



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 723

Conor Magee

9 pages

Dear Commissioners,

I thank you for the opportunity to object to the proposed redistribution of the New South Wales Federal electoral boundaries.

This objection does not seek to provide commentary on the redistribution as a whole. It seeks to object to the poor outcome that the redistribution has achieved in the Sydney Metropolitan Area, south of Sydney Harbour.

The electorates with which this objection is concerned with are:

- Barton
- Blaxland
- Cook
- Fowler
- Grayndler
- Hughes
- Kingsford Smith
- Sydney
- Watson
- Wentworth
- Werriwa

I have divided this objection into three sections.

1. Compliance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*
2. The Key Issues for Resolution
3. Recommended Borders

I hope that the augmented commission finds my objection helpful in finalising the redistribution process for New South Wales.

Kind Regards,
Conor Magee



1. Compliance with the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918

In my objection, I focus on ensuring that the changes I propose meet the requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Act). I take particular interest in ensuring that the electoral boundaries that I propose are in full compliance with section 66 of the Act.

The redistribution commission set out on Page 42 of the redistribution report principles which it sought to apply to the developing of electorate boundaries, in addition to the need to comply with the Act. I have considered these principles in addition to the act when preparing my objection.

I note that the first three principles set out on Page 42 broadly align with the requirements of s66 of the Act and assist in ensuring that the proposed redistribution complies with the act. The fourth principle, “the maximum number of electors are retained in their current electoral division, to the extent possible,” does not fully align with the requirements of the Act.

Section 66(3)(b)(v) of the Act requires the Redistribution Committee to consider the boundaries of existing electoral divisions in New South Wales, with this factor being subordinate to consideration of factors i, ii and iv. The requirement for s66(3)(b)(v) to be subordinate is specified in sub-section 66(3A) of the Act.

A focus on ensuring that the maximum number of electors are retained in their current electoral division, the Redistribution Commission could fail to meet the requirements of s66(3)(b) of the Act if it means drawing divisions with greater concern for existing boundaries over concerns of community of interest, travel and communication. In particular, I am concerned that the proposed boundaries of the divisions of Cook and Kingsford Smith may have been drawn on this basis.

As such, I argue that the commissioners should make all efforts to ensure that the considerations of s66(3)(b)(i)-(iv) are given maximum weight possible, even if this means moving greater number of voters than required to meet the numerical requirements in s66(3)(a) of the Act.

Further, I object to the commissioners continuing to use the principle, “the maximum number of electors are retained in their current electoral division, to the extent possible,” as one of the principles of drawing electoral boundaries. The other three principles, coupled with the numerical and community of interest requirements of s66 of the Act already sufficiently act to reduce the transfer of voters between divisions.

I am concerned that a number of the electoral boundaries proposed by the commissioners do not consider the factors outlined of s66(3)(b)(i)-(iv). This means that the electoral boundaries proposed by the commissioners are substandard and can be improved on by taking these factors into account.

2. Key Issues for Resolution

There are three key areas where I believe that the proposed electoral boundaries that have arisen from the draft redistribution are unacceptable.

- The seat of Kingsford Smith crossing the Cooks River to include parts of Bayside LGA west of Sydney Airport
- The seat of Cook crossing the Georges River to include parts of Dolls Point, Sans Souci and Sandringham, north of the Georges River
- The seat of Sydney lacking continuity, with two distinct portions of the seat either side of Rozelle Bay

It is possible for the commissioners to draw boundaries that meet the both the numerical and community of interest requirements of the Act and resolve the issues I have identified.

The proposed division of Kingsford Smith

I believe that the most complex issue facing this redistribution relates to the seat of Kingsford Smith. Before the commissioners consider how to deal with the issues facing other seats across NSW, but particularly those in Sydney, it is important that the commissioners consider the seat of Kingsford Smith.

Based on the numerical requirements of the Electoral Act, I accept that one electorate may need to cross the Cooks River east of Strathfield. Prior to this redistribution, Barton crossed the Cooks River. At this redistribution, the electoral commission has two options that satisfy the numerical requirement – Kingsford Smith and Grayndler.

In their proposed electoral boundaries, the commissioners recommend Kingsford Smith cross the Cooks River.

