



The Commissioners

New South Wales State Electoral Redistribution

Dear Commissioners,

I had earlier lodged a redistribution proposal for the entire state and 93 Districts, comments on suggestions and commented on the Committee's draft boundaries and appreciate the opportunity to again comments on comments.

Summary

I will not revisit my earlier contributions, but just wish to add some comments in relation to a few areas other papers have made.

S28A

Both the Labor Party and Greens have commented on the potential for a quarter of the Districts to fall outside 5% of quota for 2 consecutive months. Whilst I think it is unlikely, it is possible for sufficient Districts to breach S28A, triggering a new redistribution.

Whilst I have not proposed strict numerical equality, the point made is valid. I am aware of the history that led to the 10% tolerance as the earlier tolerance was far too strict. I had recommended changes to Barwon and Murray, which would have led to raising at least two Districts that might fall too low on quota. I had also recommended changes to Cootamundra. The prospect of Districts like Leppington, Camden to exceed 5% is real.

The Greens

Apart from my agreement with the point about enrolments and S28A, I note the concern of the Greens for the Districts they hold. I was surprised by their concerns for Lakemba, whilst not suggesting a solution. The reality is that the elector shortfall in the south west of Sydney requires a District to be abolished. I had suggested Canterbury, and the Committee chose Lakemba, the simple numerical pressures have driven this, as they did in 2013 when Newtown was created.

With the Illawarra I had pointed to the steady decline of the over enrolment of the three Illawarra Districts. I believe the elongation of Heathcote into the Illawarra is a mistake and will have to be reversed in 2027, as the decline will be quite obvious and the changes proposed needing to be reversed out.

I was intrigued in the proposal to move Gloucester from Upper Hunter to Myall Lakes. Given numerical requirements the existing arrangement and proposed arrangement is satisfactory.

Labor Party

Apart from my agreement at least in part with their S28A concern I was not convinced that many of the Labor Party changes actually enhanced community of interest.

In respect of Kogarah and Oatley, the Labor Party wishes to depart from a clearly evident boundary in King George Road. I had proposed that King George Road be used as a boundary in an earlier redistribution. I remain unconvinced by their argument to have some crossover arrangement as existed before. The simple fact is that some modification is needed to Rockdale, Kogarah, and Oatley, due to elector trends. Placing Blakehurst in Kogarah is a perfectly reasonable solution.

In respect of Liverpool and Holsworthy I had proposed that areas west of the Georges River be placed in Holsworthy as part of retaining numbers in the 4 Districts of the Sutherland Shire, and some parts of Casula, Glenfield would be sufficient for this. I agree that the suburb of Liverpool should remain in Liverpool but am perplexed by the idea of converting Holsworthy into Liverpool. I think based on raw numbers and projected growth that Holsworthy and Liverpool are quite viable separate entities and with well-defined boundaries been entirely possible.

With regards to Auburn, Parramatta and Granville I am broadly happy with the inclusion of the Olympic Park area and the northerly parts of Auburn in Parramatta. I had proposed it and it has struck me for some time that this boundary has made sense closer to the Sydney CBD and makes equally good sense further towards Parramatta. The socio-economic characteristics are equally sound too. I am not sure the historical record relied upon by the Labor Party is all that relevant either. The Newington suburb was a munitions storage and industrial area. Clearly making the area residential and now that it is the hub of the Olympic Park has totally changed its character. The inclusion of these areas north of a motorway in a District that is itself north of the same motorway seems a logical solution.

The Nationals

Whilst the Nationals have not raised the S28A issue, it is clear that this is a background issue for their areas of agreement with the draft boundaries. I restate that I think S28A is unlikely to be breached, but it is an issue that should not be ignored.

Whilst my agreement with this National Party issue will make one District bigger and the other smaller, I believe there is merit in the changes proposed in relation to Greta and Branxton and Belford and Pokolbin. In my original proposals I recognised the high elector growth in Cessnock, and the need to reduce its enrolment. The transfer of westerly rural and semi-rural areas of Cessnock to Upper Hunter solved community of interest issues, enrolment issues and allowed for transfers to Barwon. The Nationals suggestion places more rural areas in Upper Hunter and the lower Hunter towns of Branxton and Great clearly in Cessnock.

With respect of the boundary proposed between Goulburn and Monaro, I completely disagree with the proposal to reverse the proposed change, as it will exacerbate elector imbalances. In my original proposals I had proposed that there be an aggressive move to increase enrolments in further west Districts. This area proposed to be included in Goulburn is entirely appropriate a transfer, as it is an awkward area, that is quite close to the City of Goulburn.

Liberal Party

The Liberals have proposed some changes in the Sutherland and Illawarra area, Penrith, and Londonderry, and between Parramatta and Granville.

In respect of Heathcote and Keira, I note the Liberals have proposed that the Committees draft be largely be undone (except for the suburbs of Bulli). I had proposed that it be entirely reversed as the trend in elector enrolments will mean that in 2027 the entire transfer from Keira to Heathcote will need to be reversed out as elector growth in the Illawarra is less than the state average. For the 4 Districts in the Sutherland Shire the addition of suburbs west of the Georges River such as Casula and Glenfield and maintenance of some existing boundaries west of Georges River is sufficient to maintain them. I note the lengthy and detailed information on community of interest in this area, which highlights its unity of interests. It is quite instructive.

With regard to Leppington and Macquarie Fields the Liberals also noted the multiple crossing of the Hume Highway and its unsatisfactory nature. Whilst the Liberal Party seems unwilling to advance an argument to essentially leave Mulgoa unchanged, which would lead to a better configured Badgerys Creek (rather than Leppington). Areas such as Edmondson Park and Bardia (which are west of the Hume Highway) could be placed in Badgerys Creek and Macquarie Fields placed further south with one crossing of the Hume Highway into Claymore, Kearns, Eagle Vale and probably Blairmount.

With Oatley and Kogarah, I have disagreed with the Labor Party proposal and am also not entirely convinced of the Liberal Party one. Numerical requirements necessitate a transfer from Oatley to Kogarah. Blakehurst is the least problematic.

With East Hills the Liberals have identified a suburb boundary that has merit. The difficulty is that numerically the solution moves East Hills further from quota, and whilst recognising a point I had made in my comments of creating a clear boundary that places areas in a District that there is a clear association with and that Bankstown as a separate District needs to be clearly delineate; unlike now, as proposed by the Commissioners or the Liberal and Labor Parties. I would refer to my earlier comments, which proposes changes to East Hills incorporating Georges Hall, using the Hume Highway as a continuous boundary and Edgar Street. This places all the argued communities of interest in East Hills, uses a solid boundary, and then delineates areas in Condell Park by a long continuous boundary between East Hills and Bankstown and the core of Bankstown and most of its key facilities.

Penrith and Londonderry are discussed by the Liberals and essentially, they argue in favour of clear boundaries like the Northern Road and the renaming of Londonderry as St Marys, and basically exactly as I had suggested/commented. It might be a case of great minds, but it is a longer term and more satisfactory solution than the current boundary proposals in community of interest terms. I would urge the adoption of these alternatives as they are much clearer boundaries, and name.

Conclusion

I wish the Commissioners well in this endeavour.



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