



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

# Comment on Objections 133

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4 pages

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NSW, 2068

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To: The augmented Electoral Commission for NSW

*My comments on objections to the draft proposal in the Report of the Redistribution Committee's Report to abolish the Federal Electorate of North Sydney*

Dear NSW Electoral Commission

My husband and I have lived in, and owned, our house in Castlecrag for over 25 years. Castlecrag is in the Federal Electorate of North Sydney and I am a voter in that electorate.

I strongly objected to the Committee's recommendation to abolish the Federal electorate of North Sydney in my **Objection 719**. I confirm the reasons for my objection that include:

- 1) The current demographics and the Committee's flawed demographic projections invalidate proposal to abolish North Sydney Federal electorate,
- 2) The Committee's proposal to abolish North Sydney Federal electorate fails the community of interest test,
- 3) The North Sydney Federal electorate being a Federation seat with 123 years of proud history is in itself a strong factor against its abolition, and
- 4) There are more equitable and far less disruptive boundary changes and alternatives to abolishing North Sydney Federal electorate.

### **Flawed Demographic Projections**

My comments on the objections to the Committee's proposal to abolish the North Sydney Federal electorate largely centre around (1) above, concerning my strongly held view that the Committee's demographic projections are flawed and have greatly contributed to its proposal to abolish the North Sydney Federal electorate.

As discussed in my objection 719, the enrolment number for the North Sydney Federal electorate as at 9 August 2023 was 112,630, making the North Sydney Federal electorate the 27<sup>th</sup> highest enrolment number of the 46 NSW electorates. This in itself would certainly not make it a likely candidate for abolition.

I also expressed my incredulity and in fact disbelief in the AEC's projected estimate of North Sydney Federal electorate's enrolment number as at 28 April 2028 being only 112,566 which is 64 less than North Sydney electorate's redistribution date (9 August 2023) enrolment number of 112,630. I am and was aware of the plans of the NSW Planning Department for increased housing densification, especially around the North Sydney, Cows Nest and North Sydney transport hubs and also each of North Sydney, Lane Cove and Willoughby City Councils' plans for an increased numbers of houses over the next five years.

I have now read and wish to endorse Ms Margaret Stoneman's **Objection 720**, especially the part on demographic projections.

Ms Stoneman has worked in econometrics and forecasting for much of her professional life, including as an economist at the Reserve Bank of Australia. She has considerable expertise in this area.

Following are the comments I have copied on demographic projections from pages 1 and 2 of Ms Stoneman's objection. They are far more detailed than my own.

## **EXTRACT FROM MARGARET STONEMAN'S OBJECTION 720**

### ***'Demographic projections fail fact check test***

*It is difficult if not impossible to find any population data to substantiate the projected decline of 0.06% in electoral numbers for the Division of North Sydney between 9 August 2023 and 10 April 2028. Official ABS data confirms the following facts (all years ending in June):*

- *The population of North Sydney electorate grew by 9.2% (0.89% pa) in the 10 years to Jun 2023.*
- *Although disrupted by Covid, this population rose by 0.84% between 2020 and 2023.*
- *North Sydney Division's growth outstripped that of Bradfield (at 0.44%) in this period, while Warringah's population declined by 0.40% and Wentworth's by 1.66%; the latter continuing a long-term trend.*
- *Nothing in the actual data points to a decline in the population of electors in the division of North Sydney as projected in the AEC.*

*The NSW government also provides detailed projections of population growth using the cohort component method. The base data being that collated by the ABS. Figures published in its 2022 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections are broken down by LGA. Comparing actual population changes over the latest 10 years of ABS data shows that the data for LGAs North Sydney, Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Willoughby, combined are well correlated with the North Sydney Division, which encompasses the first 3 LGAs and approx 60% of Willoughby. Likewise, population movements in percentage terms in Bradfield broadly accord with those of Ku-ring-gai. Those in the Warringah electorate reflect the direction of changes in the Northern Beaches LGA but with greater declines. The NSW data show:*

