Comment on Objections 231

Anonymous 29

8 pages

To The Augmented Electoral Commission for New South Wales,

I have not been able to review every single objection relating to the North Shore area but have fully reviewed the 10% of submissions regarding the remainder of Greater Sydney and New South Wales. I extend my sympathy to whoever in the AEC and the wider community has had to read through all 738 objections.

I would like to briefly comment on some of the specific and general themes raised in the submitted objections. I would also like to reiterate some of the arguments I made in OB668, particularly because I feel that some of my suggested amendments would help to address many of the objections raised by the community.

Based on the community objections to the treatment of the Epping area and the Lower North Shore more generally, I encourage the Commission to redraw the divisions of Northern Sydney, giving more weight to the significant physical barriers provided by the Lane Cove River and the M2 Motorway, instead of an absolute focus on local government area boundaries.

While it necessitates the transfer of a greater number of electors, the clearest outcome for the divisions of Northern Sydney would occur by leaving **Bennelong** unchanged except for the addition of Hunters Hill Council, and by handling all elector transfers in a progression from **North Sydney** to **Bradfield** to **Berowra** to **Mitchell** to **Parramatta**. Conceptually, this would be an effective amalgamation of **Bradfield** and **North Sydney**, although the name of **North Sydney** would still be the best name to retire in this alternative.

In conjunction with changes made to Northern Sydney, there is also a need to improve the boundaries of Northwestern Sydney by retaining Emu Plains in **Lindsay** and better consolidating **Chifley** on Mount Druitt.

I have attached a map showing how the 12 divisions of Greater Northern Sydney can be achieved.

I also encourage the Commission to resolve the awkward handling of the Bayside Council area by removing both **Cook** and **Kingsford Smith** from the area between the Sydney Airport and the Georges River.

Thank you to giving consideration to these arguments. I hope that the Commission sees the logic in these proposed changes.

GENERAL COMMENTS

AVOID CREATING ELONGATED OR 'DUMBELL SHAPED' DIVISIONS WHERE POSSIBLE

Peter Mitchell (OB708) has made an intelligent case for defining divisions around their central community hub (or hubs) where possible. For instance, **Parramatta** should be centred on the Parramatta CBD and **Watson** on the Bankstown CBD.

In contrast, the Committee proposal results in variations of **Bennelong**, **Berowra**, **Bradfield** and **Parramatta** that are unnecessarily elongated, and which are generally centred on areas of low density.

BALANCING 'HYBRID' DIVISIONS

In cases where a division has to combine two largely separated areas, Ben Raue (OB375) has made a strong argument for the need to balance the concerns of these areas by aiming for as close to a 50-50 split as possible.

MINOR CONCERNS

ALSTONVILLE

Jeff Waddell's suggestion (OB619) to revisit the boundary between **Richmond** and **Page** has some merit. The boundary chosen at the previous redistribution is quite convoluted, awkwardly splitting the community of Alstonville in particular, and could quite sensibly be simplified to follow the southwestern boundaries of the localities of Pearces Creek, Teven and West Ballina. with only a minor transfer of electors.

KULNURA

Although neither **Dobell** nor **Robertson** need to change, Lorraine Wilson (OB35) makes a strong argument for resolving the current split of Kulnura by aligning to state district boundaries, now that the Gosford Council boundary no longer exists.

LIDCOMBE & YAGOONA

Councillor David Walsh's suggestion (OB124) to swap **Watson**'s awkward protrusion into Lidcombe and Cumberland City Council for the majority or all of Yagoona remaining in **Blaxland** would clearly improve outcomes for both localities.

NORTH ROCKS

Regardless of any other changes that may occur to **Mitchell** and **Parramatta**, Nicholas Weston (OB330) clearly outlines North Rocks' geographic separation from the rest of **Mitchell** and why it should be included with Carlingford in **Parramatta**.

EASTERN & SOUTHERN SYDNEY

KINGSFORD SMITH SHOULD REMAIN EAST OF THE AIRPORT

A small body of objections (OB8, OB26, OB86, OB269, OB375, OB421, OB504, OB515, OB649, OB668, OB687, OB705, OB723) have been raised regarding the transfer of the western shore of Botany Bay to **Kingsford Smith**.

The consensus is that – contrary to local government boundaries – the localities of Rosebery, Beaconsfield and Zetland would be a far more suitable addition to **Kingsford Smith** than the proposed Kyeemagh, Brighton-Le-Sands, Monterey and Ramsgate Beach, which should be in **Barton**. The resulting changes to **Grayndler** around Annandale and Earlwood are also reasonable on community of interest grounds.

