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**Where Do You Draw The Line?:
Prospects For The 1997
New South Wales Redistribution**

by

Antony Green

Background Paper No 1997/1

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The Author

Antony Green is the Election Analyst for ABC Television, and has worked for the ABC on every Federal, State and Territory election since 1989. He also writes regularly on electoral matters for the Sydney Morning Herald.

Antony studied at Sydney University, obtaining a Bachelor of Science in mathematics and computing, and a Bachelor of Economics with Honours in politics.

Antony is the author of a number of publications for the Parliamentary Library, including "*NSW Elections 1984 to 1991: A Comparative Analysis*", and "*Electing the NSW Legislative Council 1978 to 1995: Past results and Future Prospects*". In the current Parliament he has produced three publications based on the results of the 1995 election, "*NSW Elections 1995*", "*1995 Legislative Assembly Election: Estimated Two-Candidate Preferred Results by Polling Place*" and "*NSW Legislative Council Elections 1995*".

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WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

Prospects for the 1997 New South Wales Redistribution

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the life of the current New South Wales parliament, an Electoral Districts Commission must be appointed to re-draw electoral boundaries for the Legislative Assembly. To allow time between the redistribution and the 1999 election, the redistribution should take place during 1997.

After elections, no process focuses the minds of those interested in politics more than the re-drawing of electoral boundaries, and the 1997 redistribution promises to have more political impact than most. The current Legislative Assembly has a finely divided political balance, after the Labor Party narrowly won the 1995 state election with less than half of the state-wide two-party preferred vote¹. In such circumstances, the re-drawing of electoral boundaries will be a crucial pre-cursor to the 1999 state election.

Yet the strange fact is that in re-drawing electoral boundaries, the Electoral Districts Commissioners have no scope for considering the political impact of their decisions. They are restricted by a strict set of numerical criteria concerning current and projected enrolments, and several loose principles related to geography and 'community of interest'. In fact, the Commission will not even consider arguments relating to the political impact of boundaries. Reading submissions to the Commission requires seeing through the veil of community of interest in which the parties cloak their arguments, to see the reality of the political advantage they seek to achieve.

That our electoral system pays more attention to the geographical identity of voters ahead of party politics stems from our inheritance of the British system of single member electorates. This equates representation with the geographical location of voters rather than any class or sectional interest they may also possess. It is a view of representation that reaches back to the middle ages, when the early Parliaments at Westminster were called together by the King as representatives of their Counties or Boroughs. After the industrial revolution, the vast disparities in the number of residents in constituencies lead to the various reform acts of the 19th and early 20th century that effectively introduced one person one vote to British politics. However, to this day, the drawing of British electoral boundaries pays far more attention to local government boundaries than is the case in Australia, and far greater differences in enrolment are accepted to maintain community of local interest in representation.

Yet this geographical view of representation pre-dates the development of modern political parties. While boundaries are drawn on the basis of geography and community of interest, clearly the majority of voters support parties based on historical class divisions which bear only limited relationship to geography.

In Europe, very different traditions of representation exist, and the use of proportional representation has equated representation with non-geographic interests, following social cleavages based on class, ethnic and religious divides. That Australia has not abandoned geographic representation for more direct forms is because the existing system has continued to be seen as legitimately translating the will of the people into party representation in Parliament. This acceptance should be compared with New Zealand, where the tendency in the last two decades for the electoral system to thwart the will of the people eventually lead to the replacement of single member electorates by proportional representation.

However, keeping legitimacy in Australia's electoral systems has required considerable tinkering. In the past, the use of different enrolment quotas in rural and urban seats (technically called malapportionment) was commonplace. This was justified at the time by the difficulty of rural communication and travel, as well as the importance of rural

¹ While an official count is not available, it is estimated that the state-wide two-party preferred vote was Labor 48.8%, Coalition 51.2%.

industry to the economy. However, as one side of politics (usually the Labor Party) came to see malapportionment as a tool for keeping governments of the opposite political persuasion in office, its legitimacy was undermined.

In the last two decades, the process of drawing electoral boundaries has been reformed across Australia. With the exception of Western Australia and five seats in Queensland, one vote one value is now the accepted norm. Boundaries are now drawn by independent commissioners and no longer need to be approved by Parliament. Most jurisdictions also specify that Commissioners should pay some heed to expected growth in electoral enrolment.

The point should be made however, that these reforms have dealt only with the issue of equality of electoral enrolment. This is a very different issue to fairness in electoral boundaries. Equality relates to ensuring all votes have the same value, while fairness requires an assessment of whether political parties are able to return members or parliament in proportion to their level of state-wide vote.

With the exception of South Australia, Commissioners are not asked to address whether their boundaries are fair. Boundaries are drawn based on arguments about community of interest, and using strict enrolment criteria. The political impact of boundaries is not assessed.

So there is still scope for achieving electoral advantage through electoral redistributions, though the methods have become more sophisticated. Manipulation is still possible because of the nebulous definition of community of interest. There is often more than one possible solution to re-drawing the boundaries of an electorate, and competing community of interest arguments justifying each. It is in the arguments for the importance of different communities of interest that possible political advantage is revealed.

In the past, New South Wales has often been described as a 'natural Labor state'. It has been argued that the concentration of Liberal support on Sydney's north shore, and the large number of ultra-safe National Party seats means that the Labor Party appears to be able to gain political advantage even from numerically fair electoral boundaries. (See in particular my previous publication for the NSW Parliamentary Library, "*NSW Elections 1984 to 1991: A Comparative Analysis*", which deals with the last two NSW redistributions.)

It is within this environment that the 1997 NSW Electoral Districts Commission will function. Its work will be prescribed by a strict set of criteria, as outlined in Section 2 of this publication. Yet the submissions of the political parties, while set out in terms of community of interest, will be carefully designed to maximise political advantage.

After setting out the legislative framework for redistributions in Section 2, the balance of this publication relates to current and projected enrolments for existing electorates. This data is the raw material that will determine the scope of the redistribution. In Section 4, maps are provided showing the electorates projected to be over and under enrolment in April 1999, the date at which legislation specifies all electorates must be within 3% of the projected average enrolment. Section 4 also provides some commentary on how the Commissioners may deal with re-drawing the boundaries.

With two years to the March 1999 election, the day to day political battle will concentrate on the traditional fare of state politics, hospitals, schools and roads, with the addition of the millennial issue of Olympics organisation. Yet during the process of the redistribution, these issues will be mere byplay to the main event of trying to gain political advantage from the new electoral boundaries.

2. THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The redistribution of electoral boundaries is governed by two Acts of the New South Wales Parliament. The mechanism by which an electoral redistribution is initiated, and the broad principal of 'one-vote one-value', are set out in the Constitution Act 1902, while the process of setting up the Electoral Districts Commission and conducting the redistribution are contained in the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912.

Section 2.1 and 2.2 below set out the relevant sections of the two acts, and provide commentary on the meaning of each provision, as well as a history of amendments since the introduction of 'one-vote one-value' boundaries in 1979/80.

2.1 CONSTITUTION ACT 1902

Number of Members of Legislative Assembly

25. Every Legislative Assembly shall consist of 99 Members.

Comments

This clause can be amended by a simple Act of Parliament. A redistribution would then be triggered according to Section 27 (1) (b). The number of electorates was increased to 109 in 1986 (1986 No. 57), though at the time a redistribution was already due. The number was subsequently reduced to 99 in 1990 (1990 No. 17), triggering the 1990/91 redistribution, which otherwise would not have been due.

Single Member electorates

26. Each Member of a Legislative Assembly shall be elected to represent one electoral district only.

Comments

This clause was inserted in 1979 (1979 No. 38). It was embedded into the Constitution by the same act through the insertion of Section 7B, and Section 26 now may only be altered following a referendum. Section 26 prevents a return to the system of proportional representation used for New South Wales elections between 1920 and 1925.

Distribution of New South Wales into electoral districts

27. (1) A distribution of New South Wales into electoral districts shall be made:
- (a) forthwith after the date of assent to the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1979;
 - (b) forthwith after the enactment of any Act for the alteration of the number of Members of the Legislative Assembly;
 - (c) forthwith after a general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly if the next previous distribution applied for the purpose of that general election and the next previous such general election; and
 - (d) at such additional times as may be provided by law.

(2) The number of electoral districts into which New South Wales shall be distributed upon any such distribution shall be the number that is equal to the number, provided by law, of Members of the Legislative Assembly to be returned at the general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly to be held next after that distribution.

Comments

This clause was inserted in 1979 (1979 No. 38). It was embedded into the Constitution by the same Act through the insertion of Section 7B, and Section 27 now may only be altered following a referendum. This section sets out when a redistribution process should take place. Clause (b) forces a redistribution whenever the number of members is altered in Section 25. Clause (c) forces a redistribution after every second election. It is under this clause that a redistribution is currently due. Clause (d) provides that others laws may also force a redistribution, such as Section 28A, added in 1990. (See below)

Number of voters in electoral districts

28. Upon any distribution of New South Wales into electoral districts, the boundaries of each proposed electoral district shall be so determined that, at the time the distribution is made, the number of persons entitled to vote at a general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly in each proposed electoral district is equal to the quotient obtained by dividing the number of persons entitled at that time to vote at any such general election in all of the proposed electoral districts by the number of those proposed electoral districts, but subject to a margin of allowance not exceeding 10 per cent more or less of that quotient.

Comments

This clause was inserted in 1979 (1979 No. 38). It was also embedded into the Constitution by the same Act with the insertion of Section 7B, and Section 28 now may only be altered following a referendum. It may be termed the 'one-vote one-value' clause, ensuring that at the time of a redistribution, all electorates must have equal enrolment within a 10% variation from the quota established by dividing the state electoral enrolment by the number of electorates. Prior to 1979, the state had been divided into zones with different enrolment quotas. (See R.S. Parker, The Government of New South Wales (University of Queensland Press 1978), pp 25-30 for details.)