The division of Kingsford Smith has existed since 1949. Since 1955, the seat has typically been based on Maroubra and the suburbs surrounding it within the Randwick and former Botany Bay LGAs. At various points in history, the electorate has also included suburbs within the former South Sydney LGA including Rosebery, Zetland, Waterloo and Redfern. At no time has the electorate ever extended south to include suburbs to the west of Sydney Airport, south of the Cooks River. This reflects the reality that there is no community of interest between areas east of Sydney Airport and those areas to its west.

There is no demonstrable community of interest between the Randwick LGA and the former Rockdale LGA. As I previously noted, there are little community of interest between the former Botany Bay LGA part of Bayside LGA and the former Rockdale LGA part of the Bayside LGA. There are few travel links between the two parts of Bayside LGA, and no direct and clear travel links between the Randwick LGA and the former Rockdale LGA. In fact, to travel from one side of the proposed Kingsford Smith in Coogee, to the other in Ramsgate by the fastest Public Transport route would involve passing through four electorates (Wentworth, Sydney, Grayndler and Barton).

Further, there has been significant community agitation surrounding attempts to link communities either side of the Airport. Bayside Council has made consistent moves to attempt to have the council demerged into its former Botany Bay and Rockdale LGAs. Linking the two parts of the council at a Federal Electorate level is likely to exacerbate these existing concerns.

In this part of Sydney, Sydney Airport is a major geographical border. Attempting to create a federal electorate where the only land link is Sydney Airport fails to realise sheer scale of boundary that the Airport creates. There a single bus route linking the two parts of the proposed Kingsford Smith electorate. This bus route operates hourly, during daylight hours only. There are no pedestrian links across the Airport. The communities either side of the airport are very distinct and separate from each other.

The draft redistribution has made a poor attempt at trying to create a Kingsford Smith that forms its basis as Northern Botany Bay Shore seat as opposed to a Maroubra and the suburbs surrounding it within the Randwick and former Botany Bay LGAs seat. Less than 10% of the total population of the proposed Kingsford Smith falls south of the Cooks River. This means that those voters within the seat of Kingsford Smith south of the Cooks River will not have effective representation.

I want to further emphasise I am opposed to a seat which not only splits the suburb of Coogee between Kingsford Smith and Wentworth, but includes part of the suburb of Coogee in a seat with Rockdale.

The alternative is to have Grayndler cross the Cooks River. Whilst Grayndler has always been a division based to the north of the Cooks River, the current division of Barton crosses the Cooks River to include Marrickville and Tempe. Marrickville and Tempe have always historically formed the basis of the electoral division of Grayndler. That the redistribution commission in 2016 saw fit to link the communities of Marrickville and Tempe with those areas to the south of the Cooks River in Barton is a recognition of the reality that there are strong community links either side of the Cooks River in this location.

Compared to the crossing of the Cooks River in the proposed Kingsford Smith at Sydney Airport, there would be up to 4 road crossings and 9 pedestrian crossings across the Cooks River in Grayndler. There would also be strong public transport linkages, with frequent 24/7 bus service linking the two sides of the river.

Based on my evaluation, it is clear that having the division of Grayndler crossing the Cooks River delivers a better outcome in respect of all of the requirements of Section 66 of the Act.

I will outline my proposed borders for Kingsford Smith and Grayndler in the "Recommended Borders" section of this objection.

The proposed division of Cook

The existing division of Cook has very poor boundaries. One quarter of voters are north of the Georges River in the St George region with the remaining three quarters south of the

Georges River in the Sutherland Shire. The committees proposed boundaries for the division of Cook worsens this imbalance, with over 91% of voters located south of the Georges River. This would leave the voters north of the Georges River with very poor representation.

The communities of Dolls Point, Sans Souci and Sandringham are far more clearly connected to the St George region than the Sutherland Shire region. They look to Hurstville and Kogarah as their major centres, not Miranda and Sutherland as with the majority of the division of Cook. There is only one bridge linking the two parts of the electorate. The proposed borders of Cook leave the communities north of the Georges River as an isolated beach separate from the remainder of the electorate.

There is significant community push to have the seat of Cook contained entirely south of the Cooks River. This is a topic that has been the subject of a very significant number of submissions and objections over at least two redistribution cycles. As it is numerically possible for Cook to remain south of the Georges River, through changes to the borders of the division of Hughes, it should be a priority of the commission to return Cook to a seat solely south of the Georges River.

I will outline my proposed borders for Cook and Hughes in the “Recommended Borders” section of this objection.

