



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 353

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The Australian Electoral Commission
Locked Bag 4007
Canberra ACT 2601

Via EMAIL

Attention Re-distribution Committee

SUBJECT: Strongly against proposal to change North Sydney Electoral Boundaries

Over the past 20 years of living in the North Sydney electorate I have seen and experienced the development of a strong sense of community which has been driven by a highly multi-cultural and diverse population. The federal seat of North Sydney is strong, vibrant, actively engaged and connected by geographic boundaries, roads/public transport and multi-cultural integration. Losing this sense of connection and community in relation to electoral boundary redistribution would be a retrograde step to deliberative democracy.

In addition, it is concerning that in abolishing the federal seat of North Sydney, the area's unique historical connection with Federation will disappear forever. We have already lost too much of our important history. There are some things that need to be preserved.

North Sydney has demonstrated that it is a community that unifies for the good of Australia. It is a thinking and engaged electorate. To dismantle this electorate and 'disappear it' is to negate the work and commitment of the many individuals who have combined to create a strong democratic voice; losing North Sydney as an electorate is to lose the voice of an integrated community that sets a standard for multi-cultural engagement and collaboration.

The strength of this community as it exists today is reflected by outcome of the recent Voice referendum, the outcome of the 2022 Federal election AND the way the community comes together and connects on matters of importance to Australia. It is not a passive electorate. The federal seat of North Sydney has strongly demonstrated its interconnectedness as a community of interest by unifying in exercising its collective voice in the way that acknowledges the common bonds that us.

I am also perplexed. If one of the criteria for considering a boundary distribution is population numbers, do we not look at forward projections rather than historical numbers? While the ABS figures from the 2022 census may reflect a population number that is either static or falling, these numbers are at odds with the State and Local Government projections which show that over the next few years there will be (at least) a 14% growth in the Federal North Seat electorate based on projections for the LGAs of Willoughby City and North Sydney.

I cannot see that the Electoral Redistribution Committee has taken into account the projected growth of all four LGAs in the federal North Sydney electorate.

As local and state government residents we are being told to prepare for significant population growth along transport hubs BUT the Federal Government is saying population based on ABS statistics is static. Who is right? Which level of government is more likely to have up-to-date, realistic projections? I'm inclined to believe those who deliver infrastructure and services are more accurate in their projections.

Changing electoral boundaries without taking into consideration projected population growth is a short-term decision and comes with significant administrative cost. It is administrative money that does not need to be spent given future projected growth of the electorate. We risk losing the character and history of this federal seat based on short thinking.

So, to summarise: My objections to abolishing the federal seat of North Sydney are four-fold.

- (1) My personal activities in the area reflect a strong local community spirit plus physical and cultural connections delineated by roads, public transport and geographic features and the many community groups to which I belong. As it currently exists, the federal electorate of North Sydney is cohesive and engaged.
- (2) The recent referendum and last Federal election clearly indicated that the North Sydney electorate, as it currently exists, is a highly engaged, strong 'community of interest'.
- (3) Any change made on historical population numbers does not reflect projected increases in population, so, abolishing the electorate is an expensive administrative change that will require another boundary change in the not-too-distant future. The money used to make bureaucratic changes today could be used more effectively on things that are significantly more important to Australia. The proposed changes are counterproductive and smack of an expensive bureaucratic 'be-seen-to-do-something' exercise with no real benefit.
- (4) Once you lose history, it's hard to regain it. While we live in an era of constant change, we need to keep some of our historical heritage preserved as a record and acknowledgment of the past. As a seat created at Federation in 1901, North Sydney should remain an electoral division. Abolishing this federal seat effectively 'disappears' an important part of a historical record which is a symbol of an independent nation with its world leading, democratic electoral system.

This proposed boundary change is unnecessary and not in the interests of the people it impacts.

It is important, on so many levels, to **retain the Federal seat of North Sydney**.

Kind regards

Glenda Hewitt

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