



**THE FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

# Objection 708

Peter Mitchell

7 pages

Friday 12 July

## **Re: NSW Federal Redistribution 2024 – Objection to the proposed redistribution**

Dear AEC,

Thank you for the opportunity to make submissions for the redistribution of electoral divisions in NSW.

I wish to object to some poor proposed boundaries for divisions in the Sydney region, to support a number of good proposals, and to suggest alternative approaches that can produce more sensible boundaries and more coherent divisions.

I urge the redistribution committee to consider these suggestions that are all intended to keep major urban centres contained within a single division, and to draw boundaries along major geographic barriers such as rivers and highways. The deep valleys between in urban areas to Sydney's north and south, and the major barriers of creeks and highways in urban areas in Sydney's west need to exert a greater influence in federal electoral divisions.

I have not formed a position on proposed divisions in provincial and regional NSW, because the task in these areas is more to draw boundaries between urban areas rather than through regional urban centres.

My submission is made as an Australian citizen with no political party memberships or donations to declare.

### **Summary**

1. **I object to the proposed abolition of North Sydney.** This creates a divided lower north shore area while also creating a series of unwelcome compromises to boundaries further west in the northern Sydney region.
2. **I suggest that Berowra is abolished instead.** This is consistent with the redistribution committee's general approach to abolish one seat in the northern Sydney region. It also enables a far better arrangement of boundaries and divisions throughout this region.
3. **I support the proposal that Kingsford Smith division should span the airport, but object to the manner in which this proposal is drawn.** I urge the redistribution committee to make this a wholehearted move in that direction. I recognise that a version Kingsford Smith that spans the airport is a compromise solution that is not ideal, however I consider this to be the best compromise to make so that many southern Sydney divisions can be drawn more cleanly.

## **Northern Sydney Review**

This review of the proposed boundaries follows the order of drawing divisions that I believe is best.

### **1. Mackellar**

- i. I support keeping Mackellar within the Northern Beaches.
- ii. I support Mackellar's move south to Curl Curl Lagoon. This is a very sensible boundary.

### **2. Warringah**

- i. I oppose Warringah's move into North Sydney CBD and as far west as Crows Nest. North Sydney is a major city centre with excellent public transport links north and south. Warringah is predominantly a coastal division with small urban centres and very poor public transport that is reliant on buses for most people. There is no collective community of interest to be formed in the proposal merger of these two dissimilar areas together.
- ii. I suggest Warringah should extend no further west than the Warringah Freeway. This massive road is a major barrier to movement between neighbouring suburbs, and is therefore an ideal divisional boundary. To make up the required electoral population, Warringah should then extend north into the very similar suburbs of Cammeray, Castlecrag, Middle Cove, Castle Cove, and eastern Willoughby. This move would be entirely consistent with Warringah's coastal communities serviced only by buses.
- iii. I recommend the previous North Sydney 1949-54 and 1955-67 division boundaries as a precedent for a boundary drawn in a north-south direction in the Willoughby Area. In the current urban context, I recommend Willoughby Road and Penshurst Street to be the ideal new boundary at the western edge of Warringah. This is a very busy road, and all communities to the east rely on bus access or cars, while all communities to the west have access to the north shore rail line.

### **3. North Sydney**

- i. I oppose the abolition of North Sydney. North Sydney CBD, Crows Nest, and St Leonards should be considered as one interconnected major city centre. This highest level importance means that this city needs to be the major feature within its own division, not cut into three separate divisions. The LGA boundaries in this area are poor boundaries to use as federal division boundaries because they sever neighbouring communities that otherwise have very strong connections with each other.
- ii. I suggest North Sydney begins from west of the Warringah Freeway at the Harbour Bridge, that it includes its existing areas of Lane Cove and Hunters Hill, and that it extends north into Bradfield up to Pymble to make up its required electoral population. This would make it clearly and coherently a lower north shore division.

### **4. Bradfield**

- i. I oppose the current proposal to draw a boundary so close to Chatswood. This is also a major centre that deserves to be wholly contained within a single division. (For example, it is an unwelcome move to divide between schools and the urban centre). This is negative impact #1 from the proposed abolition of North Sydney.
- ii. I suggest that Bradfield extends north to include the entirety of Hornsby, Berowra (suburb), and Brooklyn. The new western boundary should be Berowra Creek / Galston Gorge, as this is a major geographic barrier with very few connections in-between.
- iii. I suggest that Bradfield extends west to include Pennant Hills, Beecroft, Cherrybrook, and West Pennant Hills to make up its required electoral population. This would make it clearly and coherently an upper north shore division.