- *For the four LGAs in North Sydney Division:*
  - *a projected rise of 0.35% between 20 and 23 against an actual outcome of 0.53%.*
  - *a projected 4.4% increase in population between Jun 23 and Jun 28, compared with the AEC's already superseded projection of a 0.06% decline. This projected increase is close to that of NSW as a whole (5.4%). Once the new government's planned intensification of development in the division, it will almost certainly exceed the statewide growth.*
  - *an implied increase in population of between 13,206 (6.6% - high growth scenario) and 10,366 (5.2% - low growth scenario) in the five years to Jun 2027, according to the NSW Dept of Planning's housing supply projections.*

○ These projections were made prior to the change of government in NSW. New policies have been implemented with the goal of accelerating the pace of residential development around a series of transport nodes. Close to 6,000 new dwellings are planned to be built in North Sydney LGA alone by 2029.

• For the electorates of Warringah and Mackellar, official data and projections show:  
○ greater actual declines, of 0.4% and 0.15% respectively, against a projected decline of

only 0.09% for the Northern Beaches LGA in the 3 years to June 2023.

○ a projection by the NSW government of only a 1.24% rise in the population of the Northern Beaches LGA between 2023 and 2028.

○ An AEC projection of electoral growth for Mackellar that is 4.5 times faster in a shorter timeframe than that of the whole LGA in which it sits, while the Division of Warringah comprised mostly of the balance of this LGA is projected to grow twice as fast. This does not add up; especially in a district with relatively low growth historically.

• For the electorate of Wentworth that falls below the electoral quota by more than any other division in NSW – by 14% now and over 21% per AEC projections - data show:

○ This electorate has experienced a long-term decline in population of 1.4% over the 10 years to June 2023. The rate of decline accelerated to 1.66% in the last three years of the period.

○ While projecting a further 1.6% decline in the number of electors, there is no suggestion by the AEC that this electorate should be abolished, despite missing the requisite quotas by such large margins.

*Housing supply projections in the near term are based on actual data on building approvals and dwelling commencements, so have a higher degree of confidence. Such more concretely quantifiable assumptions underpin the NSW Department of Planning projections, as opposed to evidently generalised, hypothetical assumptions relied on by the AEC. There is also the value of physical proof, where large numbers of recently completed dwellings in what were brown field sites are now on the market or already sold off the plan. Developments well underway in St Leonards and imminent in Crows Nest, demonstrate just how seriously astray are the AEC's projections for the Division of North Sydney. Any proposals made based on these flawed and already superseded projections will have severe and lasting consequences for constituents, businesses and their elected representatives.'*

To conclude, I therefore agree with and also endorse Ms Stoneman's closing remarks on page 4 of her **Objection 720**, that I have copied below:

*'On the basis of a more realistic, amended growth projection that accords with the current and continuing intensification of development of North Sydney, the need for other boundary adjustments would be minor.'*

*In respect of this redistribution the AEC, although chartered to be impartial, is being inadvertently drawn into being unduly influenced by the major parties, particularly the Liberals and the Nationals and their proxies. Letters advocating the abolition of the division of North Sydney have been lodged by Nationals, who to my recollection, have never run a candidate in this seat. The AEC, despite the statistical and factual evidence to the contrary,*

*has chosen to adopt their position. The advocacy of more independent, non-ideological appears to carry little weight.*

*In the light of the official data and more informed, rather than hypothetical, projections summarized above, I would ask the Committee to reconsider its proposal to abolish the division of North Sydney. It would be an unwarranted and a great mistake to carve it up on an ad hoc basis between neighbouring electorates that share few of its particular characteristic as a rapidly intensifying, inner metropolitan area.'*

Please do reject the Committee's proposal to abolish our North Sydney Federal electorate. It just has to be preserved!

Jill Newton