



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Comment on Objections 174

Mr Stephen Bali MP

5 pages



Stephen Bali MP

Member for Blacktown



26 July 2024

The Australian Electoral Commission
(Attn: NSW Redistribution Secretariat)
Locked Bag 4007,
Canberra ACT 2601

By webform: <https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/2023/nsw/comments-objections.html>

Dear Members of the New South Wales Augmented Electoral Commission,

Re: Support the submission by NSW Labor to review the proposed boundary between Mitchell, Greenway, Parramatta and McMahon

I am writing to provide feedback on the proposed boundary changes for the Greenway electorate.

I support the submission by NSW Labor to review the proposed boundary between Mitchell, Greenway, Parramatta and McMahon.

Old Windsor Road

Old Windsor Road has served as an electoral boundary at either the federal or state level for over 50 years. Moreover, it is utilized for various community planning purposes, including school catchment zones.

Rouse Hill is a well-established suburb with a stable population and significant connections to adjacent suburbs such as Beaumont Hills and North Kellyville that are within the electoral division of Mitchell. These suburbs form a 'community of interest'.

In contrast, Box Hill currently lacks strong connections to adjacent areas. Box Hill is a relatively recent suburb with significant projected growth like the suburbs of Riverstone, Grantham Farm and Tallawong in the State Electoral District of Riverstone and Ward 1 of Blacktown Council.

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If Old Windsor Road must be crossed, I recommend the Redistribution Committee consider separating Box Hill and Rouse Hill, retaining the latter in Mitchell.

Blacktown CBD

Blacktown CBD is the capital of Blacktown Local Government area which since the 1980s has been the largest populated local Government area in New South Wales. Blacktown City Council was temporarily the second largest populated council between 2016 – 2020 when Canterbury and Bankstown councils were merged. Blacktown Council's population growth of 12,000 per annum (last ABS census period) and projected population growth will see this one local government area surpass the population of Tasmania by the mid-2030s.

Accordingly, Blacktown CBD includes Blacktown Council head office; Service Australia; Service NSW; hospital, TAFE, disability services, domestic violence support groups, local court, and police station.

The Blacktown CBD area since at least 1969 has always been kept in one electorate, Chifley (1969-1984) or since the creation of Greenway (1984-2024). This would be the first time since the creation of Chifley or Greenway that the Blacktown CBD would be spread across two federal electorates.

To have people living south of the railway line at Blacktown (where the largest commercial portion section of Blacktown CBD) would be required to travel to Fairfield makes no logical sense.

To have one electorate, McMahon to include commercial centres of Fairfield, Merrylands, Greystanes, Guildford, Kemps Creek and now Blacktown would make it impossible for anyone MP to effectively represent this region given the many competing needs of all these major CBDs.

Seven Hills

The current southern boundary of Greenway encompasses parts of Blacktown, Prospect, and Seven Hills. It is inconsistent with the 'communities of interest' requirement to propose a separation of the suburbs of Seven Hills, Lalor Park, and Kings Langley.

These suburbs are similar, interconnected, and share the same postcode (2747). In previous redistributions all three suburbs have been moved together. Presently, they fall within Ward 2 of Blacktown City Council.

Seven Hills & Fairfield CBD

It would not be in the best interest of the residents of Seven Hills to be included in the Division of McMahon, which also includes Fairfield CBD within its boundaries. Communities like Seven Hills do not consider themselves part of the Fairfield community nor do they have any significant connection to Fairfield CBD.

Fairfield is a very distinct community which is disconnected from Blacktown LGA - this separation is intentional, not coincidental. The Blacktown Local Government Area, with its significant size and presence, has cultivated a sense of community that is distinct and should not be further divided amongst federal electorates.

Residents of Lalor Park rely on Seven Hills and Blacktown train stations for their major public transport needs and located on the T1 western line. Fairfield is located on the T2 – Inner West & Leppington Line and requiring a change for Blacktown residents at Parramatta.

The role of a local Member of Parliament's office is critical. For residents of Seven Hills to seek assistance from their Federal MP, they would need to travel on public transport to Fairfield, requiring multiple bus changes to reach the McMahon Electorate Office.

For example, a person living on MacKenzie Boulevard in Seven Hills travelling by public transport to MacMahon MP Federal Office, located at 398 Hamilton Rd Fairfield West would require:

- Assuming a start time 11.01am
- Walk of 17 min or 1.2km from the house to the bus stop at The Hills Sports High School
- 705 bus (4 min) to Toongabbie Station
- Walk from bus stop onto Toongabbie station platform
- Toongabbie Station and Fairfield Station (23 minutes)
- Walk from Fairfield Station to bus stop
- 804 bus from Fairfield Station bus stop to Hamilton Rd bus stop (opp Fairfield West Public School)
- Walk 170m or approx. 2 minutes to 398 Hamilton Rd Fairfield West
- Arrival time 12:32pm – assuming that you arrive in time to catch all public transport elements on time.
- **1 and half hours (minimum)**

A round trip would be over 3 hours and for people with complicated health challenges or issues may have to attend the Federal MPs office on numerous occasions over multiple days. All this would be adding to the tyranny of distance for a person or family to have the basis right of accessing their Federal MP.

Compared to the current situation where a one-way trip consisting of a 4 minute walk to catch the 702 bus (16 minutes to Blacktown Station) and 3 minute walk from station to the Greenway Office.

A round trip of less than 50 minutes to the Greenway office compared to over 3 hours to the McMahon office (assuming just in time arrival at public transport modes works).

Shared Community Resources

Lalor Park and Seven Hills have similar socio-economic backgrounds and share a significant number of community resources, including:

- Services Australia Offices including Centrelink and Medicare located 8 First Avenue Blacktown
- Service NSW located at 14 St Martins Crs, Blacktown
- Blacktown Hospital
- PCYC in Blacktown
- A number of Blacktown City Council libraries: Max Webber Library in Blacktown, Lalor Park Library
- A number of Blacktown City Council community halls: Bowman Hall, Lalor Park Community Centre, Lalor Park Community Hub, Seven Hills Community Centre
- Blacktown Police Station
- Blacktown court house
- Parks and sporting fields for local sporting clubs
- Interlinked religious communities

If the boundary changes take place, a person would have to travel over 3 hours round trip to meet their McMahon Federal MP, then have to return to government agencies in Blacktown, and if the problem not resolved undertake a further 3 hour round trip.

The extended travel time to meet staff or MP of McMahon will have adverse impact on people with disabilities; elderly residents as well as people suffering mental health challenges to exercise their basic human right to see their local MP.

There are also several primary and secondary school catchment areas that cover both Seven Hills and Lalor Park.

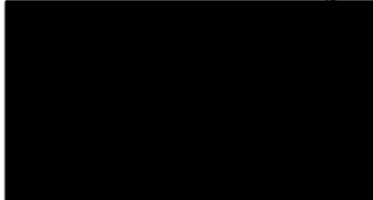
Summary

These communities should remain together in the electorate of Greenway as that is the best way to draw upon the strong bonds and identity that exists in support of the community.

Therefore, I support NSW Labor's proposal that at least the majority of Seven Hills (north of Lucretia Road) including the industrial area of Seven Hills be retained in

Greenway as these adjustments will keep more electors within their current boundaries while consolidating communities with shared interests into a single electoral division.

These adjustments will help ensure that communities with shared interests and established connections are appropriately represented within their respective electoral divisions and to better reflect the differences in the communities on either side.



Mr Stephen Bali MP

Member for Blacktown

Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces