



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

# Objection 113

Catherine Burrows

4 pages

## **Objection to the Abolition of North Sydney (NSW) Electorate.**

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed abolition of North Sydney on four grounds:

1. Historical significance of the electorate
2. Incorrect assumptions regarding the projected growth of the electorate
3. The community of interests:
  - a. the difference between North Sydney and the surrounding electorates
  - b. the strength of the North Sydney community.

### **Historical significance of the electorate**

Historically, North Sydney is not like other electorates.

The proposal to abolish the electorate of North Sydney ignores its historical significance. North Sydney has existed since 1901, that is since the first Federal election. It was one of the first 75 electorates in Australia.

The elected representatives of North Sydney have also been significant. They include Prime Minister Billy Hughes; Joe Hockey, former Treasurer and former Ambassador to the USA; and the first openly LGBTQI+ member of the Commonwealth Parliament, Trent Zimmerman. It is also an electorate which has chosen independent representatives, Ted Mack, for two terms, and now Kylea Tink.

### **Incorrect assumptions regarding the projected growth of the electorate**

The proposed redistribution report suggests the population of North Sydney will decline by 2028. This is not supported by an examination of the electorate.

Large scale building development is currently underway at many sites across the electorate. In 2023, the Sydney Morning Herald reported, “The government has an 80-page plan for the precinct, which was finalised by the Department of Planning in August 2020. It claims it will deliver capacity for 6683 new homes...” ([Crows Nest Sydney Metro station: How much housing density will it support? \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/news/politics/crows-nest-sydney-metro-station-how-much-housing-density-will-it-support-20230801))

A list of current developments, both those which are already under construction and those which are newly completed but not yet fully occupied, is attached (**TAB A** refers). Where possible, the number of new dwellings within each approved development has been included. These examples have been taken from publicly available information on council websites and property listings. The list is not exhaustive.

The ABS Commonwealth Electoral Division Profile for North Sydney (based on 2017 data) states that people 80 years and over then living in the electorate comprised 3.9%, equating to 6768 people. To interrogate this, let us use two assumptions:

- there is an equivalent number of people of this age now living in the electorate; and
- all these people are eligible to vote.

Only if every one of those aged 80 and over were to die before 2028 and every one of the new dwellings being built was occupied by only one elector, both implausible assumptions, would

there be a small decrease in the number of electors in North Sydney. This is not a logical conclusion.

More recent data from the 2021 Census ([2021 North Sydney, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/2021-north-sydney-census-all-persons-quickstats)) indicate that in 2021, 112,630 people aged between 20 and 79 lived in the electorate, as well as 7,400 aged 80 or older and an unknown number of people aged 18 and 19 (the data are not broken down for the 15 to 19 age group). Taking only those aged 20 and older this figure is higher than the projected enrolment number in the redistribution report<sup>1</sup>.

It is noted that “the Australian Statistician commissioned an independent review of the ABS processes for producing enrolment projections” following the confirmation of an error: “In January 2024, the ABS confirmed an error in the electoral enrolment projections it supplied to the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for use in the Victorian and Western Australian electoral redistribution processes.” One of the recommendations of that review was, “A face validity or ‘sniff test’ should be applied to all ABS outputs but especially those of high importance. I would include electoral projections for redistribution in that category.” (my emphasis). ([Statistical review of process for providing regional enrolment projections for electoral redistribution purposes | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistical-review-of-process-for-providing-regional-enrolment-projections-for-electoral-redistribution-purposes))

Basing the abolition of the North Sydney electorate on the assumption of a decline in population cannot be supported by the evidence available. This alone should be grounds for a different decision.

### **The difference between North Sydney and the surrounding electorates**

The proposal to abolish North Sydney would split the electorate between Bennelong, Bradfield, Mackellar and Warringah. However, this does not take account of the differences between the people of these electorates.

Demographically<sup>2</sup>, the people of North Sydney differ in certain characteristics from those in the electorates of Bennelong, Bradfield, Mackellar and Warringah.

In North Sydney:

- a greater percentage is female (51.9%)
- the median age is the second youngest (39 years)
- the average number of people per household is the smallest (2.3)
- a greater percentage of people have degrees at Bachelor level or higher (55.7) [the next highest is Bradfield (52.7) and the lowest, Mackellar (32.9)].

Significantly, North Sydney also has the highest percentage of people renting (42.4), a figure which might be anticipated to grow given the construction outlined above.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is accepted that population numbers will be higher than the number of electors but there are limits to the data available publicly.

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Census data have been used (for example [2021 North Sydney, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/2021-north-sydney-census-all-persons-quickstats))

## **The strength of the North Sydney community**

To elect independents requires a strength and community spirit not commonly seen in Australia, although it is part of a growing movement.

North Sydney has achieved this twice, electing Ted Mack, the father of the independents, and Kylea Tink.

Kylea Tink is a true community independent who has been elected because she represents the concerns of the North Sydney electorate. The people of North Sydney worked tirelessly to achieve the goal of electing our local community independent. Working together to achieve this goal brought the people of the electorate together and built an even stronger sense of community. This should be respected and encouraged because it is a demonstration of practical, grassroots democracy.

North Sydney was also one of the few electorates to vote for the Voice to Parliament, at least partly as a result of positive community action.

## **Conclusion**

Abolishing the electorate of North Sydney superficially appears to meet the criteria required under the Act. However, a more profound understanding of the electorate demonstrates that this is not the case.

An examination of construction underway across the electorate belies the projection that the population will shrink. While other electorates are still debating new housing developments, the transport hub at Crows Nest is nearing completion and the new metro station will open in 2024, bringing with it further growth. Taken together, these provide a clear indication North Sydney's population will grow substantially by 2028.

North Sydney is demographically different from its neighbours and its electors have a strong sense of community. Abolishing North Sydney and breaking up the electorate across its neighbours would undermine the community interests of this electorate.

North Sydney has existed since Federation. The AEC should take its history into consideration and, for all these reasons, review its decision to abolish the electorate. Instead, the AEC should look elsewhere for an electorate to abolish.

**Examples of dwellings under construction in North Sydney electorate**

<b>Development (where known)</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Dwellings under construction</b>
St Leonards South Area	The St Leonards South area encompasses the blocks bounded by Marshall St, Canberra Ave, River Road, Holdsworth St and Berry St.	1453
Akoya	2 Greenwich Rd Greenwich	39
Willoughby Grounds	5 Walter St, Willoughby	164
NINE (Mirvac)	24 Artarmon Rd, Willoughby	442
The Bellevue	2 Bellevue Ave, Greenwich	36
Over metro development (A)	521 Pacific Highway Crows Nest	88
Over metro development (B) <i>(note some previous over metro dwellings in A and B have been changed to commercial usage, so numbers are not exact)</i>	521 Pacific Highway Crows Nest	140
JQZ	88 Christie St, St Leonards	650
Landmark (not yet fully occupied)	500 Pacific Highway St Leonards	46 storeys; no. of dwellings not less than 46 but assumed to be at least double.
Deicorp	5 Ways Crows Nest	191

<b>Development where dwelling numbers are not known</b>	<b>Address</b>
Atlas	5-7 Doohat Avenue, Nth Sydney
Platino	75 Parraween Ave, Cremorne
The Sierra Development	84-90 Atchison St, St Leonards
The Collective	35 Atchison St, St Leonards
n/a	2 Northcote St, Naremburn

(Note these lists are not exhaustive)