The proposed division of Sydney

The proposed division of Sydney gains the Balmain Peninsula from the division of Grayndler. I am supportive of this change, however, it leaves the division of Sydney as two isolated parts either side of Rozelle Bay.

The division of Sydney consistently contained the bulk of the City of Sydney LGA and the Balmain Peninsula from 1992 until 2016. Throughout this period, it also largely included the suburb of Annandale. Including the suburb of Annandale in the division of Sydney would ensure that it is a continuous electorate.

In order to allow for changes to other divisions and ensuring that my proposal meets the numerical and community of interest requirements in the Act, I also recommend that Stanmore, north of the Main Western Rail Line be included in the division of Sydney. Stanmore has strong connections to the rest of the division of Sydney, including by road, rail, bus and bike. Stanmore relies on services in the division of Sydney including schools and hospitals. There is a clear community of interest between Stanmore and the rest of the seat of Sydney.

I will outline my proposed borders for Sydney in the “Recommended Borders” section of this objection.

3. Recommended Borders

Kingsford Smith

I recommend that Kingsford Smith returns all territory south of the Cooks River and Sydney Airport to the division of Barton. In lieu, I recommend that Kingsford Smith gains the locality of Rosebery (east of Botany Road and south of Epsom Avenue) from the division of Sydney. I also recommend that the division of Kingsford Smith retain its existing 2016 border with the division of Wentworth. My proposal would return Kingsford Smith to its 2006-2009 boundaries.

Rosebery has been included in the division of Kingsford Smith at multiple points throughout history, as recently as 2009. It has a clear community of interest with the neighbouring suburbs in Kingsford Smith, characterised by established low rise residential communities. It is distinct from the newer high density urban renewal precinct to its north, thereby not creating unnecessary division amongst an established community of interest.

I also propose a retention of Clovelly Road as the northern border of Kingsford Smith. By retaining the existing Clovelly border between Kingsford Smith and Wentworth, all of the Green Square Growth Area to be retained within the division of Sydney. I do not wish to unnecessarily spilt the Green Square Growth Area between two divisions, as this would lead to a poor community of interest outcome. The bulk of the suburbs of Coogee and Randwick would otherwise have been retained in Kingsford Smith, with only a small portion being moved to Wentworth, so this also strengthens the community of interest arguments for retaining the Clovelly Road boundary.

Wentworth

I recommend that Wentworth returns all territory south of Clovelly Road to the division of Kingsford Smith. I also recommend that Wentworth gain the balance of Darlinghurst and Surry Hills from the division of Sydney.

In order to allow the divisions of Kingsford Smith and Sydney to have strong borders that meet the requirements of s66 of the Act, Wentworth can only gain territory from Sydney. All territory proposed to be gained from Kingsford Smith should remain in Kingsford Smith to allow Kingsford Smith to remain north of the Cooks River.

Wentworth is already proposed to be a division based in the Inner East and Eastern Suburbs. Surry Hills and the balance of Darlinghurst south of Oxford Street share a strong community of interest with other suburbs in the Inner East and Eastern Suburbs. This includes suburbs that are already in Wentworth, such as Paddington and Woollahra, and suburbs proposed to be gained by Wentworth, such as Darlinghurst north of Oxford Street. Surry Hills is demographically similar to the rest of Wentworth and shares many services that are located in Wentworth.

Sydney

I recommend that Sydney gain all of Annandale and those parts of Stanmore north of the Main Western Rail Line from the division of Grayndler. I also recommend that Wentworth gain the balance of Darlinghurst and Surry Hills from the division of Sydney and that Kingsford Smith gains the locality of Rosebery (east of Botany Road and south of Epsom Avenue) from the division of Sydney.

These changes achieve two aims. They ensure that the division of Sydney remains a continuous seat, through the land connection to the Balmain Peninsula at Annandale. They also ensure that all three of the divisions of Kingsford Smith, Sydney and Wentworth meet the numerical and community of interest requirements of s66 of the Act.

Grayndler

I recommend that Grayndler gain the suburb of Earlwood and Clemton Park from the division of Barton. I also recommend that Grayndler lose all of Annandale and those parts of Stanmore north of the Main Western Rail Line to the division of Sydney.

Earlier, I argued that Grayndler was a more appropriate division to cross the Cooks River than Kingsford Smith. These changes, which see Grayndler cross the Cooks River, support my earlier argument in allowing for more logical borders to Kingsford Smith and Barton.