Special distribution to maintain equal numbers of voters in each electoral district

28A. (1) A distribution of New South Wales into electoral districts shall be made forthwith after more than one-quarter of the number of electoral districts has been malapportioned for a period of more than 2 months.

(2) For the purposes of this section, an electoral district is malapportioned at any particular time if the number of persons then entitled to vote at a general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly in the electoral district differs from the average electoral district enrolment at that time to a greater extent than 5 per cent more or less.

(3) The average electoral district enrolment is the quotient obtained by dividing the number of persons entitled to vote at a general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly in all electoral districts by the number of those districts.

- (4) A distribution shall not be made under this section if:
- (a) the distribution would commence within 1 year before the expiry of the Legislative Assembly by the effluxion of time; or
 - (b) a distribution has already been made since the last general election of Members of the Legislative Assembly (whether under this section or not); or
 - (c) a distribution is required to be made apart from this section.

Comments

This clause was inserted in 1990 (1990 No. 111) and sets out another route for initiating a redistribution. The first three parts of Section 28A set out that a redistribution will take place when more than one quarter of electorates differ from the average

enrolment by more than 5%. (This is 25 electorates in the current Parliament). However, Section 28A (4) (c) negates the requirement for such a redistribution if there is less than a year to the next general election, if there has been a redistribution in the current Parliament, or if a redistribution is already due for other reasons as set out in Section 27.

As under Section 27 (1) (c) a redistribution takes place after every second election, this effectively limits the operation of Section 28A to the term of Parliament between the first and second elections on a set of electoral boundaries. When Section 28A was introduced by the Greiner Government in November 1990, it was criticised by the Labor opposition as guaranteeing a redistribution in every Parliament. As figures contained in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 on pages 18-24 demonstrate, whether this would be the case probably depends on the accuracy of the enrolment projections developed by the Electoral Districts Commission. Section 28A would certainly have applied on the boundaries drawn by the 1986/87 redistribution, as set out Table 3.2 on pages 18-21. However, the 1990/91 Commission proved to have better enrolment projections, and the criteria of Section 28A were not met until June/July 1995 when it no longer applied, a redistribution then being due under Section 27 (1) (c).

2.2 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS ACT 1912

6 Appointment of commissioners for redistribution of seats

- (1) When any distribution of electoral districts becomes necessary under the provisions of the *Constitution Act 1902*, the Governor shall, by commission under the Great Seal, appoint three persons to be commissioners for the purpose of this Part, and to be called the "Electoral Districts Commissioners", to carry out the distribution.
- (2) The persons so to be appointed shall be a person who is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or Member of the Industrial Commission of New South Wales or a Judge of the District Court, the person who for time being holds the office of Electoral Commissioner and a person who is registered as a surveyor under the *Surveyors Act 1929*.
- (3) The names of the person so appointed shall be published in the Gazette.

Comments

Under New South Wales provisions, only one member of the Electoral Districts Commission holds a designated office, that is the Electoral Commissioner. The other two positions are effectively chosen by the government of the day, subject to meeting the requirements set out in Section 6 (2) above. By way of comparison, it is worth setting out the situation under other Australian jurisdictions:

Victoria: *State electoral law sets up a permanent Boundaries Commission consisting of three members, the Chief Judge of the County Court, the Electoral Commissioner and the Surveyor General. Where the Chief Judge is unable serve on the commission, he or she may nominate another Judge to fill the role.*

Queensland: *The Electoral Act 1992 nominates three members. The chairman must be a Judge or former Judge of a court of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory; and have been a Judge for at least three years. The second member is the Electoral Commissioner. The third member must be a Chief Executive of a Department, or the holder of an office under an Act the Governor in Council considers to be equivalent to a Chief Executive.*

South Australia: *The Constitution Act sets up a permanent Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission made up of three members, the senior puisne judge of the Supreme Court*

as Chairman, the Electoral Commissioner and the Surveyor General. If any of these are not available to serve, it is the Chief Justice not the Governor in Council who nominates substitutes.

Western Australia: The Electoral Distribution Act nominates three members for the Electoral Distribution Commission, the Chief Justice who is Chairman, the Electoral Commissioner, and the Government Statistician, a position held by the Commonwealth Government Statistician for Western Australia.

Tasmania: Tasmanian Legislative Assembly boundaries correspond to the boundaries for the House of Representatives.

Federal: In brief, the boundaries are drawn in each state by a Redistribution Committee consisting of the Australian Electoral Commissioner, the Australian Electoral Officer for the State, the State Surveyor-General or equivalent, and the State Auditor-General or equivalent. There are detailed procedures in the Commonwealth Electoral Act for dealing with the situation where any of these officers are unable to serve. The boundaries are also reviewed by an Augmented Electoral Commission, with additional members specified in the legislation.

The membership of the last three New South Wales Electoral Districts Commissions were as follows:

1979 Electoral Districts Commissioners

Judge J.H. Staunton, Chief Justice of the District Court, Chairman
W.R. Cundy, Electoral Commissioner
L.N. Fletcher, Surveyor General

1986/87 Electoral Districts Commissioners

A.J. Goran, District Court Judge (Retired), Chairman
E.I. Dickson, Electoral Commissioner
D.M. Grant, Surveyor General

1990/91 Electoral Districts Commissioners

J.F. Lincoln, District Court Judge (Retired), Chairman
E.I. Dickson, Electoral Commissioner
D.M. Grant, Surveyor General

6A Commissioners may use services of officers of Public Service

For the purposes of carrying out the powers and duties conferred and imposed upon the Electoral Districts Commissioners with respect to the carrying out of a distribution, the Electoral Districts Commissioners may, with the approval of the Minister of the department concerned, make use of the services of any of the officers and employees of the Public Service including members of the police force.

7 Duration of office etc

- (1) The office of a commissioner shall be tenable for the period named in such commission, and, if necessary, for such extended period, to be named in a further commission, as the Governor may deem proper for the completion of the distribution in respect whereof such first mentioned commission has been issued.

- (2) The office of a commissioner shall be vacated if for any cause he ceases to possess the qualifications for appointment in section 6 (2).
- (3) A commissioner may be paid such remuneration as may be determined by the Governor. Each commissioner shall be entitled to such travelling allowances as may be fixed by the Governor.

Comments

The 1986/87 Electoral Districts Commission was appointed on 8 May 1986 to hold office until 12 November 1986. Due to difficulties in completing the task, this commission was extended twice, first to 31 January 1987, then to 2 March 1987.

The 1990/91 Electoral Districts Commission was appointed on 11 July 1990 to hold office until 10 January 1991. Due to difficulties in completing the task, this commission was extended twice, first to 10 March 1991, then to 12 April 1991.

8 Chairman

At any meeting of the commissioners the person who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court, a member of the Industrial Commission of New South Wales or a Judge of the District Court shall, when present, be chairman; and in his absence the Electoral Commissioner shall be chairman.

9 Rules

The commissioners may, subject to the provisions of this Act, make rules for the conduct of their proceedings (including the conduct of their proceedings in public), but no such rule shall have any force until the same has been approved by the Governor.

Comment

Sections 13 to 15 below set out details of the timetable for the calling for submissions and comment, but there is no specific requirement for public hearings to be held. However, it has been normal procedure in New South Wales for hearings to take place, and the conduct of these hearings is governed by this clause. By tradition, New South Wales hearings have been conducted as court hearings, with counsel leading witnesses through their evidence. This is in contrast to Federal hearings, which are generally more informal and under the direction of the Redistribution Committee.

10 Quorum - casting vote of chairman

At all meetings of the commissioners two shall form a quorum and in the event of an equality of votes the chairman shall have a casting vote in addition to his original vote.

11 Disqualifications for appointment as commissioner

- (1) A person shall not be appointed a commissioner under this Act if he is a person:
 - (a) who is a bankrupt, is applying to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, whose debts are subject to a composition with his creditors, or whose remuneration would, on his appointment, be subject to an assignment for their benefit,

- (b) who has been convicted in New South Wales of a crime or an offence which is punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or has been convicted elsewhere than in New South Wales of a crime or an offence which, if committed in New South Wales, would have been a crime or an offence so punishable, or
 - (c) who is a temporary patient, a continued treatment patient, a protected person or an incapable person within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1958, or a person under detention under Part 7 of that Act.
- (2) A commissioner shall be deemed to have vacated his office if he:
- (a) becomes bankrupt, applies to take benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounds with his creditors or makes an assignment of his remuneration for their benefit,
 - (b) is convicted in New South Wales of a crime or an offence which is punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or is convicted elsewhere than in New South Wales of a crime or an offence which, if committed in New South Wales, would be a crime or an offence so punishable, or is convicted of a crime or an offence, whether in New South Wales or elsewhere, and is sentenced to imprisonment for that crime or offence, or
 - (c) becomes a temporary patient, a continued treatment patient, a protected person or an incapable person within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1958, or a person under detention under Part 7 of the Act.

12 Appointment to fill vacancies

If any commissioner dies or becomes permanently incapable from illness of performing his duties, or resigns his office, or vacates his office by reason of any of the causes mentioned in section 7 (2) or in section 11, the Governor shall by commission under the Great Seal appoint a person eligible under Section 6 as commissioner in his stead.

