



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

# Objection 464

Joanne Eckermann

2 pages

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To The NSW Redistribution Committee

**SUBJECT: Objection to draft plans to abolish the federal seat of North Sydney in the proposed 2024 NSW redistribution**

I am writing to express my strong objection to the planned redistribution which will abolish the historic electoral seat of North Sydney.

The AEC must be conscious of community movements, and there was no more notable movement last election than the election of teal candidates. I have never seen my community band together in a more active way. There were 70 year olds in my Saturday Pilates class campaigning for Kylea Tink. Our community demonstrated it truly cares about our representation, and it has a voice. Finally, we moved away from being a “default liberal seat”, and people here were celebrating it.

Now, just as these independent candidates have started to play such a vital role in our national politics, one of their seats is abolished. It makes the AEC look out of touch, ignoring community concerns, and gives a very clear impression of gerrymandering.

I might add, I didn't vote for Kylea. I'm not writing because she was my vote. As someone who teaches ethics regularly in my professional life, we always emphasise it is not just ethical conduct that is vital, it is also the *appearance* of ethical conduct. I believe the AEC needs to reflect on the appearance of the ethics of getting rid of a teal candidate in **her first term**, a seat that was liberal for 19 years prior to that. I hate to tell you AEC, if you can't see it for yourself, but it is all the electorate is talking about, and “its not a good look”.

I am not writing for political reasons. I am writing because our community is unique, and we deserve representation as a cohesive community group. We have some of the largest sports clubs in NSW. We have an active community who truly identify with where they live. We are physically different – we straddle North and Inner West in our thinking, and our connecting bridges and waterways. We are different to the seats of Bennelong or Warriewood or Bradfield . My grandfather Terence O'Donnell can be found on the census and records in Foss Street Hunters Hill where he went to school in the late 1800s – I know, I have them. My grandmother lived in

North Sydney where Mary Mackillop chatted to her every day on her way to the convent and my uncle delivered parcels by horse and cart. Our connections to this electorate, to its place, to its name, they are old, and they are part of our history. Every day on my way to Hunters Hill public school I walk past historic Vienna Cottage where Terence's sister lived. To abolish a historical electorate that goes back to Federation is to disregard a long tradition. I am appalled that the AEC would even consider this. Perhaps you don't understand because you don't live here. Perhaps you should have asked the people, and publicised this fairly hidden move a bit more clearly to affected voters. Everyone I have spoken with in our community is either completely unaware of the boundary change, or vehemently opposed. There is no in-between.

Now I have talked about the past, but we must also consider the future. Our area is an area of rapid growth. Many families are moving into the area, often from the inner west, and this is part of the slowly shifting political landscape here. Your projections have clearly not allowed for this growth. I query why. Because our area is convenient for city or North Sydney employment, and because of the access to a wide variety of schools almost unmatched in other areas, it is growing, and it is growing quickly, particularly with young families. Quite simply if your projections are not based on accurate growth, and I believe they are not, you've chosen the wrong seat.

Let's have some facts. Our electorate, including where I live in Henley & Hunters Hill, includes a top 10 rich list postcode in Australia based on ATO figures recently released. We also contain one of the highest housing commission dwellings per capita of any council area in NSW. How is that for a contrast? The same cannot be said for Bradfield, or Bennelong, or Warriewood. To absorb those diverse voices into the surrounding electorate is to make a mistake for democracy and representation.

I believe your decision is based on a lack of understanding of our distinct community values, and underestimating the growth we all expect in the coming years. Our community's voice will not be appropriately represented at a Federal level should the boundary change. I believe your decision also destroys an important part of our democratic history since Federation. For the reasons noted above, I strongly object to this boundary change.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Eckermann