



**THE FEDERAL
REDISTRIBUTION
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Objection 671

Zali Steggall OAM MP

4 pages



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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

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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

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

1. The Division of Warringah

I acknowledge the proposal of the Redistribution Committee to retain the Division of Warringah. I strongly agree with the recommendation to retain the Division and its name.

Warringah is a distinct area encompassing the beaches of the Lower Peninsula, Middle Harbour, the northern coastline of Sydney Harbour and their hinterlands. The residents of the Division share similar age demographics, income and levels of education. The area has many small businesses employing local residents and schools, both Government and private, that educate its school age residents. It is an engaged community with a host of charitable, sporting, social and recreational groups providing amenity and services to local residents. By its physical features, unique identity and strong community links it meets the criteria set out in the Electoral Act to be deserving of its own Federal Division.

As an established area it will not see the population growth of newer areas in Sydney. Nonetheless, the State Government estimates that in the local government areas from which Warringah draws its constituents, Mosman, the Northern Beaches and North Sydney, 12,300 new homes will be constructed in the period to 2029. While not all these projected new homes will be in Warringah this shows that, far from declining, the population of the area will continue to grow.

Warringah has been a Division since 1922, covering areas north and east of the North Sydney CBD. The precise boundaries have varied since the creation of the Division although the core of the Division has always been Mosman, Manly and their surrounding

suburbs. The proposal maintains this core, albeit it moves boundaries south and west. Consequently, it shifts the balance of constituents in the Division from a majority north, to a majority south, of Middle Harbour.

The proposed redistribution of the Division of Warringah involves a substantial redrawing of the seat's boundaries and number of constituents. As a result, the seat loses 13.7% of its current constituents in its northern boundaries and gains new constituents amounting to 35% of its existing constituent numbers on its western boundary, a net gain of 21.3%. This is one of the larger gross increases in elector numbers in the proposed redistribution of divisions in New South Wales. This percentage change could be substantially reduced if my suggestion, that flows from my objection, was applied.

My objection is that the redistribution of the Division of Warringah represents unnecessary elector disruption caused by the excision of the areas of Dee Why, North Curl Curl, Frenchs Forest, Killarney Heights and Forestville. In particular the proposed redistribution gives insufficient consideration to the following requirements set out in Section 66 of *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*;

- I. *community of interests, including economic, social and regional interests*
- II. *the means of travel and communication*
- III. *the physical features of the area, and*
- IV. *the boundaries of existing divisions in the State*

These areas have been added to the Division of Mackellar. In my view these areas should remain in Warringah. They are inextricably linked to the southern end of the peninsula through transportation, business, services and education. They have a lesser community of interest with Mackellar a division that stretches west to the bushland of Ingleside and north to shores of Palm Beach.

In proposing a shift of these areas to the Division of Mackellar the Committee has given as its reasons that it is preferable to keep that Division wholly within the area of the Northern Beaches Council and that its boundary should be that existing between the Garigal and Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Parks.

The arguments that a Division should be kept within a local Government boundary and natural features are not ones commonly applied to a metropolitan Division. They are reasons more usually applied in non-metropolitan Divisions, due to the fact that in regional areas local Government boundaries are larger and physical boundaries are more pronounced.

I believe that their application in this case is a narrow and insufficient justification for the excision of these areas from Warringah. It fails to take into account the other considerations in section 66 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. Indeed, the objectives of that section would be more closely met if the area of North Dee Why was added to the Division and aligned with state electoral boundary of the division of Manly.

The Division of Mackellar requires a net addition of between 7,117 to 16,189 constituents to meet the projected requirements on 10 April 2028. As I have previously suggested these could come from the locality of St Ives (projected 14,366 constituents in April 2028) in the Division of Bradfield an area with similar amenity, features and connections to the Division of Mackellar.