Nicholas Peppercorn (OB269) and Conor Magee (OB723) have described in detail the issues with the proposal for **Kingsford Smith**, alongside alternative solutions. Ben Raue (OB375) and Darren McSweeney (OB421) have provided excellent maps demonstrating how these changes could occur as part of larger changes to Greater Southern Sydney.

Whichever amendments are made, the Commission is encouraged to refrain from any further changes to the proposed division of **Wentworth**, particularly any that would include Surry Hills in this division. The proposed inclusion of Darlinghurst is already tenuous but supportable because it allows for neat boundaries along Oxford Street and Alison Road, however the further inclusion of highly inner-city Surry Hills would be inappropriate.

COOK SHOULD FULLY RETURN TO THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE

Several submissions have demonstrated that it's possible to keep **Cook** completely south of the Georges River with some reasonable minor adjustments to **Barton** and **Hughes**.

The transfer of Chipping Norton from **Fowler** to **Hughes**, would allow **Hughes** to transfer all of Como, Jannali and Bonnet Bay to **Cook** (in alignment with OB558, OB682), as well as the Royal National Park suburbs of Bundeena and Maianbar if desired. As a result, the Sans Souci peninsula can be returned to its logical home in **Barton**.

Adding Sans Souci to **Barton** means that it can reduce its footprint in Canterbury-Bankstown City Council. Realistically, **Barton** should not extend north of Wolli Creek which acts as a relatively strong divider between Canterbury-Bankstown and the St George region, however may need to do so for numeric reasons. **Watson** may then need to lose electors but can easily transfer Lidcombe to **Blaxland** or Strathfield South to **Reid** as necessary.

LIVERPOOL

This Commission is encouraged to look at ways to improve the treatment of the Liverpool area, by considering the proposals by Ben Raue (OB375), Darren McSweeney (OB421) and Leon Shinkai (OB504).

GREATER NORTHERN SYDNEY

EMU PLAINS *(and consequences for **Chifley**, **Greenway**, **Lindsay** and **Macquarie**)*

The transfer of the Emu Plains area from **Lindsay** to **Macquarie** is an elegant way to address the enrolment requirements of both divisions, but several submissions (OB88, OB104, OB106, OB107, OB108, OB156, OB482, OB691) raise the issue of transferring this key part of urban Penrith into a division based around the exurban areas of the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury.

Macquarie must expand into an additional local government area, but it would be reasonable for it to expand into the outlying parts of The Hills Shire along the lines of the state district of Hawkesbury, either the Box Hill area in the proposed division of **Greenway** or the isolated outlying areas of **Berowra**. This would also ensure that the population in **Macquarie** is more evenly balanced between its two distinct halves.

Noting that it is possible to draw the two divisions of **Lindsay** and **Chifley** neatly between the Blue Mountains and Richmond Road-Eastern Creek, it would be suitable for **Lindsay** to instead transfer Colyton and Oxley Park to **Chifley**, firmly consolidating **Chifley** as a division based upon the centre of Mount Druitt. This alone would leave **Lindsay** slightly over quota but can be resolved either by the neat transfer of the balance of Badgerys Creek and Luddenham to **Hume**, or the transfer of North St Marys to **Chifley**.

Consequently, the growth areas east of Richmond Road would be a sensible addition to **Greenway**, which could then cede the Box Hill area to **Berowra**, completing the circle of transfers required. Especially now that a significant part of central Blacktown is being removed from **Chifley**, these areas along the Richmond railway line are more oriented to Blacktown and **Greenway** than to Mount Druitt and the remainder of **Chifley**.

Addressing the issue of Emu Plains would also partly resolve the objections (OB37, OB38, OB50, OB79, OB590) raised around the transfer of areas east of Windsor Road to **Greenway.**

EPPING & LANE COVE

Given the large amount of objection to the removal of Epping from **Bennelong** and the abolition of **North Sydney**, the Commission is encouraged to rethink the entire North Shore area.

There is an obvious political dimension driving the large number of submissions received regarding the North Shore. The Liberal Party supports (OB578) the proposed redrawing of **Bennelong** and will likely submit comments of opposition to any submissions that suggest alternatives. In contrast, the Labor Party would prefer to retain Epping in **Bennelong**, suggesting some minor adjustments which allow for this to happen (OB669). Finally, the campaigns of 'Teal' Independents Kylea Tink (OB686) and Zali Steggall (OB671) have advocated for the abolition of **Berowra** or **Bradfield**, Liberal Party held seats, instead of **North Sydney**, although this would adversely affect the campaign of Sophie Scamps, who did not submit an objection and presumably has no issues with the proposed boundaries of **Mackellar**.

Ultimately, the key decision is whether to include Lane Cove Council in **Bennelong** or whether to retain the division west of the Lane Cove River, as it has been for over 30 years.

