



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 159

Reverend Michael Armstrong

2 pages

St Mark's & All Saints'
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Saturday, 29 June 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Objection to Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) draft plan to abolish the federal seat of North Sydney.

I am writing to express concern regarding the AEC's draft plan to abolish the seat of North Sydney, and ask that this letter be deemed as my objection to this plan on the following grounds:

1. Our Community Identity

North Sydney has a distinctive nature, and this is reflected in our electorate and our voting.

We are an increasingly diverse community, and see this as a treasure, and celebrate our multiculturalism.

Despite our diversity, we also hold much in common – such as a concern for the environment, social justice, care for those in need, and concern for future generations. Some examples of this include:

- The election of progressive Liberal and Independent members who reflect these concerns;
- Significant support for our First Nations Voice in the recent referendum;
- Community Leaders coming together in recent forums and meetings to discuss ways of dealing with violence and negotiating difference across our community;
- Active and engaged people who gather to meet, debate and volunteer for causes, issues and needs.

Some of our distinctiveness comes from the privilege of being in such a geographic place. I often describe Hunters Hill as a “country town in the middle of a city”. Neighbours say hello to one another, are concerned for one another, and come together for the ups and downs of life. I know this is part of the culture across much of our electorate.

Churches across our area work well together, often sharing resources and working in collaboration with one another. In my Parish we work closely with the Catholic, Congregational and uniting Church whom we share boundaries with.

Our electorate, and our elected member, has reflected this community. Removal of this electorate would take away representation of “us” and our distinct and important voice that needs to be heard in the Parliament.

2. Population growth

The population across our community is set to increase dramatically under NSW State Government policies relating to new housing and growth, along with other natural growth factors.

I do not believe that this growth has been taken into consideration in any determinations to abolish the electorate.

It seems more feasible that rather than abolishing a seat in order to create another elsewhere, a redrawing of boundaries across the state would produce a better, fairer and more representative outcome based on numbers.

3. Economics

North Sydney is home to the third largest business centre in Australia, and so deserves a dedicated local member to represent these interests. Many of the people who live in our electorate own, operate, manage or work at these businesses.

4. North Sydney is our “home”

North Sydney as a seat is historically significant, and as part of our nations heritage, deserves to continue.

More significantly it is the community that we relate to. In Hunters Hill, during debates regarding the amalgamation of Council's, our community made a distinct case that we do not relate to the community at Ryde (Bennelong) for which it is proposed we would belong to. We made clear that we were a distinct community of our own, but if given a choice we would link with Lane Cove and North Sydney, which is where our natural links with families, friends, work places, sports groups, churches and many other links were located.

5. A local member who knows us

Having a local member who knows our community because they are often here, visiting and talking with us is also incredibly important to us. In my ten years I have been here I have been blessed by local members who have been available to engage with us on important local and national issues, available to talk about them and work through solutions, and importantly we have not needed to “background” them because they live in the area and know us. This ensures that the time of our representative is well used, that funds from government is able to be applied fairly and ensure that the government gets the best return for its investment.

6. Loss of local investment

Often Federal Government grants are made available by electorates, and we feel changing this electorate, and moving us into an extremely large one, will have an impact upon our local community as we need to compete with a significantly larger number of people for a smaller pool of funds and resources available. I believe by removing our electorate that our local community would miss out on opportunities.

I do hope and pray that these, along with many other considerations, will sway the AEC to reconsider this draft plan, and will ensure that the seat of North Sydney remains in place ensuring good representation for those who live in this place.

Many thanks for your time in considering this submission.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Rev'd Michael Armstrong.

Rev'd Michael Armstrong
Rector, Anglican Parish of Hunters Hill