



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Comment on Objections 172

Peter Mitchell

2 pages

Friday 26 July

Re: NSW Federal Redistribution 2024 – Comments on objections to NSW Draft Redistribution

Dear redistribution committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the redistribution of electoral divisions in NSW.

The NSW Draft Redistribution has rightly attracted many comments from many interested citizens. This is to be applauded, and hopefully further encouraged in the future, as it is very healthy for more significant feedback to be provided to the redistribution committee to inform their work. I urge the redistribution committee to respect the inherent wishes that people express in submissions, even when it cannot follow their specific suggestions, because of course the committee must find a holistically good outcome for the entire state.

I wish to provide the following comments on these objections. Rather than address every objection, these comments address a sample of the objections based on the ideas that these objections raise. These comments should be equally applied to any other objections that raise similar ideas to the objections that are specifically listed below.

Overall comments

- The Draft Redistribution rightly maintains the current boundary between Mackellar and Bradfield, where there is a wide gap between communities with few common interests. It also maintains the link between the Northern Beaches LGA and the north shore at The Spit Bridge, where there is a busy link between communities along a major city artery. This approach to the Northern Beaches region appears to have achieved warm endorsement from many submissions regarding Mackellar amongst others who support this division remaining within the Northern Beaches LGA and finding very appropriate new boundaries slightly further south. I also endorse the redistribution committee's draft drawing of Mackellar, and urge the redistribution committee to continue to maintain the current Mackellar – Bradfield boundary in its current position. I endorse Objection 316 for these reasons.
- Many submissions regarding either Warringah or Mackellar – principally Objection 686 – conflate two separate ideas; firstly that North Sydney should be retained, and secondly that it should remain relatively static in position. In pursuing this second idea, these submissions suggest moving Warringah northwards and Mackellar westwards. While the large number of interested citizens making submissions in the interests of their area should be applauded, these submissions fail to acknowledge the broader implications of the redistribution committee's task to resolve the redistribution for communities across the state. The redistribution committee's draft redistribution was right to acknowledge that North Sydney cannot remain in a static position. However, the first question – about whether North Sydney should be abolished or not – remains open, and is subject to finding an acceptable redistribution outcome for the whole state. I would argue that with significant shortcomings in the draft redistribution in the treatment of the centres of North Sydney, Epping, and Blacktown, that the current draft must be revised. This revision should entertain alternative options for which division in northern Sydney is abolished in order to find the best all-round outcome.
- In recognising the merit of many citizens making submissions to 'save' their division, I suggest the redistribution committee pursues keeping North Sydney, but to repositioning it after drawing Mackellar and Warringah (up to the Warringah Freeway). Considering that Bennelong in its current position is an ideal division that clearly includes both Ryde and Epping, I suggest that Bennelong should largely be retained in place. This would mean that North Sydney should extend northwards into Bradfield, and Bradfield would extend northwards and westwards into

Berowra. This could be a solution that keeps North Sydney CBD intact (without a division boundary between it and St Leonards), keeps Epping intact, and uses the major barrier of Berowra Creek as a new boundary. I suggest the redistribution committee abolishes Berowra instead as this achieves a better arrangement for the northern Sydney region while Berowra suburb moves into Bradfield. I endorse Objection 600 as part of the necessary approach that the redistribution committee should take in listening to significant community views while also achieving its required objectives for the whole state.

- Resolution of the the southern Sydney region depends significantly on which approach is taken around the Sydney Airport and the Kingsford Smith division. This variable makes it difficult to review many southern Sydney comments because they rely on different outcomes around the airport. I maintain the redistribution committee was right to draft Kingsford Smith across the airport around Botany Bay, but that they need to go further to avoid the current poor resolution in the Bayside area. This means that I expect that the redistribution committee must make some changes to the current draft redistribution around the area, and that there will be flow-on impacts from that in various directions. This extends as far as the centre of Blacktown, which shouldn't be divided by new boundaries. I endorse Objection 26's critique of the current draft boundary to Kingsford Smith, and the approach taken in that recommendation.

Specific comments

- Objection 421 is very thorough, and makes constructive suggestions for southern Sydney, although I disagree with this approach to maintain the boundary at Sydney Airport and in so doing, displace many inner and central Sydney divisions from Sydney westward. Also, while it identifies several important flaws in the northern Sydney region (Epping, Lane Cove, etc) it does not make suggestions for how these can be addressed. This means that better solutions for the genuine flaws in the draft redistribution for the northern Sydney region need to be found elsewhere.
- Objection 504 makes important and valid suggestions for McMahon and Berowra Creek as a new boundary. These should be incorporated into a redrawing of northern Sydney (with improved treatment of the north shore area) and southern Sydney (with resolution of the airport boundary question).
- Objection 619 is representative of several that support the draft redistribution proposal for the northern Sydney region. I oppose this conclusion on the basis that boundaries drawn through or very close to major centres of North Sydney – St Leonards and Epping is a very poor outcome and must be revised by the redistribution committee in its next update.

Conclusion

In reviewing these objections I find that the Draft Redistribution in its current state is untenable. It creates poor boundary outcomes in the northern Sydney region, and the southern Sydney region appears in flux because of the indecisive draft boundary around the airport.

The redistribution committee should review the northern Sydney region starting from Warringah – North Sydney and extending northwards up the north shore. This can maintain the connectedness of major urban centres and honour the overall intent (but not the specific suggestions) of the many citizens objected to the redistribution outcomes in this area.

The committee should also properly commit to Kingsford Smith spanning the airport by extending it slightly further west and south, and in so doing, address the problems throughout Sydney such as the centre of Blacktown being broken up.

I wish the redistribution committee well with the next steps in this process.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Mitchell