



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor welcomes retention of country voice in NSW redistribution

The voice of country people in the Federal Parliament has been retained in the proposed redistribution of electorate boundaries announced by the Australian Electoral Commission according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor has welcomed the proposal and is particularly pleased with the inclusion of the Gunnedah Shire Council in the expanded seat of New England boundaries.

He said the submission he put into the Australian Electoral Commission made two suggestions which he is pleased to see have now formed part of the AEC's recommended changes.

"First, I argued against the loss of any country seats on the grounds of serviceability of country seats and the need for recognition that more sparsely populated areas deserve representation in the Parliament.

The AEC proposal is to abolish the seat of Reid in the Sydney basin and I welcome this," Mr Windsor said.

The second suggestion Mr Windsor made was in relation to the seat of New England. He told the AEC that he believed that the additional electors required by the AEC to bring the number up to what was required could be obtained from the Gunnedah Local Government Area (LGA).

Mr Windsor wrote, "At the last redistribution, the Liverpool Range became a key geographic landmark forming the southern boundary of the New England Electorate and incorporating the communities of Willow Tree, Quirindi, Spring Ridge and Premer, all of which have a community of interest with Tamworth, the largest centre in the Electorate.

Many of the families in the Liverpool Plains Shire Council area have children attending schools in Tamworth or Armidale as well as attending the University of New England.

The same relationship exists with residents of the Gunnedah LGA.

Gunnedah forms the second portion of the magnificent Liverpool Plains farming country and shares with the Liverpool Plains Shire Council significant issues relating to landuse, water and the coal developments being undertaken.

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The economic linkages of the Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah relate more to Tamworth and the New England Electorate than to Dubbo and the Parkes Electorate.

The freight linkages to Newcastle of these areas are also an important factor.”

The Redistribution report includes the following reasoning for the changes recommended for the New England Electorate boundaries.

New England

134. Projected enrolment for the Division of New England is 94 382. New England must again at least 1 063 electors, but no more than 7 987 electors, to be within numerical tolerance. New England is below the permissible numerical tolerance and enrolment growth is projected to be below the state average.

135. New England is bounded by the New South Wales – Queensland border and the divisions of Page, Cowper, Lyne, Paterson, Hunter and Parkes.

136. Given the Committee’s considerations to the boundaries of other neighbouring divisions, and having lost 1 094 electors in the area north-east of Amosfield, Sandy Hills and Ewingar State Forest to the Division of Page, the additional electors required to bring New England within numerical tolerance can only be drawn from the existing Division of Parkes. Recognising the community of interest that exists between Gunnedah, Tamworth Regional and Liverpool Plains LGAs, the Committee proposes to transfer 8 175 electors from Gunnedah LGA into the Division of New England, consistent with a number of suggestions.

137. A minor adjustment is also proposed to the boundary with the Division of Hunter to align with LGA boundaries.

138. This results in a projected enrolment for New England of 101 463 or a variation from the average projected enrolment of plus 2.58%.