## **5. Bennelong**

- i. I oppose the current proposal to draw multiple boundaries so close to Epping. This is also a major centre that deserves to be wholly contained within a single division. This is negative impact #2 from the proposed abolition of North Sydney.
- ii. I oppose Epping being included in the division of Berowra. This is another example of a major centre being proposed into a division with an otherwise completely different character. Epping should remain connected with its highly urbanised neighbours in Bennelong. This is negative impact #3 from the proposed abolition of North Sydney.
- iii. I suggest that Bennelong remains largely in its current position, including the centres of both Ryde and Epping, and that it extends west into Parramatta to make up its required electoral population.

## **6. Berowra**

- i. I suggest that Berowra should be abolished.
  - a) In its current form, Berowra is deeply divided by Berowra Creek / Galston Gorge, and there are very poor urban connections across this major barrier. It is the most compromised division in the northern Sydney region, and is therefore the best candidate for abolition.
  - b) While the Aboriginal name 'Berowra' may be appropriate to be retained for a division that includes part of Berowra Creek, in a practical sense, the suburb of Berowra should ideally be included in a division with this name, for consistency's sake. However, since it is suggested to extend Bradfield into the suburb of Berowra, the divisional name of Berowra is no longer sustainable.
  - c) A potential alternative naming strategy for the same divisional distribution on the ground would be for the Bradfield name to be abolished, for the area identified as the 'upper north shore' division centred upon Hornsby to be named Berowra, and for Mitchell to move north to Wiseman's Ferry.

## **7. Mitchell**

- i. I suggest Mitchell moves north up to the Hawkesbury River. This would make a consistent ridgeline settlement division from Castle Hill through to Wiseman's Ferry, comprised of complimentary settlement types of outer suburban areas in the south and peri-urban areas in the north.

## **8. Parramatta**

- i. I support the proposal to move the southern boundary north to the Western Motorway. This is a major barrier that is highly appropriate to be used as a division boundary.
- ii. I suggest that Parramatta's northern boundary moves north to take in areas that are vacated by Mitchell. This is appropriate given the Windsor Road - Church Street arterial connection into Parramatta.

## **9. Greenway**

- i. I oppose the current proposal to draw multiple boundaries through the centre of Blacktown. This is a major centre that deserves to be wholly contained within a single division. This is negative impact #4 from the proposed abolition of North Sydney.
- ii. I support the proposal for Greenway to move north of Windsor Road into Rouse Hill. While Windsor Road was previously a major boundary, the north-western rail line is turning this into a series of centres. New suburban developments throughout this area are also very

similar to one another (for example Kellyville and Kellyville Ridge), so there is no clear reason for these areas to be divided into separate divisions any more.

- iii. I suggest Greenway also extends east slightly to include Kellyville as part of Mitchell moving north.

## **10. Chifley**

- i. I suggest that McMahon is formed around the major urban centre of Blacktown. This completes redistribution of the northern Sydney region whereby Greenway moves north, McMahon moves north into this space, and Chifley retreats out of the McMahon areas of Doonside / Quakers Hill and instead extends move south.

## **Southern Sydney Review**

### **1. Wentworth**

- i. I oppose the proposal to extend Wentworth west into Kings Cross. Kings Cross is for all intents and purposes part of Sydney City, and the NSW State Capital and Central Business District should not have a federal division boundary running into it and dividing its area.
- ii. I suggest that Wentworth extends south instead, and withdraws slightly from the west (see Sydney below).

### **2. Kingsford Smith**

- i. I support the proposal to retain the boundary to the City of Sydney LGA. This is consistent with keeping Sydney City intact.
- ii. I conditionally support the proposal to extend Kingsford Smith south-west, but urge the redistribution committee to make this a wholehearted move by extending west to Beverley Park and south to take in the entirety of the Sans Souci – Sandringham peninsula. This makes Kingsford Smith a consistently 'northern Botany Bay' division. It is a compromise to span the airport, which is a big barrier, but this composing a two-part division in Kingsford-Smith is the best compromise to make in the southern Sydney region in the interests of serving the requirements of this redistribution.