13 Redistribution of electoral districts by commissioners etc

- (1) It shall be the duty of the commissioners, and they are hereby directed, to distribute New South Wales into electoral districts and to do so with all due diligence after their appointment.
- (2) As soon as practicable after they have been appointed, the commissioners shall, by advertisement published in the Gazette:
 - (a) invite suggestions in writing to be lodged with the commissioners, within 30 days after the date of advertisement, relating to the distribution of New South Wales into electoral districts,
 - (b) invite comments in writing to be lodged with the commissioners, within 14 days after the expiration of the period referred to in paragraph (a), relating to any suggestion received by the commissioners in pursuance of that paragraph, and
 - (c) give notice that any suggestion or comments lodged with them pursuant to paragraph (a) or (b) will, immediately after the expiration of:
 - (i) in relation to suggestions - the period referred to in paragraph (a), or

- (ii) in relation to comments - the 14 day period referred to in paragraph (b),

be made available at their office situated at a place specified in the advertisement.

- (3) Immediately after the expiration of the period referred to in subsection (2) (a), the commissioners shall make available for perusal at their office copies of any suggestions lodged with them in pursuance of that paragraph.
- (4) Immediately after the expiration of the 14 day period referred to in subsection (2) (b), the commissioners shall make available for perusal at their office copies of any comments lodged with them in pursuance of that paragraph.
- (5) The commissioners shall consider any suggestions or comments lodged with them in pursuance of subsection (2) before determining the names and boundaries of electoral districts.
- (6) The commissioners shall also obtain, and consider, the advice of a recognised demographer before determining the boundaries of electoral districts.

Comment

This Section was inserted as part of the 1979/80 changes to the Act. Sub-section 6 was added in 1990 to require the Commission to gain the advice of a demographer in calculating future enrolment growths.

This Section states that the Commissioners call for public submissions, with 30 days for receipt of these submissions. The submissions are then available for comment for 14 days, after which the comments are also to be made available. The Commissioners shall then consider these submissions and comments in determining the names and boundaries of electoral districts.

14 Notice of proposed alteration of existing boundaries to be given

- (1) The prescribed notice of any proposed alteration of an electoral district shall be given by the commissioners in the Gazette and in some newspapers published or circulating in the district.
- (2) Suggestions or objections in writing may be lodged with the commissioners in relation to a proposed alteration of an electoral district within:
- (a) a period of 30 days, or
- (b) where some other period is prescribed, the prescribed period, after the publication in the Gazette of the notice referred to in subsection (1).
- (3) The commissioners shall consider any suggestions or objections lodged with them in pursuance of subsection (2) before determining the names and boundaries of electoral districts.

Comment

Draft electoral boundaries are published in the Gazette and made available for public comment. After the period of comment, the Commissioners will consider submissions made. At this point, the Commission will also hold public hearing, though this is not required.

In 1986/87, the Electoral Districts Commission held fourteen days of open hearings in Sydney, and two days in Tumut. In 1990/91, the Commission held 26 days of hearings in Sydney.

15 Report of commissioners to be proclaimed etc

- (1) The commissioners shall report to the Governor the names and boundaries of the electoral districts determined by them under any provision of this Part.
- (2) The Governor shall thereupon cause a proclamation setting out the names of such electoral districts and the boundaries thereof to be published in the Gazette.
- (3) Upon publication of a proclamation under subsection (2), the electoral districts specified in the proclamation shall, until altered by a further distribution under the Constitution Act 1902, be the electoral districts of New South Wales.
- (4) Notwithstanding subsection (3), the electoral districts existing immediately before the publication of a proclamation under subsection (2) shall, for the purpose of any by-election to be held before the dissolution or expiry of the Assembly next succeeding the publication, be the electoral districts of New South Wales .

Comment

The final boundaries come into force immediately once published in the Gazette. However, they will not be used for elections until the next general election for the Legislative Assembly. Should a by-election occur before the next general election, it will be conducted on the old boundaries.

17A Criteria for distributions

- (1) In carrying out a distribution, the commissioners shall, subject to complying with Section 28 of the Constitution Act 1902:
 - (a) have regard to demographic trends within the state and, as far as practicable, endeavour to ensure on the basis of those trends that, at the relevant future time, the number of electors enrolled in each electoral district will be equal (within a margin of allowance of 3 per cent more or less of the average enrolment in electoral districts at that future time), and
 - (b) subject to paragraph (a), give due consideration, in relation to each electoral district, to:
 - (i) community of interests within the electoral district, including economic, social and regional interests,
 - (ii) means of communication and travel within the electoral district,
 - (iii) the physical features and area of the electoral district,
 - (iv) mountain and other natural boundaries, and
 - (v) the boundaries of the existing electoral districts.
- (2) For the purpose of subsection (1) (a), the relevant future time is 4 years from the day of the return of the writs for choosing the Legislative Assembly that exists at the time the distribution is carried out.

Comment

This section needs to be read in conjunction with Section 28 of the Constitution Act. Section 28 specified that at the enumeration date, all electorates must be within 10% of the average electoral enrolment or quota on that date. Section 17A (1) (a) imposes a second quota on these boundaries, such that the projected enrolment four years after the return of the writs for the previous election (in the current case that means in April 1999) must be within 3% of the average projected enrolment or projected quota. Within these constraints, the factors set out in Section 17A (b) must also be considered by the Commissioners.

Note that the Commissioners have no grounds to consider the political impact of new boundaries. All submissions to the Commission, and evidence at public hearings, must address the items set out in Section 17A (b), or question the Commissioners current and projected enrolments. The Commissioners do not take account of submissions on the political impact of their decisions.

The only state where the political impact of boundaries is considered is South Australia, where since 1991, the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission has had the over-riding criteria to "ensure, as far as practicable, that the electoral redistribution is fair to prospective candidates and groups of candidates so that, if candidates of a particular group attract more than 50 per cent of the popular vote (determined by aggregating votes cast throughout the State and allocating preferences to the necessary extent), they will be elected in sufficient numbers to enable a government to be formed."

The Commissioners in South Australia have interpreted this to mean that if a party needs a swing of say 5% in the state-wide vote to win government at the next election, boundaries are drawn so that enough seats for a bare majority exist in this range on an electoral pendulum.

2.3 THE EVOLUTION OF SECTION 17A

Following the introduction of Section 28 of the Constitution Act 1902 instituting 'one-vote one-value' boundaries, a replacement clause 17A was inserted in the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912. Used for the 1979/80 redistribution, it was as follows:

- 17A.** In carrying out a distribution, the commissioners shall, subject to complying with Section 28 of the Constitution Act 1902, give due consideration to -
- (a) the then existing boundaries of electoral districts;
 - (b) community or diversity of interest;
 - (c) lines of communication;
 - (d) physical features;
 - (e) distance from the seat of government;
 - (f) density of population; and
 - (g) demographic trends.

In 1986, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill (1986 No. 57) increased the number of electorates to 109. The cognate Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Bill (1986 No 58) also modified the criteria for conducting a redistribution, amending Section 17A.

The new amendments were in line with provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. The most important amendment was the introduction of Section 17A (1) (a) providing that at a future date, the enrolments for all electorates should as far as possible be equal. Note that while it may have been more appropriate to include this criteria in Section 28 of the constitution, this would have required a referendum. Of less importance were the amendments to Section 17A (1) (b), again bringing criteria in line with the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

As a result, the 1986/87 redistribution was carried out under the amended Section 17A, as set out below.

17A Criteria for distributions

- (1) In carrying out a distribution, the commissioners shall, subject to complying with Section 28 of the Constitution Act 1902 -
 - (a) have regard to demographic trends within the state and, as far as practicable, endeavour to ensure on the basis of those trends that, 4 years from the day of the return of the writs for choosing the Legislative Assembly that exists at the time of the distribution is carried out, the number of electors enrolled in each electoral district will be equal; and
 - (b) subject to paragraph (a), give due consideration, in relation to each electoral district, to:
 - (i) community of interests within the electoral district, including economic, social and regional interests,
 - (ii) means of communication and travel within the electoral district,
 - (iii) the physical features and area of the electoral district; and
 - (iv) the boundaries of the existing electoral districts.

In their report on the redistribution, the 1986/87 Electoral Districts Commissioners made a number of comments on the operation of Section 17A. They interpreted the clause that projected enrolments "be equal" to allow a tolerance of 1.5% variation from projected quota. However, the Commissioners expressed reservations about the quality of the rolls at the time of the redistribution, conducted as it was in between major roll reviews, and based on enrolments eighteen months after the 1984 Federal election. As Table 3.2 on pages 18-21 makes clear, the actual enrolments in March 1988 demonstrate that the Commissioners' projected enrolments were in fact inaccurate.

Following the 1986/87 redistribution, two amendments were made to Section 17A as a consequence of the Commission's report. These were to specify an actual figure of 3% in the legislation for the allowed variation in future enrolment, and to insert a 5th sub-clause in Section 17A (1) (b) instructing the Commissioners to consider "mountain barriers and other natural boundaries". This was included following difficulties for the Commission in drawing boundaries in the Tumut region in the south of the state.

The current Section 17A (see Page 10) was used by the 1990/91 Electoral Districts Commission, and unless changed, will be used by the 1997 Commission.

3. ENROLMENT GROWTH IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The most important of the criteria used in re-drawing the electoral boundaries concerns the allowed variation from electoral enrolment or quota. There are two of these quotas, the current enrolment quota set for the date of the redistribution, and the future enrolment quota set for one month after the date of the next state election, in this case, April 1999.

According to Section 28 of the Constitution Act, all electorates must be within 10% of the current enrolment quota. On enrolment figures for March 1997, 9 electorates are currently outside the permitted range.

Section 17A of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act specifies that the projected enrolments for April 1999 must see all electorates within 3% of the projected enrolment quota. Based on projections used in Section 3.5 below, in April 1999, 67 of the existing electorates will be outside this range.