THE CASE FOR AMALGAMATING BRADFIELD AND NORTH SYDNEY

When a division is to be abolished, past Redistribution Committees have generally aimed to split electors between as many neighbouring divisions as possible, with the objective to minimise the 'blast radius' of such an abolishment.

This certainly makes sense for the abolishment of divisions that lack a strong community of interest and which have individual components that would sensibly fit within neighbouring divisions, however this protocol should be reconsidered when the division in question is being abolished purely for numerical reasons.

The current **North Sydney** clearly encompasses the Lower North Shore and is a community that is distinct from its neighbouring divisions. The community has made this clear in their submissions. **North Sydney** is being abolished not because it is poorly cohesive division, but simply because the divisions of the Northern Beaches need to expand, and North Sydney Council must be transferred to **Warringah**.

Even with the removal of Hunters Hill Council to **Bennelong** and the removal of North Sydney Council to **Warringah**, there is still approximately 65,000 (or half of a division quota) of electors that would most sensibly remain included within the same division regardless of what name that division takes on.

Rather than transfer a significant number of electors to **Bennelong**, disrupting a division that is clearly based west of the Lane Cove River and on Ryde Council, it would be better to effectively amalgamate the remainder of **North Sydney** into **Bradfield**.

Given the **Bradfield** already must extend as far south as St Leonards, the inclusion of Lane Cove would actually make the division more compact, as it sheds those areas in its north that would be more sensibly included in the division containing Hornsby, **Berowra**.

WIDER BENEFITS

Given that the proposal has **Berowra** gaining electors from both **Bennelong** and **Bradfield** (which have both gained electors from the abolished **North Sydney**), it would be more straightforward for it to simply gain more electors from **Bradfield**. The Commission should be seeking out ways to reduce the scope of **Berowra**, not extend it further.

If we consider that the 5 divisions of **Bennelong**, **Berowra**, **Bradfield**, **Mackellar** and **Warringah** need to lose electors, then it makes more sense for **Berowra** to lose its relatively isolated share of The Hills Shire before **Bennelong** loses the Epping Ward of Parramatta City Council. The Epping Ward of Parramatta City Council will never fully fit in **Parramatta**, so there is little reason to shift the boundary from Pennant Hills Road to Midson Road, a relatively minor road.

The local government area boundary between Hornsby Shire and Ku-ring-gai Council effectively splits the core of Hornsby from those areas in close association with it. Wahroonga and Turramurra would be a stronger inclusion in **Berowra** than Epping, especially now that **Bradfield** extends all the way to St Leonards.

The Commission is encouraged to unite all of Lane Cove Council within **Bradfield,** but even just a small clockwise rotation of **Bennelong**, **Berowra** and **Bradfield** to return Epping back to **Bennelong** would make each of these 3 divisions more compact and more cohesive.

