



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Comment on suggestion 95

Robert Erwin Firth

2 pages

10 November 2023

Australian Electoral Commission Re-distribution of NSW

Locked Bag 4007

Canberra ACT 2601

By AEC online forms

Dear Committee Members

Redistribution of Electoral Divisions in NSW (Warringah)

In 2022 my wife and I moved, for family reasons, from Cremorne Point in Sydney to Canberra. We have had no formal membership with any political parties however, from time to time, we have been involved as volunteers supporting aspiring politicians and grass-roots campaigns advocating, for example, for stronger climate action in Australia.

Although we are relatively recent newcomers to living in the ACT, we are still interested in political developments in other States, in Sydney and in our old electorate Warringah in Sydney.

We are aware of the current round of re-distribution of NSW electorates being conducted by the AEC, and some of the submissions made regarding possible changes to the boundaries for Warringah and the adjoining electorates of North Sydney and McKellar.

From our personal experience living in Warringah electorate, it could be characterised as a strong, proud and diverse community; sought-after suburbs for a wide range of family units and individuals pursuing convenience, amenity and lifestyle; and a strong economic/commercial base offering wide ranging employment opportunities, from highly-qualified professionals and corporate executives to a sizeable workforce of skilled and unskilled tradespeople, servicing local businesses and individuals, as well as clients across the wider Sydney region. To the extent that a large community can be identified within electoral boundaries, one would have to say Warringah works well.

My wife and I support the submission by the independent member for Warringah, Zali Steggall OAM MP, ("Suggestion 42") that basically proposes maintaining the existing electoral boundaries for Warringah, as well as the modest proposal to reclaim some of the adjoining electorates in McKellar and North Sydney electorates in order to reach the acceptable range of projected enrolment quota to April 2028.

I am not qualified to debate the merits or otherwise submitted in respect of other electorates.

However, stepping back from the minutiae, I believe the AEC should totally reject the suggestion from the Liberal Party that the Division of Warringah be abolished. The AEC is widely recognised for maintaining Australia's electoral integrity through quality, agility and professionalism – values that are fundamental in its charter.

Presumably the AEC strives to not only maintain the integrity of the system, but also to “be seen to be fair, professional and impartial” in discharging its responsibilities.

In recent years, and particularly for the 2019 and 2022 Federal elections, Warringah has been one of the most strongly-contested electorates in Australia. Against such a background, the proposed abolition of the seat on the recommendation of the party of the unsuccessful candidate could be considered a political act, or possibly “retribution” for the Warringah community taking a strong and different stance from the previous incumbent.

I am certainly not suggesting any impropriety on the part of the AEC and AEC staff – for whom I have the highest regard. However, to allay any suggestion (or ‘conspiracy theories’) with respect to the redistribution process I respectfully urge the Committee to maintain the status quo with the Warringah electorate, along with the modest changes proposed by Ms Zali Steggall.

Rob Firth

Red Hill, ACT

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