If the redistribution were based only on current enrolment, its scope would be limited. It would begin by increasing the enrolment in Broken Hill, distributing the surplus in Ballina and Kiama, and re-arranging outer Sydney to cope with the enrolment growth in Camden, Badgerys Creek, Liverpool, Moorebank, Riverstone and The Hills. While there would be substantial flow-on effects to these changes in surrounding seats, the requirement for change would be limited.

However, the projected enrolment quota makes the redistribution task much more complex, and forces changes to more seats. The projected quota means seats in rapidly growing areas must be drawn with a current enrolment under quota, so that predicted population growth will put them within the 3% range in April 1999. Conversely, slow growing or declining electorates need to be drawn with a current enrolment above the quota. Very rapidly growing areas may need to be divided, despite community of interest arguments, so that enrolment will remain within both quotas.

The balance of this section examines aspects of projected enrolment growth. It looks at the success of projections used by the last two Electoral Districts Commissions, as well as this publication's estimates of projected enrolments for April 1999. A full table of electorate enrolments over six years is included along with projected enrolments.

3.1 Total Enrolment 1992-1997

The chart on page 17 shows the total monthly electoral enrolment for New South Wales from March 1992 to March 1997. The timing of State and Federal elections and roll deletions following roll cleanses are indicated on the chart.

The graph would show a smooth increase if voters changed their electoral enrolment on moving, as compulsory enrolment laws require. However, many voters only change their enrolment in the run up to an election, or when door-knocked as part of an electoral roll review. This is reflected in the chart, with rises just before the three elections, and also in the months when roll cleanses were taking place in 1992, 1994 and 1995.

The sharp decline in enrolment at the end of a roll cleanse is due to the AEC's procedures for roll reviews. While new enrolments and changes of address are processed immediately, voters who cannot be contacted in person are placed on an objection file for follow up by post. After the required period in which the voter is given the opportunity by letter to prove their enrolment, all the deletions from the objections file are carried out at the same time. A smaller drop in late 1993 and 1996 results from a similar process used in following-up non-voters from the Federal elections in both years.

3.2 1986/87 Redistribution Enrolment Projections

The table on Pages 18-20 demonstrates the accuracy of the projected enrolment figures used by the 1986/87 Electoral Districts Commission. In their final report, the Commission produced projected enrolment figures for April 1988. The table compares these projections with the actual enrolments at the 25 March 1988 State Election.

In their determination, the Commissioners believed that all electoral districts would have enrolments within 1.5% of the projected quota in April 1988. As the table of actual enrolments shows, in March 1988, 62 of the 109 electorates were outside the 1.5% tolerance chosen by the Commissioners. (Indicated with '*'). Indeed 33 electorates were outside the 3% tolerance allowed under the 1987 amendments to Section 17A of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act.

It should be pointed out that in their report, the Commissioners expressed some dissatisfaction with the enrolment data available when they began their deliberations in May 1986. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the projected enrolment data also proved to be inaccurate.

3.3 1990/91 Enrolment Projections

The table on pages 21-23 demonstrates the accuracy of the projected enrolment figures used by the 1990/91 Electoral Districts Commission. The Commission produced projected enrolments for April 1992, and the table compares these projections with the actual enrolments in April 1992.

As can be seen by comparing the two tables, the 1990/91 Electoral Districts Commissioners' projected enrolments proved to be more accurate, with only 6 of the 99 electorates finishing outside of the 3% tolerance. (Indicated with '*'). The main reason for the improved accuracy was that the 1990/91 Commissioners used enrolment data for August 1990, only five months after a Federal election.

In fact, so good were the estimates that the requirements for another redistribution under Section 28A of the Constitution Act were not met until June/July 1995, when more than 25 electorates had been outside of the 5% tolerance for two consecutive months. This was too late to force a redistribution, as one was then due as a result of two elections having been held on the same boundaries. Even if the 1988-91 Parliament had completed its full term to March 1992, June 1995 was still too late to have forced a redistribution in the term of a possible 1992-96 Parliament.

3.4 Calculation of Projected Enrolment for April 1999

The chart on page 24 explains the calculation of the projected enrolments for April 1999 contained in Section 3.5 and used for the maps in Section 4. The chart explains this process using enrolments for Badgerys Creek. Using monthly enrolments, a linear trend estimate was calculated. The graph shows the monthly enrolments figures and the straight line trend estimate calculated from these figures. The formula for this trend line has then been used to estimate the projected enrolment for April 1999.

Note that this projected enrolment figure will almost certainly differ from the projected figures to be released by the Electoral Districts Commission at the start of its deliberations. The trend figure is calculated entirely from past enrolments, where the Commission will take more account of known trends in housing development and age profile within each electorate.

3.5 -- Table of Annual Variations from Quota.

The table on pages 25-28 shows the percentage variation from quota for each electorate on an annual snapshot over seven years from 1991 to 1997. It also shows the estimated enrolment for each electorate in April 1999, and the number of voters that each electorate will need to lose or gain to be within the 3% variation from the quota.

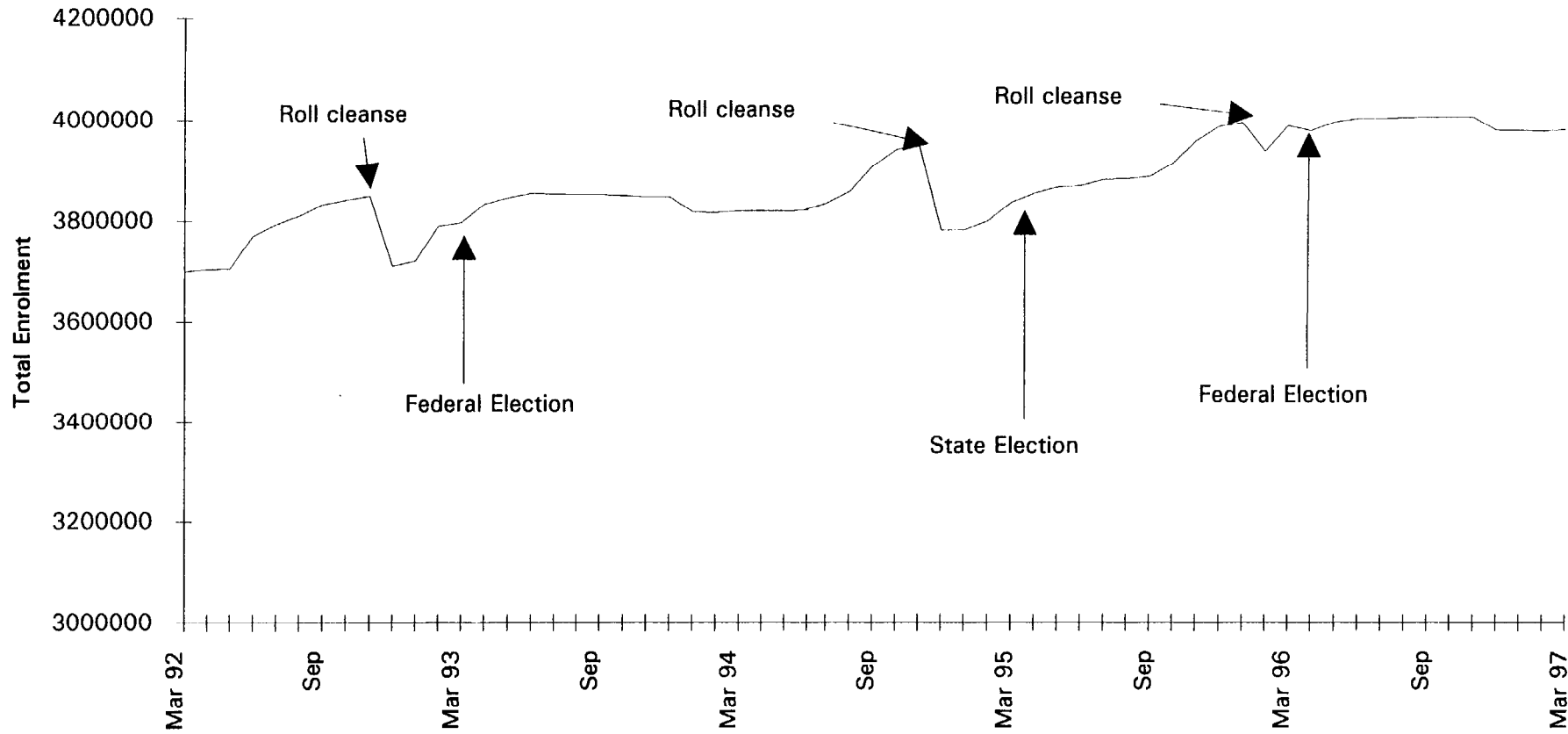
The figures for May 1991 and March 1995 are the enrolments for the state election in both years. Others columns are taken from monthly figures released by the Electoral Commission. March 1993 and 1996 coincide with Federal Elections in both years. The projected enrolment is calculated as described in Section 3.4 above.

The key point to make from this table is that it is the projected enrolment figure that will force the redistribution commissioners to make massive changes to electoral boundaries. On the March 1997 enrolments, only 9 of the 99 electorates vary from quota by more than 10%. If current enrolment were the only criteria apart from community of interest, then the scope of the redistribution would be limited.

However, 69 of the 99 electorates vary from the projected quota by more than 3%. There will need to be changes to all these electorates to ensure they meet permitted projected enrolment variation.

Note that this table assumes no change in the number of electorates to be drawn. If the number of electorates were to be increased, then some electorates currently under quota would then be within the permitted variation. In particular, the currently under-quota electorates of Gladesville and Kogarah would be assisted by an increase in the number of seats.

