



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 208

Nina Ardill

2 pages

Objection to the abolition of the federal seat of North Sydney

I am writing to object to the AEC's draft proposal to abolish the federal seat of North Sydney. I have lived in the North Sydney electorate for the past 18 years and have found it to be a very cohesive mix of residents with common interests and networks that extend across this particular area. Below are some of the reasons I think North Sydney should be retained.

Community of interests

I believe there is a very strong community of interest in the North Sydney electorate and that the electorate is very cohesive and engaged. Over the years, I have lived in the Bennelong area of Gladesville and the North Sydney area of Gladesville, as well as in Lane Cove West, also in the North Sydney electorate.

In my experience, there is a strong natural divide along the current western border that runs along Pittwater Rd. When I lived west of Pittwater Road in Bennelong, I tended to spend more time in the Gladesville/Ryde/North Ryde area for shopping, recreational activities, etc. I now live on the eastern side of Pittwater Road and I find I do most of my shopping and recreational activities in the North Sydney electoral area. I shop and socialize mostly around Lane Cove, Hunters Hill, Crows Nest and Chatswood.

When the announcement was made that, under the draft proposal, I would be now be in the Bennelong electorate, I felt quite alienating thinking that I would be voting along with the people from areas like Meadowbank, Eastwood and Marsfield – people and areas I have absolutely no connection with.

The sociodemographics of the areas proposed to be redistributed to the Bennelong electorate are very different from those of the rest of Bennelong and are far more consistent with the rest of the current North Sydney electorate. I believe the same is true for the other sections of the electorate that are proposed to be redistributed to Warringah and Bradfield.

The fact that North Sydney is a federation seat is also of significance to our community's identity. Many families have lived in this electorate for generations and are proud that we have been represented by a prime minister, a treasurer and the independent icon Ted Mack.

The very fact that the North Sydney electorate worked together to elect another independent MP at the last election I think demonstrates the cohesiveness of the electorate in terms of our common goals and aspirations. The result of the Voice to Parliament referendum demonstrated this yet again, with North Sydney being one of the only electorates where a majority voted 'Yes'. I am very proud of our electorate for both these achievements and believe we can contribute a lot more as a highly connected and engaged community by staying together.

Physical features of the area/ Existing federal electoral boundaries

I feel there is a natural physical divide between the electorates of North Sydney and Bennelong as the borders currently stand.

The western border currently follows Pittwater Road along the western side of the Lane Cove River, a natural physical break. The areas either side of this road are distinctly different in terms of the physical environment as well as housing types, connecting road networks, etc.

The foreshores of Greenwich, Longueville, Riverview, Lane Cove, Henley, etc – all the way up to the Bedlam Bay (the current extent of the North Sydney electorate) – are more connected to Sydney Harbour or Lane Cove River. West of the current border, the foreshores are more connected to the Parramatta River and have a completely different feel. There are also many areas of local bushland, bush headlands, parts of the Lane Cove National Park, etc, that give the North Sydney electorate a physical connectedness that does not extend into the Bennelong electorate.

The proposed new borders do not seem to follow natural breaks, in fact some seem so unnatural as to be ridiculous. For example, it seems very wrong to divide Crows Nest from St Leonards, Naremburn from Crows Nest, Northbridge from Cammeray. The 3-way split in the middle of St Leonards/Crows Nest/Greenwich seems particularly unnatural and arbitrary and divides areas that are highly connected.

Number of voters projected by 2028

The draft proposal does not seem to take into account the large projected growth in population in the North Sydney electorate expected by 2028.

The NSW State Government plans to see 5,900 new homes built in the North Sydney LGA alone by 2029. If that growth is replicated across the four LGAs currently contained in the seat that would see more than 24,000 new homes built across our community. In addition to this, North Sydney Council is expecting 19,500 new residents to move into the area by 2036. This is a 27% increase in just one of the four LGAs that currently make up the seat of North Sydney.

This level of growth indicates that abolishing the seat of North Sydney now would be completely counterproductive, as there will likely be a case to re-establish it come 2029. It reminds me of the situation where the NSW government closed down a large number of public schools across the north shore in the 1980s, which led to a severe lack of school placement and massive overcrowding in the remaining schools as demand surged over the 2000s and beyond as the population expanded rapidly, leading to the scramble to open new schools.

I appreciate your consideration of these objections.