



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 277

Winifred Southcott and Chris Johnson

2 pages

The Australian Electoral Commission,
Locked Bag 4007, Canberra ACT 2601

Subject: Draft plans to abolish the federal seat of North Sydney in the proposed 2024 NSW redistribution

My name is Winifred Southcott and my husband Chris Johnson lived in Northbridge which is part of the North Sydney electorate for the majority of his life. We currently live in Newtown but both of us feel connected to North Sydney through being a previous long term resident, going to school there, working in North Sydney and being involved in the North Sydney community.

Objections:

We are writing to object to the proposed abolition of the North Sydney federal electorate and merging its suburbs with the adjoining electorates of Bradfield, Bennelong and Warringah which are dissimilar in demographics and do not share a business hub of the size and importance to the Australian economy of the current North Sydney electorate.

Australia's population is growing enormously through immigration with most of that growth going to the Eastern States. How big do electorates need to get before their sheer size and diversity make them unmanageable with a loss of representation that will result? "In 2023, however, the AEC determined that the House will return to 150 members at the next election, with WA gaining a seat, and NSW and Victoria each losing a seat. " (Infosheet 8 - Australian Parliament) How does a reduction in the number of electorates and much larger population in electorates result in better democracy?

Business Hub:

North Sydney is the third biggest business centre in the country. It will lose focus for its business and industrial zones if merged with the dissimilar adjoining electorates of Warringah, Bennelong and Bradfield. North Sydney is home to many of Australia's largest businesses - it is the CBD just over the bridge.

Surely, this dynamic business centre deserves the focus of its own federal representative.

Population growth and density:

North Sydney population density is growing significantly with large scale developments but the AEC's proposal does not include this growth. The NSW State Government plans to see 5,900 new homes built in the North Sydney LGA alone by 2029. Also, North Sydney Council is expecting 19,500 new residents to move into the area by 2036. This is a 27% increase in just one of the four LGAs that currently make up the seat of North Sydney.

Without taking state based projected growth plans into account how can the AEC be certain that after abolishing the historic North Sydney electorate now, only have to reinstate the electorate within a decade? Surely, this is not a sensible outcome.

Diversity of the North Sydney electorate:

Half of the population was born overseas and a third speaking a language other than English at home. Surely, this culturally diverse electorate requires representation that values this diversity.

History of North Sydney:

North Sydney is one of the 75 original federation divisions contested in Australia's first federal election 123 years ago. It is of historical importance to the identity of Sydney and the country.

Summary:

We strongly oppose the draft proposal that the seat of North Sydney be abolished and request for it to remain intact for the reason listed above.

We question the arbitrary requirement to reduce Australia's representation to 150 seats which will decrease democracy and representation, in the face of a significantly growing population. Particularly, reducing representation at this dynamic and dangerous time with the disarray of world geopolitical affairs does not seem wise.

Yours faithfully,

Winifred Southcott and Chris Johnson
4th July, 2024