### **3. Cook**

- i. I support the withdrawal of Cook southwards out of Blakehurst and Monterey.
- ii. I suggest that Cook should be drawn entirely south of the Georges River by extending westwards slightly, and making it a consistently Sutherland division.

### **4. Sydney**

- i. I suggest that the division of Sydney should extend east to include all of Rushcutters Bay and Elizabeth Bay. These suburbs are both very clearly a part of the Kings Cross area and the City of Sydney.
- ii. I oppose the division Sydney extending west into the Balmain Peninsula. This is too heavy a compromise to make as Sydney City would become more peripheral to this division.
- iii. I suggest keeping the division of Sydney largely intact and in its current position. This is positive impact #1 from the suggestion for Kingsford Smith to span across the airport and not into the City of Sydney.

### **5. Grayndler**

- i. I oppose Grayndler losing the Balmain Peninsula and moving west. This moves are unnecessary if Wentworth and Sydney don't push westward.

- ii. I support Grayndler's southern boundary moving to the Cook's River.
- iii. I suggest keeping Grayndler largely intact and in its current position. This is positive impact #2 from the suggestion for Kingsford Smith to span across the airport and not into the City of Sydney.

**6. Reid**

- i. I support keeping Reid largely intact and in its current position.

**7. Barton**

- i. I suggest that Barton extends south to include Blakehurst and Connells Point to make up its electoral population sans Sans Souci.

**8. Watson**

- i. I suggest that Watson remains largely as proposed, subject to any minor boundary alignments with Blaxland and Banks.

**9. Banks**

- i. I suggest that Watson remains largely as proposed, subject to any minor boundary alignments with Watson.

**10. Hughes**

- i. I suggest that Hughes extends north into Chipping Norton to make up its electoral population without the areas drawn into Cook.
- ii. I suggest the Hume Motorway as the better boundary to the west, due to its function as a barrier between neighbourhoods in this area.

**11. Blaxland**

- i. I suggest Blaxland extends west to the Prospect Reservoir.

**12. Fowler**

- i. I suggest that Fowler extends north into Fairfield Heights to make up its electoral population without Chipping Norton.

**13. McMahon**

- i. I suggest that McMahon moves north to centre upon Blacktown.

