groups connect, participate and access their future Federal Member who will not be located in North Sydney?

How would active volunteers access the electorate office? They won't.

This area is also home to the Royal North Shore Hospital, the Mater Hospital and North Sydney TAFE. While these institutions are on the fringe of the seat, the staff are not. Staff and students rent locally in high density suburbs like Wollstonecraft. Their access to their Federal MP will be severely hindered; whereas now they are a short bus ride to North Sydney electorate office. There are numerous federal matters relevant to medical staff, new migrants and students. How will they access an electorate office in Manly?

Here is a practical personal example – I recently enrolled in a TAFE ceramics course – the course is taught at Brookvale TAFE and Hornsby TAFE campuses. There is no way physically for me to attend Brookvale TAFE, no public transport option and faced with extremely high density congested major roads no one in my position would do it. This is despite the Brookvale ceramics department reputedly being the best in Australia, getting there is a nightmare. I have enrolled in Hornsby-one direct transport link or the Pacific Highway.

I cannot recall the last time we crossed Middle Harbor for anything because of the physical difficulty of getting to places like Manly or the northern beaches. The last time we went to Manly we went via Circular Quay to get a ferry!

The proposal also appears to have undervalued the projected population growth. The Master Plan for St Leonard's and Crows Nest is currently being implemented, with significant population growth in high rise apartments. These high-rise developments are literally going up right now in North Sydney, Crows Nest and St Leonard's. Both sides of the Pacific Highway, which includes Wollstonecraft, are rezoned and being redeveloped. North Sydney itself is also both a high-rise residential location and an important business center and place of employment for thousands of people.

In fact, North Sydney is the third largest business center in the country - what connection does it have too Manly? None. I think that incorporating the CBD of North Sydney into the seat of Warringah would relegate it to the margins. It sends the message that our major employment and economic center is not important. This is a major mistake in my opinion and once done cannot be undone for a generation.

Finally, the pattern of life I describe is not atypical. We are typical North Sydney electors, who live in an apartment, use local facilities for recreation, cultural and social events. Moving Wollstonecraft and Waverton into Warringah would effectively cut us off from a Federal MP. It will make the electorate office in accessible to us and other residents North Sydney.

If the seat is to be abolished the question is why Wollstonecraft would not be included in Bradfield? There does not appear to have been much consideration of that option. The other option is to expand North Sydney northwest, at least avoiding making physical barriers even more of a problem.

The proposal to abolish North Sydney is advocated by both major parties for their own reasons. I trust the committee will take into consideration the views of resident electors who know intimately the social, cultural, economic fabric of their communities and the impact of the geographic features on those relationships. Decreasing access to Federal MP services is not a positive outcome.

This is a complex process and adjustments are needed but the complete abolition of North Sydney is neither necessary or the best option. I trust you will reconsider the options available.

Yours sincerely,

Jane

Jane Hearn
Wollstonecraft
NSW 2065