



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 217

Gary Drysdale

2 pages

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED REMOVAL OF THE FEDERAL DIVISION OF NORTH SYDNEY

I wish to lodge an objection with the proposed Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) boundary changes that would result in the removal of the federal division of North Sydney.

I have resided in the seat of North Sydney for many years.

North Sydney was proclaimed in 1900 and was one of the original 75 divisions contested at the first federal election. In its history it has been represented by a former Prime Minister and a trail blazing independent Ted Mack who served for two terms in 1990s.

At the last federal election, the North Sydney community was dissatisfied once again with the two major parties and when in search of an independent candidate to run and represent our community views and values. We were fed up with the operation of the two party system and the inaction that resulted in government. We did not want a representative that voted on party lines but rather one that supported issues that were important to the North Sydney community.

As a consequence, the last federal election brought together a strong cohesive community that wanted stronger action on the environment/ climate change and deliver integrity in government. The strength of this cohesion led to a community independent being elected who now represents the views and values of this electorate.

Since the last Federal election our community cohesion was further demonstrated within North Sydney voting in support of the Voice Referendum unlike, for example, the neighbouring seat of Bennelong.

Unfortunately, with the proposed carve up of North Sydney electorate this community cohesion of shared values and social and environmental issues will be lost.

Further, I would like to query the voter growth forecasts used in your draft decision to remove the North Sydney electorate.

I note that the AEC had previously acknowledged significant voter growth expected including areas around Ryde, St Leonards and Lane Cove (see AEC report "Voter Trends Report" dated 28 April 2020). However, I not sure how this has been taken into account in your current draft proposal to remove North Sydney and boost the voter numbers in adjoining seats.

I would contend that later estimates of population suggests that growth rate will be higher than what the AEC forecast in 2020. For example, the "idcommunity report" produced for North Sydney Council in 2023 reported that the population estimate for North Sydney Council area as of the 30th June 2023 was 72,014. Since the previous year, the population has grown by 3.81%. Population growth in Greater Sydney was 2.77%.

Further, the NSW Government has released its "Transport Orientated Development Program" in December 2023 identifying 8 precincts where an additional 47,800 houses will be built. Two of these precinct (Crow Nest and Macquarie Park) are relevant to the AEC's draft boundary changes.

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Under this Program, parts of Sydney will be required to build thousands more new homes over the next five years. The NSW government's revised housing targets, seek to "re-balance" housing growth from west to east.

Councils in Sydney's eastern and northern suburbs (including areas within the North Sydney and adjoining electorates) will be responsible for delivering about 41% or 107,100 of those new homes.

NSW Premier said the new housing targets were designed to help the state meet its commitment under the National Housing Accord to build 377,000 new well-located homes by 2029.

Of relevance to this policy is that the housing targets for North Sydney and Hunters Hill have been doubled. Other relevant local government areas (LGAs) impacted are Lane Cove, Mosman, Ryde, Waverley and Willoughby.

The new targets fall in line with the government's strategy to build more low-to-mid-rise developments near transport hubs, with 82 per cent of the new homes to now come from infill areas and 18 per cent from greenfield locations.

It is therefore important for these recent NSW housing programs/policies to be taken into account in making any decision to redrawn the electoral boundaries within NSW at this time. Otherwise, by 2029 the AEC may need to reinstate North Sydney electorate.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that the AEC has not taken into account the history of the seat, the impact of NSW government housing programs, nor the strong cohesion in North Sydney with its proposed decision to remove this electorate.

Gary Drysdale



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