3.1 Total Enrolment - 1992-1997



NOTE: The month to month variation in enrolment is exaggerated by the limiting of the left-hand scale to enrolments over three million

3.2 - 1986/87 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation from Prediction		% Variation from Quota		
	Predicted April 88	Actual March 88	Voters	Percent	Predicted	Actual	
Albury	33494	33600	+106	+0.32	+1.31	+3.42	**
Ashfield	33281	32438	-843	-2.53	+0.66	-0.16	
Auburn	33179	33002	-177	-0.53	+0.35	+1.58	
Ballina	33298	31988	-1310	-3.93	+0.71	-1.55	
Balmain	32917	32555	-362	-1.10	-0.44	+0.20	
Bankstown	33268	31583	-1685	-5.06	+0.62	-2.79	
Barwon	32749	32354	-395	-1.21	-0.95	-0.42	
Bass Hill	33409	31975	-1434	-4.29	+1.05	-1.59	
Bathurst	33279	33280	+1	+0.00	+0.66	+2.43	
Bega	32977	34723	+1746	+5.29	-0.26	+6.87	**
Blacktown	32849	31627	-1222	-3.72	-0.64	-2.66	
Bligh	32991	32225	-766	-2.32	-0.21	-0.82	
Blue Mountains	32713	32583	-130	-0.40	-1.06	+0.29	
Broken Hill	33040	30963	-2077	-6.29	-0.07	-4.70	**
Burratorang	33088	32057	-1031	-3.12	+0.08	-1.33	
Burrinjuck	33061	32404	-657	-1.99	-0.00	-0.26	
Cabramatta	33018	31307	-1711	-5.18	-0.13	-3.64	**
Camden	33509	33389	-120	-0.36	+1.35	+2.77	
Campbelltown	33115	31877	-1238	-3.74	+0.16	-1.89	
Canterbury	33034	32436	-598	-1.81	-0.08	-0.17	
Carlingford	33259	32142	-1117	-3.36	+0.60	-1.07	
Castlereagh	32789	31912	-877	-2.67	-0.83	-1.78	
Cassnock	33461	33375	-86	-0.26	+1.21	+2.72	
Charlestown	33138	31942	-1196	-3.61	+0.23	-1.69	
Clarence	33218	33192	-26	-0.08	+0.47	+2.16	
Coffs Harbour	33094	32105	-989	-2.99	+0.10	-1.18	
Coogee	32878	31490	-1388	-4.22	-0.56	-3.08	**
Cronulla	32866	32074	-792	-2.41	-0.59	-1.28	
Davidson	32719	32602	-117	-0.36	-1.04	+0.34	
Drummoyne	33415	32770	-645	-1.93	+1.07	+0.86	
Dubbo	33099	32068	-1031	-3.11	+0.11	-1.30	
Earlwood	33385	33086	-299	-0.90	+0.98	+1.83	
East Hills	32864	31461	-1403	-4.27	-0.60	-3.17	**
Eastwood	32583	32349	-234	-0.72	-1.45	-0.43	
Fairfield	32639	32706	+67	+0.21	-1.28	+0.66	
Georges River	32715	32089	-626	-1.91	-1.05	-1.23	
Gladesville	32951	32649	-302	-0.92	-0.34	+0.49	
Gordon	33004	32245	-759	-2.30	-0.18	-0.75	
Gosford	33406	35723	+2317	+6.94	+1.04	+9.95	**
Goulburn	33223	32094	-1129	-3.40	+0.49	-1.22	
Grabville	33191	32829	-362	-1.09	+0.39	+1.04	
Hawkesbury	33557	32883	-674	-2.01	+1.50	+1.21	
Heathcote	32550	33733	+1183	+3.63	-1.55	+3.83	**
Heffron	33125	32159	-966	-2.92	+0.19	-1.02	
Hornsby	33392	32982	-410	-1.23	+1.00	+1.51	
Hurstville	33402	32593	-809	-2.42	+1.03	+0.32	
Illawarra	33002	31638	-1364	-4.13	-0.18	-2.62	

** - electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.2 - 1986/87 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation		% Variation		
	Predicted April 88	Actual March 88	from Prediction Voters	Percent	from Quota Predicted	Actual	
Keira	32564	31770	-794	-2.44	-1.51	-2.22	
Kiama	32579	32342	-237	-0.73	-1.46	-0.46	
Kogarah	33227	32309	-918	-2.76	+0.50	-0.56	
Ku-Ring-Gai	33542	32839	-703	-2.10	+1.45	+1.07	
Lachlan	32935	31425	-1510	-4.58	-0.38	-3.28	**
Lake Macquarie	33273	32909	-364	-1.09	+0.64	+1.29	
Lakemba	33450	31652	-1798	-5.38	+1.17	-2.58	
Lane Cove	33351	32245	-1106	-3.32	+0.87	-0.75	
Lismore	33559	32496	-1063	-3.17	+1.50	+0.02	
Liverpool	32751	30219	-2532	-7.73	-0.94	-6.99	**
Londonderry	33143	30804	-2339	-7.06	+0.24	-5.19	**
Macquarie Fields	33067	33762	+695	+2.10	+0.02	+3.92	**
Maitland	33538	33753	+215	+0.64	+1.44	+3.89	**
Manly	33304	31912	-1392	-4.18	+0.73	-1.78	
Manning	33402	34750	+1348	+4.04	+1.03	+6.96	**
Maroubra	33502	32627	-875	-2.61	+1.33	+0.42	
Marrickville	33214	32816	-398	-1.20	+0.46	+1.00	
McKell	32975	31376	-1599	-4.85	-0.26	-3.43	**
Middle Harbour	32930	31459	-1471	-4.47	-0.40	-3.17	**
Minchinbury	32996	34333	+1337	+4.05	-0.20	+5.67	**
Miranda	32828	32767	-61	-0.19	-0.71	+0.85	
Monaro	32549	33749	+1200	+3.69	-1.55	+3.88	**
Mosman	32975	32482	-493	-1.50	-0.26	-0.02	
Mulgoa	32703	31519	-1184	-3.62	-1.09	-2.99	
Murray	33008	32904	-104	-0.32	-0.16	+1.27	
Murrumbidgee	33202	31949	-1253	-3.77	+0.42	-1.67	
Murwillumbah	32733	32784	+51	+0.16	-1.00	+0.90	
Myall Lakes	32897	33999	+1102	+3.35	-0.50	+4.64	**
Newcastle	32730	32241	-489	-1.49	-1.00	-0.77	
Northcott	32554	33464	+910	+2.80	-1.54	+3.00	
Nthn Tablelands	33122	32819	-303	-0.91	+0.18	+1.01	
North Shore	32826	31787	-1039	-3.17	-0.71	-2.16	
Orange	32896	32919	+23	+0.07	-0.50	+1.32	
Parramatta	32763	30469	-2294	-7.00	-0.90	-6.22	**
Peats	33272	33851	+579	+1.74	+0.64	+4.19	**
Penrith	32976	32699	-277	-0.84	-0.26	+0.64	
Pittwater	32639	33427	+788	+2.41	-1.28	+2.88	
Port Macquarie	33541	33409	-132	-0.39	+1.45	+2.83	
Port Stephens	33455	33603	+148	+0.44	+1.19	+3.43	**
Riverstone	33483	33294	-189	-0.56	+1.27	+2.47	
Rockdale	33198	32668	-530	-1.60	+0.41	+0.55	
Ryde	33260	31738	-1522	-4.58	+0.60	-2.31	
Seven Hills	33201	30497	-2704	-8.14	+0.42	-6.13	**
Smithfield	32562	30207	-2355	-7.23	-1.51	-7.03	**
South Coast	32548	33874	+1326	+4.07	-1.55	+4.26	**
Sthn Highlands	32609	32331	-278	-0.85	-1.37	-0.49	
Strathfield	32948	31487	-1461	-4.43	-0.34	-3.09	**

** - electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.2 - 1986/87 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation from Prediction		% Variation from Quota		
	Predicted April 88	Actual March 88	Voters	Percent	Predicted	Actual	
Sutherland	33155	31990	-1165	-3.51	+0.28	-1.54	
Swansea	33569	33803	+234	+0.70	+1.53	+4.04	**
Tamworth	33076	32177	-899	-2.72	+0.04	-0.96	
The Entrance	33352	33854	+502	+1.51	+0.88	+4.20	**
The Hills	32745	33555	+810	+2.47	-0.96	+3.28	**
Upper Hunter	32910	32428	-482	-1.46	-0.46	-0.19	
Vaucluse	33255	30302	-2953	-8.88	+0.58	-6.73	**
Wagga Wagga	33288	34187	+899	+2.70	+0.68	+5.22	**
Wakehurst	33229	32195	-1034	-3.11	+0.51	-0.91	
Wallsend	33010	32255	-755	-2.29	-0.16	-0.72	
Waratah	32595	30759	-1836	-5.63	-1.41	-5.33	**
Waverley	32566	30625	-1941	-5.96	-1.50	-5.74	**
Wentworthville	33460	33446	-14	-0.04	+1.20	+2.94	
Wollongong	32869	32587	-282	-0.86	-0.58	+0.30	
Wyong	32728	33292	+564	+1.72	-1.01	+2.47	
TOTAL	3603781	3541447	-62334	-1.73			

