



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 39

Jennifer Brookes

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Objection to the 2024 proposed distribution: NSW—Yass Valley

While I understand that the announced proposed changes to Commonwealth Electoral boundaries is a process based on statistical equations, I must object to the removal of Yass Valley from the electoral district of Eden-Monaro, and its incorporation into Riverina:

1. I have lived and worked in both electorates—Riverina (in Gundagai for nine years), and Eden-Monaro (Bermagui, fourteen years and Yass for the past five). This experience has revealed to me that Yass interests will not be well-represented from Wagga. The Riverina is an electorate with predominantly rural interests; the interests of Yass Valley residents are various. Residents risk losing the electorate from Labor.
2. My lived experience in Eden-Monaro, two vastly different communities but united in their support for Labor, has demonstrated the strength of Labor values. When we realised that our increasing age might require faster access to specialised medical services, my husband and I elected to move to Yass Valley—not to return to Gundagai in the Riverina electorate where we had connections— but to remain within the Labor seat. The proposed removal of Yass from Eden-Monaro means that the rug has been taken from under our feet.
3. The current sitting member does a sterling job traversing the enormous distances, and representing the varied and disparate communities within it, as did Mike Kelly before her. She is always approachable and accessible. Witness her support for Yass High School facilities, winning funds to build a new basketball court, securing funds for Yass Crisis Housing Project, acknowledging the growth in population and the pressure it exerts on the Barton Highway, and securing funds to return maternity services to Yass Hospital. I cannot ever imagine a Nationals' member possessing similar social values.
4. Yass has no place in the Riverina electorate. While this surely cannot be true, one could almost be forgiven for imagining that the proposed redistribution is an effort to reduce Labor's chance of re-election, by causing the loss of the seat of Eden-Monaro. While Yass retains its rural town characteristics, these are melded with the town's proximity to the national capital with its services and employment opportunities. And the town is growing; witness the number of housing developments such as Yarah, Wellington, Hamilton Rise, and those before them (north Yass). The Nationals are unlikely to support a region seen to be so geographically close to ACT services as not to require their own. Yass residents will suffer from this perception

I do hope you will reconsider the proposal to transfer Yass Valley from the Eden-Monaro electorate to Riverina.

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