**14. Werriwa**

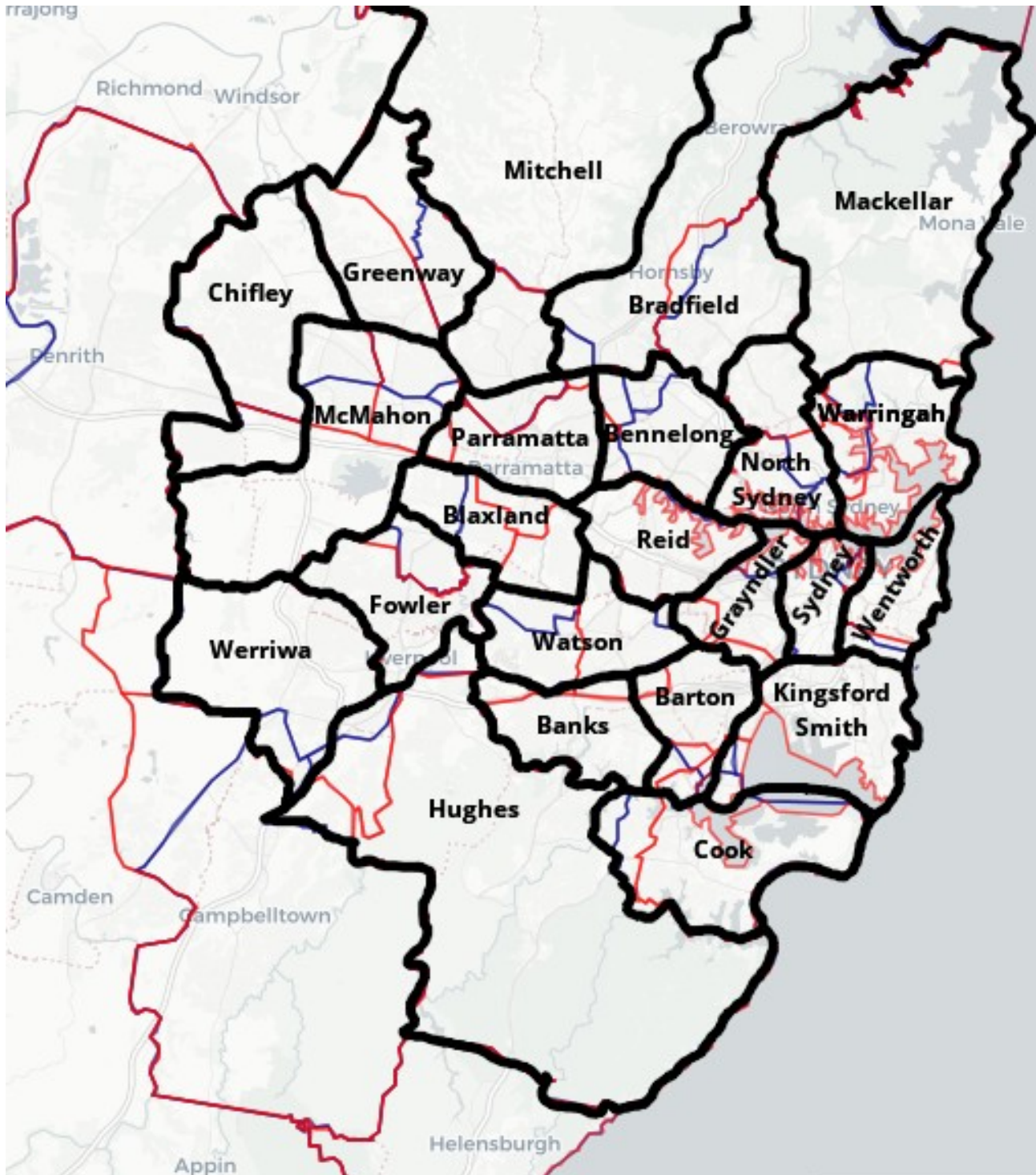
- i. I suggest a minor exchange with Hughes to align the boundary along the Hume Motorway.

## Illustration

Divisions recommended for changes in this submission are illustrated in black below. All other proposed divisions in NSW are unaffected.

Red denotes existing division boundaries.

Blue denotes the proposed redistribution boundaries.



## **A Request for the AEC to Provide Accessibility Improvements for Complex Redistributions**

I request that the AEC develop a digital platform (a website and an app) to make 'complex' redistributions more accessible to everyday citizens. (I define a complex redistribution as one where the number of divisions within a state is changing). This can enable more everyday citizens to engage with the redistribution process not only by raising pertinent suggestions to the redistribution committee, but also by helping the committee with suggestions that are more practically aligned with overall requirements for all divisions in a state.

The current situation leaves numerous challenges to overcome:

1. Data needs to be gathered from different departments within the one Australian Government (AEC and ABS).
2. Data needs to be matched together without errors.
3. An understanding of the redistribution requirements overall needs to be gained (in terms of which areas are need to grow and which to shrink), and a geographical understanding needs to be applied (in terms of finding good alternative boundaries).
4. A suggestion must avoid making serious flaws by drawing boundary lines through places that shouldn't be divided.
5. A suggestion should ideally propose a potentially successful proposition for either a single division, a region, or a whole state.

A digital platform would gather all the geographic and demographic data together. It would then display this data in an interactive map format. It could also contain feedback prompts to help guide people towards considerations that help to make their submission more achievable.

The AEC should consider that a digital platform for submissions would likely aid its work and reduce its workload significantly by allowing more quick and easy processing of various schemes. It would also have great civic benefit by making the redistribution process more open and engaging.

## **Conclusion**

This submission is broadly consistent with the redistribution committee's proposals. It maintains northern Sydney with one division abolished, it maintains southern Sydney with Kingsford Smith spanning the airport, and it retains the proposed boundaries in regional NSW. It supports many good proposals for boundaries, and where it opposes poor proposals, it suggests alternative approaches that can create better outcomes.

In good faith, the limitations of this submission in terms of its precision are acknowledged, as accessibility limitations as well as other life commitments have prevented more thorough testing at this point. However, hopefully the redistribution committee considers the arguments in this submission to have merit, and pursues these methods to their fullest extent for that reason.

I wish the redistribution committee well with the next steps in this process.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Mitchell