Further west, Glenhaven would appear to be a better fit in **Mitchell**, being the only remaining part of suburban Hills Shire in **Berowra**.
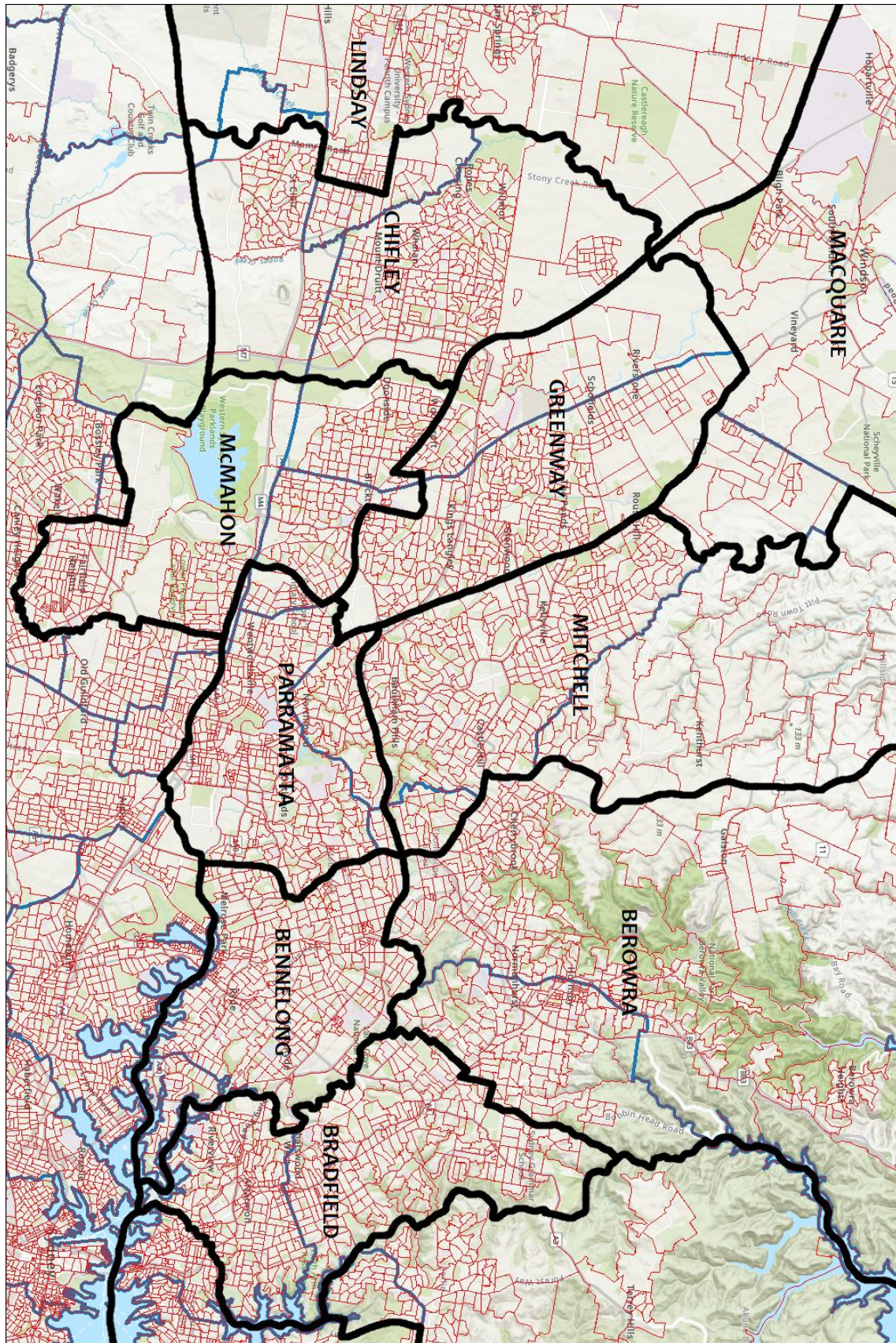
Just as **Berowra** can remain north of the M2, so can **Mitchell** by the transfer of its share of Parramatta City Council to **Parramatta**.

THE NAME 'NORTH SYDNEY'

Despite being a Federation name, the fact that it is a geographical name with the appearance of subordination to **Sydney** means that **North Sydney** is a suitable candidate for removal.

However, the Commission should also consider retaining the name of **North Sydney** by shuffling **Bradfield** northwards to replace the name of **Berowra**, which while of indigenous origin, is also a geographical name.

ALTERNATIVE GREATER NORTHERN SYDNEY

COMPARISON OF PROPOSALS

	COMMITTEE PROPOSAL	ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL	
COUNCIL AREAS			
The Hills	Berowra + Greenway + Mitchell	Greenway + Macquarie + Mitchell + Parramatta	**+1**
Hornsby	Berowra	Bennelong + Berowra	**+1**
Ku-ring-gai	Bradfield	Berowra + Bradfield	**+1**
Willoughby	Bennelong + Bradfield	Bradfield	**-1**
Lane Cove	Bennelong	Bradfield	
Hunters Hill	Bennelong	Bennelong	
Ryde	Bennelong	Bennelong	
Parramatta	Bennelong + Berowra + Blaxland + Mitchell + Parramatta + Reid	Bennelong + Parramatta + Reid	**-3**
		TOTAL	**-1**
LOCALITIES			
Wahroonga	Berowra + Bradfield	Berowra	**-1**
Chatswood	Bennelong + Bradfield	Bradfield	**-1**
St Leonards	Bennelong + Bradfield	Bradfield	**-1**
Melrose Park	Bennelong + Parramatta	Bennelong	**-1**
Ermington	Parramatta	Bennelong + Parramatta	**+1**
Dundas	Parramatta	Bennelong + Parramatta	**+1**
Eastwood	Bennelong + Parramatta	Bennelong	**-1**
Epping	Berowra + Parramatta	Bennelong	**-1**
Beecroft	Berowra + Parramatta	Bennelong + Berowra	
Carlingford	Parramatta	Bennelong + Parramatta	**+1**
North Rocks	Mitchell + Parramatta	Parramatta	**-1**
Northmead	Mitchell + Parramatta	Parramatta	**-1**
Old Toongabbie	Mitchell + Parramatta	Parramatta	**-1**
Winston Hills	Mitchell	Parramatta	
Baulkham Hills	Mitchell	Mitchell + Parramatta	**+1**
Clyde	Blaxland + Parramatta	Parramatta	**-1**
Granville	Blaxland + Parramatta	Blaxland + Parramatta	
		TOTAL	**-6**