Average (Quota) 33062 32490 -572 -1.73

Quota - 3% 32070 31515

Quota + 3% 34054 33465

** - electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.3 - 1990/91 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation from Prediction		% Variation from Quota	
	Predicted April 1992	Actual April 1992	Voters	Percent	Predicted	Actual
Albury	38412	37807	-605	-1.58	+1.07	+1.05
Ashfield	38169	37230	-939	-2.46	+0.43	-0.50
Auburn	38917	38228	-689	-1.77	+2.40	+2.17
Badgerys Creek	37458	37901	+443	+1.18	-1.44	+1.30
Ballina	37745	37864	+119	+0.32	-0.68	+1.20
Bankstown	37708	38413	+705	+1.87	-0.78	+2.66
Barwon	38977	38543	-434	-1.11	+2.56	+3.01
Bathurst	38016	37676	-340	-0.89	+0.03	+0.69
Baulkham Hills	37537	36793	-744	-1.98	-1.23	-1.67
Bega	38498	37481	-1017	-2.64	+1.30	+0.17
Blacktown	38066	37524	-542	-1.42	+0.16	+0.29
Bligh	38638	37696	-942	-2.44	+1.67	+0.75
Blue Mountains	37980	37242	-738	-1.94	-0.06	-0.47
Broken Hill	37978	37801	-177	-0.47	-0.07	+1.03
Bulli	38149	37766	-383	-1.00	+0.38	+0.94
Burrinjuck	38469	37753	-716	-1.86	+1.22	+0.90
Cabramatta	38352	38140	-212	-0.55	+0.92	+1.94
Camden	37942	38510	+568	+1.50	-0.16	+2.92
Campbelltown	38502	37577	-925	-2.40	+1.31	+0.43
Canterbury	38876	38391	-485	-1.25	+2.29	+2.61
Cessnock	37055	36615	-440	-1.19	-2.50	-2.14
Charlestown	37229	36604	-625	-1.68	-2.04	-2.17
Clarence	38675	36651	-2024	-5.23	+1.77	-2.04
Coffs Harbour	37775	36890	-885	-2.34	-0.60	-1.41
Coogee	38848	38269	-579	-1.49	+2.22	+2.28
Cronulla	37795	37412	-383	-1.01	-0.55	-0.01
Davidson	38646	38057	-589	-1.52	+1.69	+1.71
Drummoyne	38174	37527	-647	-1.69	+0.45	+0.30
Dubbo	37712	37236	-476	-1.26	-0.77	-0.48
East Hills	37581	37010	-571	-1.52	-1.11	-1.09
Eastwood	38240	37362	-878	-2.30	+0.62	-0.14
Ermington	37989	36921	-1068	-2.81	-0.04	-1.32
Fairfield	37937	37285	-652	-1.72	-0.18	-0.35
Georges River	37064	36818	-246	-0.66	-2.47	-1.60
Gladesville	38394	38104	-290	-0.76	+1.03	+1.84
Gordon	37536	37160	-376	-1.00	-1.23	-0.68
Gosford	38009	36864	-1145	-3.01	+0.01	-1.48
Granville	38500	38084	-416	-1.08	+1.31	+1.79
Hawkesbury	37297	36638	-659	-1.77	-1.86	-2.08
Heffron	38825	38509	-316	-0.81	+2.16	+2.92
Hurstville	37835	37250	-585	-1.55	-0.44	-0.44
Illawarra	38114	37256	-858	-2.25	+0.29	-0.43
Keira	37881	37259	-622	-1.64	-0.32	-0.42
Kiama	38149	38212	+63	+0.17	+0.38	+2.13
Kogarah	38409	37501	-908	-2.36	+1.07	+0.23
Ku-ring-gai	38421	37787	-634	-1.65	+1.10	+0.99
Lachlan	37760	37158	-602	-1.59	-0.64	-0.69
Lake Macquarie	38076	37024	-1052	-2.76	+0.19	-1.05

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** - Electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.3 - 1990/91 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation		% Variation		
	Predicted April 1992	Actual April 1992	from Prediction Voters	Percent	from Quota Predicted	Actual	
Lakemba	38168	38040	-128	-0.34	+0.43	+1.67	
Lane Cove	38025	37455	-570	-1.50	+0.06	+0.10	
Lismore	38294	36616	-1678	-4.38	+0.76	-2.14	
Liverpool	38455	37972	-483	-1.26	+1.19	+1.49	
Londonderry	37577	38305	+728	+1.94	-1.12	+2.38	
Maitland	38084	37727	-357	-0.94	+0.21	+0.83	
Manly	38290	38040	-250	-0.65	+0.75	+1.67	
Maroubra	38109	37524	-585	-1.54	+0.28	+0.29	
Marrickville	38476	37249	-1227	-3.19	+1.24	-0.45	
Miranda	37992	37004	-988	-2.60	-0.03	-1.10	
Monaro	37731	36881	-850	-2.25	-0.72	-1.43	
Moorebank	38346	37824	-522	-1.36	+0.90	+1.09	
Mount Druitt	37149	37312	+163	+0.44	-2.25	-0.28	
Murray	38084	36847	-1237	-3.25	+0.21	-1.52	
Murrumbidgee	37172	38023	+851	+2.29	-2.19	+1.62	
Murwillumbah	37409	35745	-1664	-4.45	-1.57	-4.47	**
Myall Lakes	38149	36694	-1455	-3.81	+0.38	-1.93	
Newcastle	37398	36831	-567	-1.52	-1.59	-1.56	
North Shore	37844	35887	-1957	-5.17	-0.42	-4.09	**
Northcott	37824	37703	-121	-0.32	-0.47	+0.77	
Nthn Tablelands	38701	38160	-541	-1.40	+1.83	+1.99	
Orange	38185	37609	-576	-1.51	+0.48	+0.52	
Oxley	37770	36123	-1647	-4.36	-0.62	-3.46	**
Parramatta	37872	37531	-341	-0.90	-0.35	+0.31	
Peats	37858	37737	-121	-0.32	-0.38	+0.86	
Penrith	38090	36920	-1170	-3.07	+0.23	-1.33	
Pittwater	38221	38202	-19	-0.05	+0.57	+2.10	
Port Jackson	38207	37509	-698	-1.83	+0.53	+0.25	
Port Macquarie	38077	36721	-1356	-3.56	+0.19	-1.86	
Port Stephens	38255	37456	-799	-2.09	+0.66	+0.11	
Riverstone	37225	37438	+213	+0.57	-2.05	+0.06	
Rockdale	37466	36979	-487	-1.30	-1.42	-1.17	
Smithfield	37791	38378	+587	+1.55	-0.56	+2.57	
South Coast	37010	35199	-1811	-4.89	-2.62	-5.93	**
Sthn Highlands	38452	36900	-1552	-4.04	+1.18	-1.38	
St Marys	37996	37253	-743	-1.96	-0.02	-0.44	
Strathfield	38256	37101	-1155	-3.02	+0.66	-0.84	
Sutherland	38325	37901	-424	-1.11	+0.84	+1.30	
Swansea	37852	37323	-529	-1.40	-0.40	-0.25	
Tamworth	37889	37334	-555	-1.46	-0.30	-0.22	
The Entrance	37988	37619	-369	-0.97	-0.04	+0.54	
The Hills	37220	37274	+54	+0.15	-2.06	-0.38	
Upper Hunter	38354	38516	+162	+0.42	+0.92	+2.94	
Vaucluse	38597	38192	-405	-1.05	+1.56	+2.07	
Wagga Wagga	37517	36973	-544	-1.45	-1.28	-1.18	
Wakehurst	38353	37435	-918	-2.39	+0.92	+0.05	
Wallsend	37026	37607	+581	+1.57	-2.57	+0.51	
Waratah	37329	35643	-1686	-4.52	-1.78	-4.74	**

** - Electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.3 - 1990/91 REDISTRIBUTION
Comparison of Projected to Actual Enrolments

Electorate	Enrolment		Variation from Prediction		% Variation from Quota	
	Predicted April 1992	Actual April 1992	Voters	Percent	Predicted	Actual
Willoughby	38234	37689	-545	-1.43	+0.61	+0.73
Wollongong	37266	37382	+116	+0.31	-1.94	-0.09
Wyong	38170	36622	-1548	-4.06	+0.44	-2.12
TOTAL	3762443	3704204	-58239	-1.55		

