Details of your submission

Please provide additional information and supporting documentation as attachments.

Dear Panel

My submission relates to the Electorate of Oatley, of which I am a resident.

Background:

I note that the proposed boundaries continue to maintain a large variance in percentages above and below the quotient figure. I understand the latest electoral act places an emphasis on natural boundaries and that meeting quota religiously, state wide, has less emphasis as long as they remain within acceptable levels. However when it comes to my own electorate, I feel there is an easy fix that would allow two electorates to be brought closer to quota with minimal effort.

According to your report Oatley is currently -7.93 below quota. I understand from reading the report that this is due to the southern Sydney areas losing population relative to the rest of the state, creating a slow drift westward in population. This seems to be why the seat has lost areas to the east which would most naturally be considered part of the same community.

It is also clear that the natural boundaries of the seat to the south (Georges River) and west (Salt Pan Creek) should be maintained as they represent natural boundaries and also LGA boundaries.

The solution has therefore been taken to extend the seat north. I feel this is a sensible solution. The state and federal seats in this area have long been north-south orientated seats, with the east-west aspect being a relatively modern phenomenon (from the mid to late 90's in my view). Given the continued need to address shortages in quotas in seats to the East, this trend will accelerate over time.

Following the draft redistribution Oatley remains under quota at -2.56. The newly distributed seat of Bankstown (mainly the old Lakemba but with the Bankstown CBD and surrounds attached) is just over quota at 0.26.

It appears to me that a slightly larger shift north, to Canterbury Road, would serve better in evening out these variances. The geographical issues affecting Oatley (water bodies) means that taking this step now will be more advantageous in future proofing the area by reintroducing the northern aspect of the seat. The alternative would be a future combining of Rockdale, Kogarah and Oatley into two seats is possible but I don't claim to know if this is practicable.

I note that Canterbury Road also represents a more natural northern boundary to the seat. The arterial roads of Belmore and Bonds Road provide ease of access past the M5 motorway but neither road crosses Canterbury Road. The East Hills rail line draws equal numbers of commuters from the north and the south, with Canterbury Rd being the point at which commuters head north towards the Bankstown rail line. Even then, many use the East Hills line due to its better connections to the Illwarra line and the employment hub around the airport.

Also, these residents are drawn south, to Riverwood and Narwee shops, and towards Roselands shopping centre rather than towards Bankstown or Lakemba shopping districts.

I also understand that this boundary was used by the federal electorate of Banks as recently as 2013 and that the area has long been discussed at Georges River (and formally Hurstville) Council as an area that properly belongs with that LGA. This council boundary is far more of a fluid boundary than the boundary with the same LGA in the west due to the absence of a defining geographical feature to compare with the creek.

Proposal:

That the area south of Canterbury Road between Salt Pan Creek and King Georges Road be transferred to the electorate of Oatley.