



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 33

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3 pages

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The augmented Electoral Commission
c/o – New South Wales Redistribution Secretariat
Australian Electoral Commission

Online Lodgement

Dear Commissioners

Objections to the Proposed Redistribution of Federal Election Divisions in New South Wales (Proposed Redistribution) The Divisions of Bennelong, Berowra, Bradfield, Mackellar, Mitchell, North Sydney, Parramatta and Warringah

I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Proposed Redistribution in my personal capacity.

I am a resident of Northern Sydney and am involved with various community groups across the region. To that end, I focus my response on the Proposed Redistribution's changes to federal electoral divisions in the region.

Through the Proposed Redistribution, the Redistribution Committee proposes to abolish the division of North Sydney. I recognise that the abolition of an inner metropolitan federal electoral division is appropriate, given that the Redistribution Committee has observed "*where the lower rates of growth in elector numbers are, in inner metropolitan Sydney, when compared to the location of the higher growth in elector numbers – in Western Sydney, particularly to the south-west*" (paragraph 83 of the Redistribution Committee's report). The Redistribution Committee's report (page 20, Table E) also notes that the current division of North Sydney is projected to be 13.16% under quota as at Monday, 10 April 2028.

However, I am concerned about how the proposed abolition of the division of North Sydney will affect the proposed boundaries of other federal electoral divisions in the region.

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth) (**Electoral Act**) section 66(3)(b) says that – subject to the overarching requirement in Electoral Act section 66(3)(a) that each proposed federal election division must have a projected enrolment within the range of plus or minus 3.5% of the average divisional enrolment in New South Wales – the Redistribution Committee shall give due consideration, in relation to each proposed federal electoral division, to the following criteria:

- community of interests within the proposed federal electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests;
- means of communication and travel within the proposed federal electoral division;
- the physical features and area of the proposed federal electoral division; and
- the boundaries of existing federal election divisions in New South Wales (this criterion is subordinate to the other three criteria listed above).

These criteria have long been in Commonwealth electoral legislation. The Redistribution Committee considered these criteria (paragraph 45 of the Redistribution Committee's report), and the augmented Electoral Commission is required to consider these criteria (paragraph 512 of the Redistribution Committee's report – see also Electoral Act section 72(11)).

I recognise that the Redistribution Committee will have had to make difficult decisions in coming up with the Proposed Redistribution. However, further to the criteria set out in Electoral Act section 66(3)(b) as applied for the purposes of Electoral Act section 72(11), I note the following:

1. North Sydney Council is likely to have a closer community of interests with suburbs like St Leonards, Northbridge, Castlecrag and even Roseville compared to Manly, Brookvale or Freshwater (by way of example). It would be strange to have North Sydney Council as part of the division of Warringah when – in my view – it has a closer community of interests with the division of Bradfield.
2. The Redistribution Committee has recognised that the proposed division of Bennelong would shift the division eastward towards its historical configuration – per paragraph 151 of the Redistribution Committee’s report:

The latter change would more closely reflect the historical orientation of the electoral division, with these two local government areas being a core part at its inception in 1949 before redistributions in 1992 and 2000 saw these areas transferred to the Division of North Sydney.

However, it is disappointing that this eastward shift in the proposed division of Bennelong would mean that suburbs like Epping, North Epping, Carlingford and Ermington would be left out of the division of Bennelong. These suburbs have a close community of interests with many of the other suburbs that form the core of the current division of Bennelong (Eastwood, Ryde, Macquarie Park). Many people travel between most of the suburbs in the current division of Bennelong, especially on weekends.

Further, the current division of Bennelong is culturally and ethnically diverse. The Australian Bureau of Statistics’ 2021 Census data says that this division has a plurality (28.8%) of people with Chinese ancestry. The cultural and ethnic diversity of the division of Bennelong should be preserved – removing the suburbs of Epping, North Epping, Carlingford and Ermington (and especially Epping and Carlingford) from the division of Bennelong does not do this.

I suggest that the division of Bennelong should keep the suburbs of Epping, North Epping, Carlingford and Ermington (and should potentially move westward to absorb some of the current division of Parramatta, if required in order to satisfy Electoral Act section 66(3)(a)).

3. Finally, the suburb of Cherrybrook should not be in the division of Berowra – rather, it should be in the division of Mitchell.

Cherrybrook gravitates towards Castle Hill and other suburbs in the division of Mitchell. Someone in Cherrybrook who wants to shop at department stores or eat at restaurants is more likely to go to Castle Towers instead of Westfield Hornsby. Cherrybrook also has a station on the Sydney Metro North West, which facilitates easy connection with other suburbs in the division of Mitchell. Relatively circuitous travel would be required to get to much of the Upper North Shore (which is the core of the current division of Berowra) from Cherrybrook.

Further, the religious, cultural, ethnic and population mix of Cherrybrook is similar to that of other suburbs in the division of Mitchell.

I recognise that Cherrybrook is in Hornsby Shire Council, unlike most suburbs in the division of Mitchell (which are in The Hills Shire Council). However, this should not stop the augmented Electoral Commission from uniting Cherrybrook with the division of Mitchell, as

the Electoral Act does not require the augmented Electoral Commission to take into account local government boundaries in developing its redistribution proposal.

If my response were implemented, I think that the division of North Sydney would be reinstated and either the division of Bradfield or the division of Berowra would likely be abolished. Relevantly, the Redistribution Committee received suggestions and comments on suggestions that argued for the abolition of either of these divisions (paragraph 79 of the Redistribution Committee's report, Table G).

However, I do not know whether adopting my response would cause the augmented Electoral Commission further difficulties, as all of the federal electoral divisions considered in this response except the division of Mitchell are required to increase their number of projected electors (paragraph 63 of the Redistribution Committee's report, Table F). Further, I am not terribly comfortable with the division of Mackellar shifting westward to take some of the territory in the division of Bradfield. Having North Turrumurra or St Ives in the same federal electoral division as Avalon Beach and Dee Why would also raise community of interests concerns!

I wish the augmented Electoral Commission all the best as it considers the objections to the Proposed Redistribution and works towards a final redistribution of New South Wales' federal electoral division boundaries. If desired, I would be happy to speak with the augmented Electoral Commission about my response.

Yours sincerely



Samuel Chu