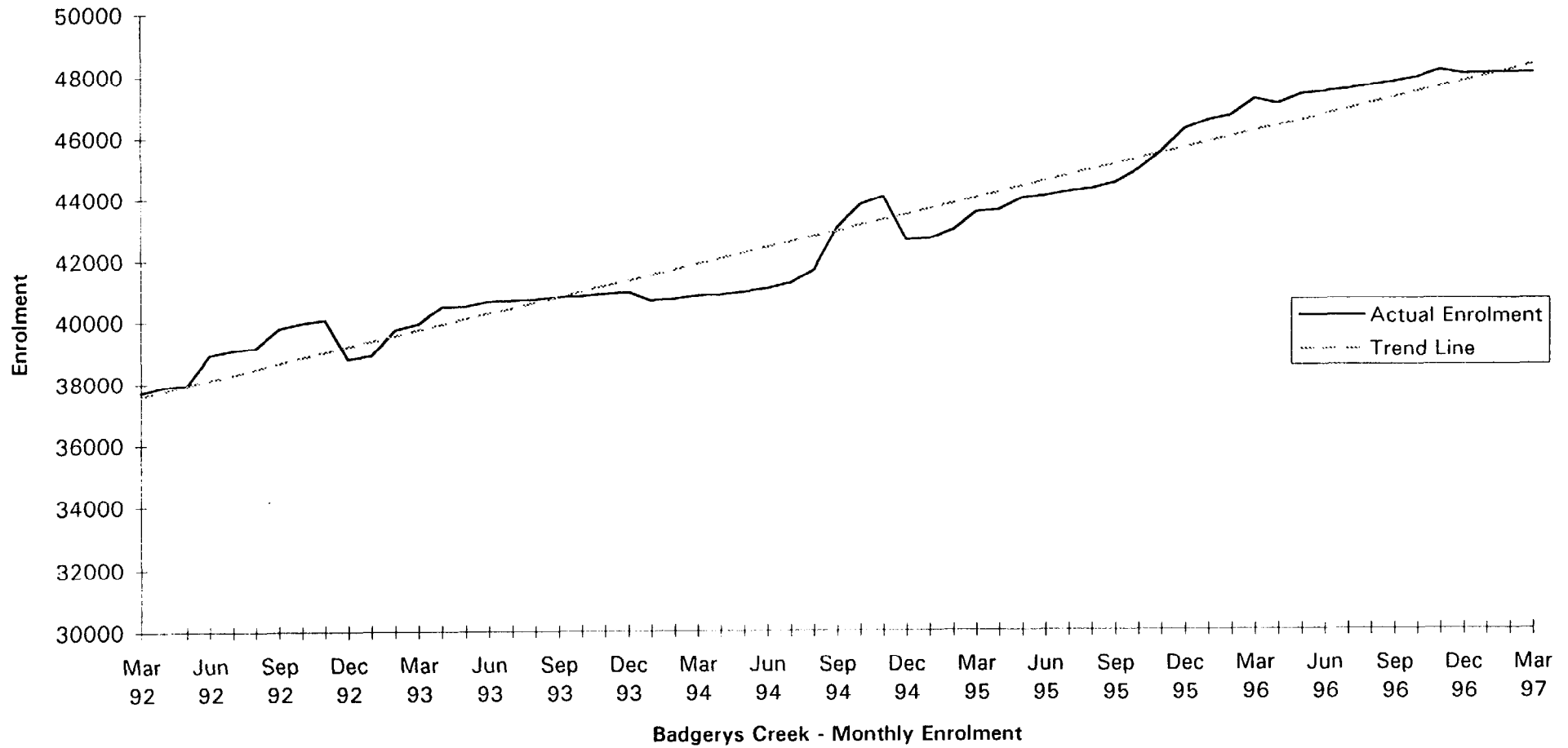
Average (Quota) 38004 37416

Quota - 3% 36864 36294

Quota + 3% 39144 38538

** - Electorates exceeding permitted 3% variation

3.4 Calculation of Projected April 1999 Enrolment for Badgerys Creek



3.5 Summary of Electorate Variations from Quota

Electorate	May 1991	March 1992	March 1993	March 1994	March 1995	March 1996	March 1997	April 1999	Change in Enrolment to meet quota
Albury	+1.05	+1.38	+0.87	+0.51	+1.07	+2.04	-0.13	+0.62	
Ashfield	-0.39	-0.48	-1.69	-2.90	-4.10	-2.70	-1.85	-3.78	+323
Auburn	+1.32	+2.35	+0.72	+0.37	-1.40	-0.74	-0.94	-2.09	
Badgerys Creek	-0.56	+0.91	+4.10	+5.82	+12.31	+17.11	+19.41	+27.09	-9988
Ballina	+0.04	+1.04	+4.57	+5.19	+8.35	+11.20	+11.02	+16.20	-5473
Bankstown	+2.76	+2.78	+2.69	+2.45	+0.94	+1.51	-0.12	-0.37	
Barwon	+3.08	+3.01	+1.08	+0.28	-3.93	-7.83	-9.30	-14.07	+4590
Bathurst	+0.64	+0.74	-0.14	+1.11	-0.26	-0.82	-1.44	-2.00	
Baulkham Hills	-1.46	-1.80	-1.13	-1.28	-1.32	-2.12	-2.03	-2.21	
Bega	-1.87	-0.14	+1.71	+3.05	+5.89	+6.12	+6.10	+9.62	-2746
Blacktown	+1.02	+0.37	-0.25	-0.52	-1.85	-2.38	-2.68	-4.65	+686
Bligh	-0.11	+0.91	+2.91	+3.07	+3.81	+5.14	+4.64	+6.84	-1594
Blue Mountains	-0.67	-0.64	-0.31	-0.11	-1.84	-0.61	+0.04	+0.74	
Broken Hill	+1.55	+1.02	-2.19	-3.73	-6.19	-9.40	-10.91	-15.83	+5319
Bulli	+1.24	+0.88	+0.75	+0.84	+1.09	+0.22	-0.40	-0.52	
Burrinjuck	+1.47	+0.94	+0.04	-0.67	-1.09	-2.68	-3.77	-5.01	+834
Cabramatta	-1.34	+1.72	+4.05	+4.29	+7.67	+6.39	+9.85	+11.83	-3663
Camden	+0.88	+2.67	+10.18	+12.60	+19.52	+23.46	+24.80	+35.23	-13364
Campbelltown	+0.29	+0.27	+0.48	+1.12	+0.05	-1.32	-1.76	-2.33	
Canterbury	+3.32	+2.70	+1.27	+0.73	-0.26	-0.75	-0.33	-2.71	
Cessnock	-2.34	-2.12	-3.13	-3.03	-3.44	-4.26	-4.43	-5.43	+1007
Charlestown	-1.20	-2.18	-3.95	-4.86	-6.13	-8.07	-8.29	-11.08	+3351
Clarence	-3.14	-2.23	-2.20	-1.69	-0.84	-0.83	-1.94	-0.53	
Coffs Harbour	-3.46	-1.73	-1.37	+0.57	+3.49	+3.84	+4.26	+8.17	-2145
Coogee	+3.18	+2.33	+2.43	+1.10	-0.84	+1.01	+1.42	-0.45	
Cronulla	+2.14	+1.25	-0.49	-1.27	-2.15	-1.43	-2.53	-3.64	+267
Davidson	+3.11	+1.94	-1.38	-1.90	-3.70	-6.31	-6.44	-10.02	+2909
Drummoyne	+2.04	+0.37	+0.01	-1.05	-2.03	-2.48	-2.27	-4.32	+546
Dubbo	-0.87	-0.53	-0.32	-0.57	-0.15	-2.56	-3.59	-3.55	+230
East Hills	+0.67	-0.91	-3.48	-4.39	-4.82	-7.08	-7.57	-10.25	+3004

3.5 Summary of Electorate Variations from Quota

Electorate	May 1991	March 1992	March 1993	March 1994	March 1995	March 1996	March 1997	April 1999	Change in Enrolment to meet quota
Eastwood	+1.23	-0.07	-1.90	-2.52	-2.99	-3.42	-2.53	-4.34	+557
Ermington	+0.07	-1.00	-2.85	-4.23	-4.83	-6.36	-6.02	-8.59	+2318
Fairfield	-1.05	-0.37	-1.09	-0.58	-1.87	-2.14	-0.30	-1.85	
Georges River	-0.09	-1.46	-3.12	-4.25	-5.16	-6.78	-7.15	-9.73	+2790
Gladesville	+2.70	+1.82	-1.20	-1.47	-1.76	-2.59	-2.80	-4.37	+567
Gordon	+0.59	-0.54	-3.30	-3.18	-3.81	-6.39	-6.22	-8.10	+2115
Gosford	-3.31	-1.71	+1.40	+2.30	+4.28	+5.65	+5.80	+9.49	-2692
Granville	+2.74	+2.24	+1.61	+0.57	-1.70	-2.33	-2.91	-5.55	+1059
Hawkesbury	-3.27	-2.19	+1.87	+2.19	+4.78	+4.70	+5.47	+8.97	-2476
Heffron	+2.82	+2.95	+2.58	+1.98	+1.35	+2.40	+2.39	+1.55	
Hurstville	+0.80	-0.25	-2.20	-3.57	-3.83	-4.84	-5.32	-7.50	+1864
Illawarra	-0.35	-0.37	-1.16	-1.39	-1.80	-3.70	-3.75	-5.06	+852
Keira	-0.02	-0.35	-2.28	-2.85	-3.90	-5.39	-6.12	-8.31	+2203
Kiama	+0.96	+2.07	+4.41	+5.80	+9.00	+10.51	+11.17	+15.51	-5187
Kogarah	+1.85	+0.33	-0.85	-1.43	-3.44	-4.54	-4.30	-7.05	+1678
Ku-ring-gai	+1.96	+1.09	+0.74	+0.16	+1.14	+0.76	+1.43	+1.63	
Lachlan	-0.44	-0.64	-2.21	-2.64	-3.14	-5.37	-6.23	-7.84	+2008
Lake Macquarie	-0.70	-1.11	-1.23	-1.01	-0.81	-0.68	-0.78	-0.80	
Lakemba	+2.19	+1.84	+0.39	-0.32	-0.38	-0.16	-1.06	-1.62	
Lane Cove	+1.28	+0.29	-1.29	-1.61	-1.53	+0.31	-0.58	-0.85	
Lismore	-2.43	-2.23	-3.34	-3.44	-4.42	-4.49	-5.70	-6.52	+1461
Liverpool	+0.31	+1.13	+5.35	+6.81	+10.52	+13.52	+16.52	+21.32	-7594
Londonderry	+1.09	+2.05	+5.03	+6.33	+7.36	+8.10	+8.56	+11.12	-3365
Maitland	+0.55	+0.79	+2.02	+2.17	+3.22	+2.11	+2.55	+3.52	-217
Manly	+2.27	+1.74	+0.51	-0.08	-2.10	-1.52	-1.36	-3.75	+312
Maroubra	+1.25	+0.41	-0.85	-1.34	-2.10	-0.73	-1.74	-2.08	
Marrickville	-0.90	-0.63	+0.98	+0.65	-1.07	+1.40	+2.40	+2.14	
Miranda	+0.15	-0.41	-1.50	-2.05	-2.32	-3.50	-3.82	-4.42	+589
Monaro	-3.49	-2.06	+1.34	+1.04	+1.75	+3.09	+3.11	+4.15	-478
Moorebank	+0.71	+0.73	+3.00	+4.13	+7.53	+10.11	+10.82	+15.41	-5144