2. The abolition of North Sydney and consideration given to the abolition of Warringah

Whilst noting that a division must be abolished in New South Wales I am concerned that the Committee has not given sufficient weight to all the considerations, in particular keeping communities of interest together and the significant mobilisation of communities to elect an independent. Community independents have mobilised thousands of constituents in their respective electorates to actively engage in the political process, each with their own specific concerns which are unique to the current divisions. This groundswell of interest in the political process highlights the strength of these communities of interest and their engagement in Australian democracy.

The Committee has proposed that the Division of North Sydney be abolished in the NSW federal redistribution. I note that the primary suggestions in respect to abolishing the division of Warringah came from the Liberal Party, and for North Sydney from the NSW National Party. I am concerned that the Redistribution Committee has given disproportionate consideration to politically motivated suggestions by political parties and their members over community suggestions and has not sufficiently considered abolishing divisions held by either the Liberal Party or National Party.

A consequence of the draft redistributions is that the divisions proposed to be abolished in both NSW and Victoria are currently represented by female Members of Parliament. It is imperative that the composition of the House of Representatives accurately reflects the Australian population and upholds principles of gender equality and diversity. Women were 50.7 per cent of the Australian population at the last census in 2021 yet compose only 39 per cent of members of the House of Representatives. At a time of inadequate gender diversity in Parliament, it is appropriate to consider whether the draft redistribution will in fact “keep together or improve representation of existing communities of interest”, as set out at point 75 of the Committee’s reasons. I am concerned that the draft redistribution proposals in NSW and Victoria include the abolition of two electorates represented by women and make it less likely that representation in the House of Representatives will reflect the principle of gender equality. Consistent with this and the other points made above, I do not support either the Divisions of Warringah or North Sydney being considered for abolition.

3. Summary

I appreciate the work the Redistribution Committee has done thus far; however, I believe a better solution is abolition of an outer metropolitan division. It is critical that the Redistribution Committee keep inner metropolitan communities of interest together. This can be achieved by:

I appreciate the work the Redistribution Committee has done thus far; however, I believe a better solution is abolition of an outer metropolitan division. It is critical that the Redistribution Committee keep inner metropolitan communities of interest together. This can be achieved by:

- Moving the boundaries of the division of North Sydney in a northerly direction and allowing the electorates surrounding to assume the required number of voters from Bradfield as set out in Suggestion 22 from Kylea Tink MP. This approach would

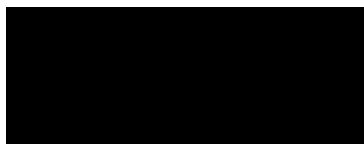
allow the business and commercial areas of North Sydney and Chatswood as well as the medical precincts of Royal North Shore Hospital and the Mater Hospital to remain together in a single federal electorate. These areas are closely connected by major roadways, heavy rail and the soon to be open Metro rail line.

- Moving the boundaries of the Division of Mackellar westward into St Ives, which shares a close connection via the Garigal and Ku-Ring-Gai national parks and a direct transport connection along Mona Vale Road.
- The Division of Berowra to move east to include the area around Hornsby.
- This approach allows the areas around Killarney Heights and Forestville, Dee Why and North Curl Curl to continue the strong links they share with communities within Warringah and remain in the division.
- On the Lower North Shore, Warringah can expand into the North Sydney LGA up to the eastern side of the Warringah Freeway, including the whole of Kirribilli, areas of Neutral Bay not already part of the division, North Cremorne and Cammeray.

I acknowledge the complexity of the task faced by the Redistribution Committee for NSW. However, I would urge the augmented Electoral Commission to re-examine the removal of electors in Dee Why, North Curl Curl, Frenchs Forest, Killarney Heights and Forestville from Warringah, to retain the strong community of Interests in the Division of Warringah. This would allow for the Division to follow clearly identifiable boundaries and reflect more closely the requirements in the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* than those proposed in the draft redistribution. It would also allow for the retention of the Division of North Sydney.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment on the proposed redistribution and wish them all the best in their deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



Zali Steggall OAM MP
Member for Warringah