



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Comment on Objections 186

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5 pages



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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACKELLAR

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Australian Electoral Commission
Redistribution Committee for New South Wales
Locked Bag 4007
Canberra ACT 2601

By AEC Online Forms

Dear AEC Redistribution Committee,

Re: Mackellar electoral division redistribution - Response to Objection 671

As the current Federal MP for Mackellar, over the past several months I have had many scores of conversations with Mackellar residents about the current electorate boundary redistribution and believe I am genuinely representing the broad sentiment of those conversations here in my response.

Firstly, I would like to thank the AEC for their hard work during this redistribution process. It is no doubt an arduous and painstaking process.

Within the Mackellar community there is broad and strong support for the boundary changes proposed for Mackellar in the AEC's draft redistribution. However, due to change.org and letter writing campaigns, there have been many objections to Mackellar's proposed boundaries from people who live **outside** of the Mackellar electorate. Whilst responding to [Objection 671](#) this submission may be considered a response to all similar objections.

Decisions within the AEC's proposed redistribution that were particularly welcome include;

- maintaining Mackellar within the one local council area (Northern Beaches Council)

- and uniting the suburbs of Dee Why, Forestville and Frenchs Forest wholly within Mackellar – having been previously split between two electorates.

These outcomes are logical and sensible and will reduce confusion and complexity.

Also very welcome is the inclusion of the suburbs of Killarney Heights and North Curl Curl into Mackellar, which will enhance the strong 'forests' and 'beaches' culture of the Mackellar electorate, and strengthen connections between these contiguous communities.

Objection

Moving the western boundary of Mackellar to incorporate St Ives and St Ives Chase is strongly opposed for reasons outlined below.

- (i) *Community of interests within the proposed Electoral Division, including economic, social and regional interests;*

St Ives is part of the Upper North Shore, and Mackellar is part of the Northern Beaches. The North Shore and the Northern Beaches are different and separate communities with little linking them. They have different councils, different sporting competitions, different school catchments, different shopping centres, different business precincts, and unrelated major transport networks.

Terrey Hills and St Ives are both peripheral suburbs within their current federal electorates and the focus and connections of these communities lie in opposite directions. The primary links of Terrey Hills are with Mona Vale and the Forest areas to their east, while St Ives' primary links are with Pymble and Gordon to their west. I have spoken to many residents of Mackellar who state they rarely, if ever, go to the St Ives area.

On the other hand, the suburbs to the south of Mackellar which have been newly incorporated into Mackellar in the AEC's draft plan - are neighbouring, closely

connected communities. They are strongly connected through surf clubs, sporting competitions, shopping precincts, transport links and business ties.

The understanding that Ku-ring-gai (on the North Shore) and the Northern Beaches are quite distinct communities is echoed by the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai Council who in his [submission](#) states;

“There is also a clear and distinct community of interest formed by the suburbs within the Kuring-gai Local Government Area and extending somewhat beyond the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area to comprise the Upper North Shore.”

(ii) The physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division

St Ives and St Ives Chase are separated from Mackellar by distance and major topographical features including the Garigal and Ku-ring-gai National Parks, and Cowan Creek and Middle Harbour Creek.

For decades these natural topographical barriers have formed a strong major boundary between the electorates of Mackellar and Bradfield and continue to be a serious barrier to the westward expansion of Mackellar.

The intervening national park means that there is a clear 5km gap by road between the most western suburbs of Mackellar, including Terrey Hills and Belrose (at the intersection of Mona Vale Road and Forest Way), and the centre of St Ives (at the intersection of Mona Vale Road and Richmond Avenue). This gap means there is little connection between the communities in these separate regions.

(iii) Means of communication and travel within the proposed Electoral Division;

The public transport links between St Ives and the rest of Mackellar are very weak. The only public transport service linking the 2 regions is an infrequent bus service between St Ives and Mona Vale, which runs every half hour at most. There are no

direct links between St Ives and Frenchs Forest, or St Ives and the southern parts of Mackellar. There is no train line or light rail linking the two areas.

On the other hand - the North Shore train line strongly links the suburbs of the North Shore with each other along the Pacific Highway. Bus services in that area head mainly towards train stations and urban hubs surrounding those stations and not to urban hubs within Mackellar.

Mackellar on the flip side, has a completely separate public transport artery to the city, the B Line bus service, which runs along Pittwater Road and follows the coast to the city. It does not link the 2 electorates of Bradfield and Mackellar at all.

(iv) The boundaries of existing Divisions in the State;

I strongly welcome the Committee's decision in the proposed redistribution to keep Mackellar wholly within the Northern Beaches Council area as the most logical and simple outcome.

Ku-ring-gai Council Mayor, Sam Ngai, also opposes the splitting of Ku-ring-gai council area that would occur if St Ives and St Ives Chase were moved into the Mackellar electorate, He states it would benefit the people of St Ives / St Ives Chase to remain within the Ku-ring-gai Council area. (see Mayor Ngai's submission [here](#))

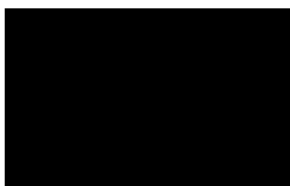
“With Ku-ring-gai being a large subset of Bradfield, it creates certain efficiencies which largely benefit our residents. From a local government perspective, we find it much easier to coordinate key events such as Australian Citizenship Ceremonies, Remembrance and ANZAC Day commemorations, and the opening of new facilities with just one federal member. The alternate arrangement of having to co-ordinate the calendars and civic duties of multiple federal members of parliament is suboptimal, with each having their attention divided across multiple Local Government Areas. Ultimately it is our constituents who suffer from having federal members with divided attention, and it is in their interest to retain the current situation where the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area sits entirely within the electoral division of Bradfield” Mr Sam Ngai, Mayor of Ku-ring-gai Council

The Upper North Shore is a wonderful community, however, my team and I have spoken to scores of Mackellar residents across the electorate who do not feel it is logical to incorporate a small part of the upper North Shore into Mackellar as it will be isolated from the rest of the electorate by distance, geography, weak or absent public transport links, lie within a different council area, and have different communities of interest and different sporting, shopping and business precincts - that do not lie within Mackellar.

The Northern Beaches is a cohesive community with a strong and unique culture, which is defined by the coastal and forest lifestyles (surf clubs, schools, community groups including RFS, sporting competitions, services).

AEC boundary changes should unite and strengthen communities of interest, not divide them which is why I strongly support the AEC's proposed redistribution as it relates to Mackellar in its entirety.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sophie Scamps MP
Federal Member for Mackellar

Link:

[Comment on Suggestion 82 \(Mayor of Ku-ring-gai\)](#)