



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 252

Barbara Masel

2 pages

SUBMISSION TO SAVE THE FEDERAL DIVISION OF NORTH SYDNEY

I have lived in the Federal Division of North Sydney for 42 years. When I first moved here from interstate for work, I was 21 years old and rows of terrace houses lined the streets of Berry and Walker Streets. Those same streets are now lined with high-rise apartments and office buildings.

In the next four years, the NSW state government plans to increase the number of new homes by nearly 6,000 in the North Sydney LGA alone. For its part, North Sydney Council is expecting 19,500 new residents to move into the area by 2036, representing a 27% increase in just one of the four LGAs which currently make up the seat of North Sydney. Abolishing the seat seems pointless, given already projected population growth seems likely to re-establish the case for it in 2029.

The current federal division of North Sydney makes sense to me because we are, in our proximity to the city and North Sydney CBDs, a harbour-side community, connected by train (and soon to be Metro) to the shopping precinct of Chatswood. We are not a coastal one, less suburban and more inner-city in our challenges. We are a busy business district during the week, welcoming thousands of office workers in the mornings, with all the benefits and stressors that entails, and all the complications brought about when they leave at the end of the day and the weekends. The Warringah Freeway – currently the eighth busiest road in the state, and its still to be completed upgrade – poses complex challenges for all of us who reside on either side of it. Much parkland has been taken to widen and extend it; communities on the eastern and western side of it share a common purpose in trying to reclaim tree canopy shelter and return to a true sense of our proximity to the harbour. Despite this major freeway, you can –and we do– walk around the harbour foreshore and under the Harbour Bridge, connecting communities and neighbourhoods in ways that neither cars nor even public transport can.

Many who live in my neighbourhood came here when I did, and have raised their families here. We are a community of shared histories, involved in the campaigns to save bushland from development and historic buildings from being demolished. My neighbours successfully campaigned to save the now heritage-listed *Kialoa* on Union Street, North Sydney from demolition, when Shore School wanted to clear the land to make way for tennis courts. *Kialoa's* building, gardens and the adjacent streets offer a rare example of intact 19th century townscape of North Sydney.

We also campaigned to save *Graythwaite*, built in the mid 1860s and left by Thomas Dibbs to the state as a convalescent home for soldiers returning from the front. Many of the most significant early photographic panoramas of Sydney were taken from *Graythwaite's* tower and provide insight into the development of the lower North Shore.

It is on the grounds of *Graythwaite* that mature specimen trees remain, especially important to those of us who don't have our own gardens. The canopies of the original Moreton Bay figtrees, now also heritage-listed, provide shelter to the extraordinary array of birds – tawny frogmouths, kookaburras, noisy miners, lorikeets, galahs and currawongs.

I have caught public transport to work, and worked from home in North Sydney. I do all my food and grocery shopping here or in Chatswood. I have my hair cut in McMahons Point. I go to the Stanton Library, not just to borrow books, but to attend community events. I have continued to swim at North Sydney Public Pool for all the time I have lived here, only stopping while the pool has been closed for a major upgrade. It is an important health hub for all who use it, and have I benefited from the safe space offered in its daytime aerobics classes which are mostly enjoyed by older women who also come from the lower north shore.

I use all of the public transport available – ferries, buses and trains – and plan to use the Metro when it opens later in the year.

Importantly for me, I have access to the Royal North Shore Public and Private Hospitals, as well as The Mater Hospital.

My main point is: Infrastructure does not simply mean facilities; it also represents the communities of people who use them.

I am proud to live in the federal division of North Sydney, which was one of the 75 divisions contested at the first federal election 123 years ago. It has been represented by a prime minister, a treasurer and not one, but two, federal Independent MPs.

Barbara Masel
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