



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 223

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3 pages

Hello, and first off, thank you for taking the time to read my comments on the proposed Federal Division Redistribution.

I would like to discuss 2x objections with this Redistribution. The first is removing Epping from the seat of Bennelong and it to the Northern seat of Berowra, and the second is the movement of Bennelong towards North Sydney. For context, I am a resident of Epping, and so, if this redistribution were finalised, would be pushed out of my current marginal seat and into the neighbouring safe seat of Berowra.

Epping was formerly a part of the Hornsby LGA, with Hornsby centre located about 7km away and directly connected by trains, busses, and roads. It was then handed to Parramatta LGA, with the centre almost 9km away, with no direct trains or roads, and busses being very traffic prone. This was, by any account, a poor redistribution. However, I believe that it has worked out well considering the changes in the population of Epping. It fundamentally changed Epping to be a locale that was closer associated with the burgeoning West of Sydney, rather than the well-established North or East, and this is a change that has only accelerated over time.

I believe redistributing Bennelong closer to its 1974 boundaries is a mistake, even if on paper it seems to simply be a reversion to former boundaries. Bennelong has changed enormously over the years to become a seat of great Ethnic, Religious and Cultural diversity that fits far closer in with Western Sydney than North Sydney. I used to live in the exact areas that are proposed to be added to Bennelong, and I can appreciably testify to the difference in culture. Just from my own experience, I can see that the people in the North Sydney areas are Wealthier, less Religious and older than those typical to Epping.

To further expand on this point, Epping has become an almost singularly diverse and culturally rich location. In addition to white Australians, there are South-Asians and East-Asians, and with them is the mix of restaurants and cuisines, supermarkets and shops, and accompanying this is a rise in high density, public transport focused living. This is to say that Epping has gone from a suburb of cultural homogeneity and isolated living, to a vibrant, interconnected, multicultural location.

Bennelong, under its current boundaries, is a delicately balanced seat between Northern Sydney suburban sprawl and the socio-economic diversity found in Eastwood and Epping. That is part of what has made it such a marginal seat, because both groups make up a significant amount of the voters, and as such a both have a real voice in who their representative becomes. This proposed redistribution completely disrupts that balance.

Quite simply, the more diverse voices of Eastwood and Macquarie would become meaningless compared to the voices of voters in the suburban sprawl, effectively silencing them in terms of Representation. Additionally, for myself in Epping being added to Berowra, the exact same issue would occur. As stated, I feel that Epping culturally and demographically aligns poorly with the seat of Berowra, and by including Epping in it, you dilute and silence the voices of us living there.

In summary, by moving Bennelong towards North Sydney, and adding Epping to Berowra, you would create a significant number of marginalised voices in both who would no longer truly have a say in who their representative becomes.

As an additional point, I have reviewed the proposal put forward by the AEC for the justification for abolishing a seat from NSW, and I have personally found it lacking. The reasons provided is that NSW has had slower growth of its voting population compared to the other Mainland States. Therefore, to keep the per seat quota within the allowed deviation by the time of the next Redistribution, NSW should lose a seat and have the remaining redistributed. This, I feel, is a terrible justification.

I understand that there are limitations on the apportionment of seats, such as the following:

- Tasmania is Constitutionally required to have at least 5 seats, regardless of population.
- The Territories are granted more generous rounding, allowing the Northern Territory to keep 2x seats, and the ACT 3x Seats.
- 142 seats (76 Senators x 2 = 152, minus 10 = 142), is the number of seats that could then be apportioned to the Mainland States.

While future considerations should be incorporated into decision making, especially as Redistributions only happen every 7 years, I feel that the picture painted using the AEC's own statistics as of the 31st of March, 2024 reflects a poor job:

	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
31/03/2024	16,925,708	5,618,938	4,510,408	3,664,340	1,844,728	1,287,294
Seats	142	46	38	30	16	10
Quota	119,195	122,151	118,695	122,145	115,296	128,729
Quota Dev.		102.48%	99.58%	102.47%	96.73%	108.00%

A QuotaDev. over 100% means a State is Under-Represented, as there are more voters per seat than the National Quota. The reverse also applies, with a QuotaDev. of under 100% meaning a State is Over-Represented, as there are less Voters per seat than the National Quota.

SA is right now ridiculously under-represented. VIC can be justified for losing a seat using this calculation, but WA is now slightly Over-Represented with an extra seat. The trend data since 2016 does confirm that WA has the second fastest growing population of voters, just behind QLD. However, WA, along with all the States, has had slowing population growth over this period, and future population growth projections from the ABS points to this trend continuing.

I would suggest an alternate Redistribution that prioritises equitable apportionment based on the voters of today, as well as accommodates for population growth in the future:

	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
31/03/2024	16,925,708	5,618,938	4,510,408	3,664,340	1,844,728	1,287,294
Seats	142	47	38	31	16	11
Quota	119,195	119,552	118,695	118,205	122,982	117,027
Quota Dev.		100.30%	99.58%	99.17%	96.73%	98.18%

By only removing a seat in VIC, and adding a seat to QLD, WA and SA, every Mainland State is now within 2% of the National Quota, except WA which is slightly over-represented, but is given the opportunity to grow into this apportionment. This results in 153 Representatives, 2.01x the number of Senators, which is firmly within historical precedent.

With WA's population growth projected to slow, along with the rest of Australia, but adjusting for an ageing population, meaning a higher level of enfranchisement, a 2031 Projection would resemble the following:

2031	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA
Est. Voters	19,438,944	6,452,035	5,158,307	4,225,525	2,115,398	1,487,679
Seats	142	47	38	31	16	11
Quota	136,894	137,277	135,745	136,307	132,212	135,244
Quota Dev.		100.28%	99.16%	99.57%	96.58%	98.79%

In this scenario, my proposed Redistribution for 2024 would still be providing equitable apportionment to all the Mainland States.

In summary, by reducing the representation of Australia's most populous State, you are making it deliberately damaging representations for today's Voters, under the erroneous justification that in 7 years-time it may equalise out. That is not democratically acceptable, and is in direct conflict with 'One Vote, One Value' reforms that Australians hold of high importance. The mainland States already suffer from underrepresentation thanks to the Constitutional rules and Legislation in place, and this redistribution will only make this worse.

I implore the AEC to reconsider this proposed Redistribution and help maintain the high standard of Democratic Integrity for which Australia is globally renowned.