



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Comment on objections 23

Luke Hopewell

3 pages

20 July 2024

Redistribution Committee for New South Wales

Australian Electoral Commission

Locked Bag 4007

Canberra ACT 2601

Re: Comments on the Proposed Redistribution of the Division of Warringah

To whom it may concern,

Further to the release of the proposed redistribution of Federal electorate boundaries for the Division of Warringah, please find below an Objections Submission.

Objections Submission to the Redistribution of Mackellar

I write to express my strong objection to the inclusion of the Sydney suburbs of St Ives and St Ives Chase within the newly proposed boundaries for the federal electorate of Mackellar. This proposal significantly disrupts the existing and well-recognised community boundaries and fails to account for several critical factors considered by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) during redistributions.

1. Communities of Interest

St Ives and St Ives Chase are integral parts of the Upper North Shore, while Mackellar has historically encompassed Sydney's Northern Beaches. These two regions represent distinctly different communities with unique economic and social interests. The Upper North Shore, including St Ives, operates under the jurisdiction of the Ku-ring-gai Council, whereas the Northern Beaches, including Mackellar, falls under the Northern Beaches Council. These councils administer different policies, services, and community programs which cater specifically to their respective populations.

Sporting competitions, school catchments, and community groups within these areas further highlight their distinct identities. Schools in St Ives primarily feed into Upper North Shore education systems and participate in different inter-school sporting competitions than those on the Northern Beaches. Shopping and business precincts also cater to and reinforce these separate community identities.

2. Transport Links and Communication

Public transport links between St Ives and the rest of Mackellar are notably weak and insufficient to justify the proposed boundary changes. There are no direct public transport routes connecting St Ives to key areas within Mackellar such as Frenchs Forest or the southern parts of the electorate. This lack of connectivity underscores the practical difficulties and inefficiencies that residents would face if these suburbs were included in Mackellar.

Residents of St Ives typically commute towards the Upper North Shore or central Sydney areas rather than the Northern Beaches, aligning more naturally with the transport patterns and infrastructure of the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

3. Physical Features in the Area

The Garigal and Ku-ring-gai National Parks, along with Cowan and Middle Creeks, have long been recognised as significant physical barriers that demarcate the boundaries between the Upper North Shore and the Northern Beaches. These natural features have historically been respected in determining electoral boundaries due to their role in shaping community access and interaction.

These geographical barriers contribute to the distinct separation between the two regions, both physically and in terms of community engagement and cohesion. The current proposal undermines this long-standing natural division, potentially leading to administrative inefficiencies and community disengagement.

4. State Electorate Divisions

While the alignment with state electorate boundaries is a secondary consideration, it is important to note that maintaining coherent and logically defined boundaries across different levels of government enhances administrative efficiency and voter understanding. The current proposal to merge parts of the Upper North Shore with the Northern Beaches disrupts this coherence.

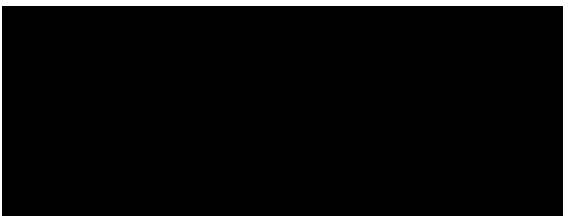
Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposal to include St Ives and St Ives Chase within the boundaries of Mackellar fails to adequately consider the substantial differences in communities of interest, transport links, and physical barriers that have long defined these regions. The Redistribution Committee's previous decision to keep Mackellar wholly within the Northern Beaches Council area is the most logical and beneficial outcome for residents. Additionally, as highlighted in the submission from the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai Council, it is in the best interest of the people of St Ives to remain within the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

I urge the Redistribution Committee to reconsider this proposal and maintain the integrity of the distinct communities by keeping St Ives and St Ives Chase within their current boundaries.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,



Luke Hopewell

Journalist, Northern Beaches resident