Wolli Creek, the boundary between the Canterbury Bankstown and Bayside LGAs will form the border between Grayndler and Barton. I believe that this is a strong and coherent border that demonstrates the split in community of interest either side of the East Hills Railway Line which runs alongside Wolli Creek. It also ensures that Grayndler remains in compliance with the numerical requirement in s66 of the Act.

Barton

I recommend that Barton gain all territory south of the Cooks River and Sydney Airport that was proposed to be in the division of Kingsford Smith, and the territory north of the Georges River that was proposed to be in the division of Cook. I also recommend that it lose the suburb of Earlwood to the division of Grayndler and the suburb of Clemton Park and the balance of Campsie, Canterbury and Belmore south of Canterbury Road to the division of Watson.

This change supports the changes that I have argued are necessary to ensure that the divisions of Cook, Kingsford Smith and Sydney have coherent and logical boundaries that meet the requirements of s66 of the Act.

Further, I believe that this change creates a better set of boundaries for Barton. My proposed Barton includes the entirety of the former Rockdale LGA and the majority of the Georges River LGA to create a clear St George based division. This is a far better outcome on

community of interest grounds for the St George region as opposed to the proposed boundaries which would have seen it divided between three electorate divisions.

Cook

I recommend that Cook gain Bonnett Bay, Como, the balance of Janali and parts of Sutherland from the division of Hughes. The recommended border between the division of Cook and Hughes is from the Illawarra Rail Line to the Woronora River via The Grand Parade, Linden Street and River Road. I also recommend that Cook lose all territory north of the Georges River to Barton.

This change allows all of Cook to remain south of the Georges River, whilst remaining within the numerical requirements of s66 of the Act.

Hughes

I recommend that Hughes gain Liverpool, Warwick Farm and Chipping Norton from the division of Fowler and Casula from the division of Werriwa. I also recommend that Hughes lose Bonnett Bay, Como, the balance of Janali and parts of Sutherland to the division of Cook and lose Ingleburn, Glenfield, Macquarie Fields and Bardia to Werriwa.

This change will ensure that Hughes is a seat with a clear identity. It will represent Liverpool and the surrounding suburban suburbs to its south east, as well as the western and southern portions of the Sutherland Shire. This allows it to better meet the community of interest requirements under s66 of the Act. It will also allow for Cook to remain south of the Georges River.

Werriwa

I recommend that Werriwa regain Ingleburn, Glenfield, Macquarie Fields and Bardia from Hughes. I also recommend that it lose Casula to Hughes and Ashcroft, Bonnyrigg Heights, Busby, Heckenberg and Sadleir and parts of Bonnyrigg, Cecil Hills, Green Valley and Mount Pritchard to Fowler.

These changes allow for the division of Hughes to have a clear community of interest, whilst ensuring that all surrounding seats continue to meet the numerical requirements of s66 of the Act. It also ensures that Werriwa remains a seat based on Ingleburn, Glenfield and the suburbs to their Northwest which share a community of interest.

Fowler

I recommend that Fowler gain Ashcroft, Bonnyrigg Heights, Busby, Heckenberg and Sadleir and parts of Bonnyrigg, Cecil Hills, Green Valley and Mount Pritchard from Werriwa. I also recommend that Fowler lose Liverpool, Warwick Farm and Chipping Norton to the division of Hughes.

These changes allow for the division of Hughes to have a clear community of interest, whilst ensuring that all surrounding seats continue to meet the numerical requirements of s66 of the Act. These changes also create a better community of interest within Fowler as a primarily Fairfield LGA based division with a major centre in Cabramatta. A majority of voters within Fowler already live in Fairfield LGA and these changes make that basis clearer.

Watson

I recommend that Watson gain the suburb of Clemton Park and the balance of Campsie, Canterbury and Belmore south of Canterbury Road from the division of Barton. I also recommend that Watson lose the balance of Yagoona north of the Hume Highway and west of Rookwood Road/Stacey Street to the division of Blaxland.

These changes are necessary to ensure that the division of Barton remains within the numerical requirements of s66 after gaining territory from Kingsford Smith.

Blaxland

I recommend that Blaxland gain the balance of Yagoona north of the Hume Highway and west of Rookwood Road/Stacey Street to the division of Blaxland.

This is possible as the commissioners drew Blaxland under the numerical requirements under s66 of the act and is necessary to allow for changes further east.