3.5 Summary of Electorate Variations from Quota

Electorate	May	March	March	March	March	March	March	April	Change in Enrolment to meet quota
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1999	
Mount Druitt	-1.46	-0.45	+1.20	+1.69	+5.16	+8.52	+9.47	+13.28	-4264
Murray	-0.50	-1.27	-1.84	-1.75	-2.36	-3.22	-4.52	-5.15	+890
Murrumbidgee	+2.25	+1.58	-1.68	-1.97	-2.79	-4.26	-4.93	-7.27	+1772
Murwillumbah	-5.82	-5.08	-1.15	+0.37	+3.48	+5.44	+6.21	+10.83	-3245
Myall Lakes	-2.18	-1.93	-1.43	-0.60	+0.33	-0.28	-0.26	+1.28	
Newcastle	-1.14	-1.40	-3.51	-4.89	-7.64	-8.47	-9.29	-12.94	+4123
North Shore	-3.39	-4.10	-3.10	-2.93	-5.02	-2.40	-2.17	-2.44	
Northcott	+1.04	+0.55	-0.16	-0.81	-0.88	-2.62	-1.95	-3.33	+135
Nthn Tablelands	+2.93	+1.94	+1.53	+1.33	-1.19	-4.67	-5.26	-8.01	+2079
Orange	+0.49	+0.48	-0.50	-0.36	-1.17	-1.89	-3.64	-4.24	+516
Oxley	-3.76	-3.53	-4.16	-3.22	-3.07	-4.79	-5.06	-5.00	+830
Parramatta	+1.70	+0.73	+0.37	-1.09	-2.68	-2.39	-1.86	-4.53	+634
Peats	+0.59	+0.75	+2.01	+2.27	+2.05	+1.04	+0.84	+0.81	
Penrith	-1.48	-1.30	-2.45	-2.45	-3.82	-4.74	-4.60	-6.39	+1407
Pittwater	+1.90	+2.09	+1.23	+2.67	-0.03	+0.92	+0.02	-0.94	
Port Jackson	-0.65	+0.16	+1.08	+0.45	-2.30	+0.73	+1.29	+0.49	
Port Macquarie	-3.15	-2.18	-1.28	+0.57	+2.52	+4.03	+5.61	+8.82	-2412
Port Stephens	-0.83	+0.00	+1.36	+2.53	+4.55	+5.83	+6.63	+9.78	-2813
Riverstone	-0.72	-0.04	+2.10	+2.88	+6.88	+10.20	+10.73	+14.86	-4918
Rockdale	-0.38	-1.20	-2.28	-2.84	-5.10	-6.45	-5.98	-9.37	+2643
Smithfield	+1.72	+2.62	+4.10	+4.89	+6.16	+5.79	+6.62	+8.91	-2450
South Coast	-6.96	-5.98	-4.76	-3.95	-2.14	-1.33	-1.01	+1.30	
Sthn Highlands	-1.10	-1.54	-0.76	-0.18	+0.17	+0.06	-0.15	+0.51	
St Marys	-0.22	-0.42	-2.75	-2.89	-5.77	-7.21	-7.78	-11.94	+3705
Strathfield	-0.46	-0.79	-1.72	-2.33	-5.07	-4.93	-4.92	-7.49	+1861
Sutherland	+1.18	+1.28	+2.62	+3.12	+6.52	+8.15	+8.36	+12.46	-3924
Swansea	-0.28	-0.23	+0.86	+1.03	+2.09	+2.92	+3.82	+5.07	-859
Tamworth	-0.30	-0.21	-1.21	-1.27	-2.37	-5.02	-5.64	-7.25	+1764
The Entrance	-1.08	+0.67	+1.55	+1.36	+2.14	+2.27	+2.12	+3.27	-110
The Hills	-1.16	-0.79	+3.69	+4.78	+8.30	+10.34	+11.53	+16.62	-5647

3.5 Summary of Electorate Variations from Quota

Electorate	May 1991	March 1992	March 1993	March 1994	March 1995	March 1996	March 1997	April 1999	Change in Enrolment to meet quota
Upper Hunter	+2.30	+3.01	+1.36	+1.82	-0.63	-2.97	-3.58	-6.08	+1276
Vaucluse	+2.14	+2.11	+2.96	+1.43	-0.19	+0.39	+1.18	-0.16	
Wagga Wagga	-1.24	-1.13	+0.09	+0.12	+0.87	+0.29	-0.92	+0.24	
Wakehurst	+1.07	-0.05	-1.10	-0.68	-1.75	-1.67	-1.72	-3.04	+16
Wallsend	+0.84	+0.53	-0.37	-0.47	-0.13	-0.38	-0.58	-0.79	
Waratah	-3.52	-4.62	-6.41	-7.17	-7.72	-8.14	-8.52	-10.04	+2920
Willoughby	+2.12	+0.86	+0.03	-0.05	-1.63	-0.29	-0.04	-0.91	
Wollongong	+0.88	+0.16	-2.56	-3.56	-4.97	-5.82	-6.34	-9.21	+2574
Wyong	-3.20	-2.22	+0.35	+0.94	+3.31	+5.70	+5.96	+9.88	-2853

4. ELECTORATE MAPS

Commentary on Maps

The discussion that follows on possible changes to electoral boundaries assumes the number of Legislative Assembly electorates remains at 99.

If the number of electorates were to be increased, it would have a significant impact on the redistribution, particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area. Increasing the number of seats would decrease the quota required for each seat. As a result, many of the middle distance Sydney suburban seats would fall within the new quota. This would minimise the amount of change required in existing seats, a factor that assists sitting members defend their seats. In particular, decreasing the enrolment quota would assist the Labor Party in a number of marginal seats, in particular Gladesville, Bathurst, Kogarah and Drummoyne.

A decrease in the number of seats and consequent increase in the enrolment quota would have far reaching impacts by guaranteeing the abolition of several seats and increasing the scope for the redistribution. It would guarantee the abolition of at least one seat west of the mountains, one on Sydney's north shore and one in the inner southern suburbs.

4.1 Country New South Wales

As is clear from the map, the major feature of electoral enrolment in Country New South Wales is the large number of electorates west of the Great Dividing Range that will be substantially under quota by April 1999. Overall, projected enrolments indicate that one electorate west of the mountains will need to be abolished.

The electorate of Broken Hill will have the state's lowest enrolment by April 1999, and will need the addition of more than 5,000 voters to bring enrolment within the allowed variation. As the Labor majority in Broken Hill in 1995 was 2,873, and all nearby towns that could be added to the electorate have substantial National Party majorities, the redistribution will clearly have a significant political impact.

With the growth of Broken Hill, all other electorates will need to shift eastwards. The Commissioners then have to make a choice in re-drawing boundaries. Running a north-south line through and including the seats of Northern Tablelands, Tamworth, Upper Hunter, Bathurst, Burrinjuck and Albury, a seat needs to be abolished west of this line. It may be that the Commissioners decide to abolish one of these seats. Two other alternatives are to detach Goulburn from Southern Highlands and include it in Burrinjuck, which helps enrolments west of the great divide. The other is that Upper Hunter is effectively squeezed east of the mountains to become a Hunter Valley and lower North Coast electorate.

In other changes, any loss of enrolment for Southern Highlands could be made up by absorbing voters from the over-quota Kiama and Camden electorates. The over-enrolment along the north coast will be accommodated by minor changes shifting the existing seats northwards, and Monaro and Bega will see minor adjustments to bring them within quota.

4.2 Hunter and Illawarra

The under-enrolment of Illawarra seats will be corrected by absorbing the excess of enrolment in Kiama to the south, or by absorbing voters from Bulli in the north. Bulli would then shift north to include parts of the over-quota Sydney seat of Sutherland. The most likely fate of Camden will be to lose more of its southern areas to a re-drawn Southern Highlands, with a new Camden re-drawn in the area between Camden and Campbelltown. Semi-rural areas between Penrith and Camden currently in Badgerys Creek may also come into play here.

Over-enrolment in the Central Coast may be fixed by incremental changes shifting the current electorates south, or by a substantial re-drawing to correct the situation where Gosford is currently divided between three electorates. Problems of geography may work against the more radical alternative.

The substantial under-enrolment of Newcastle, Charlestown and Waratah will produce substantial change in inner Newcastle. This will have substantial flow-on effects, one of which may be the removal of the suburb of Mayfield from Port Stephens, halving that seat's Labor majority. In the arc from Cessnock and Kurri Kurri through Maitland to Port Stephens, there is considerable scope for the political parties to use community of interest arguments to achieve significant political advantage.

In the past, the submissions of the Liberal Party have attempted to put as many coal mining communities together in one electorate with a huge Labor majority. Alternatively, the Labor submissions try to include mining communities with surrounding rural communities to provide a better geographic spread of their vote. Both approaches have valid community of interest justifications, but significantly different political outcomes.

Changes to the northern and western edges of the Hunter valley seats will interact with similar changes to the seat of Upper Hunter, and with the fate of the lower north coast seats. As in 1991, it is likely that the public hearings of the Electoral Districts Commission will spend considerable time considering the boundaries in the Hunter.

4.3 Metropolitan Area.

For the first time in several decades, a redistribution will not see the abolition of an inner-city electorate. While enrolment growth continues to be concentrated in the outer west and south-western suburbs, urban consolidation has allowed inner-city enrolments keep pace with the state average. It is now the circle of middle distance post-war suburbs that are under quota.

Generally the Commissioners begin drawing boundaries along the coast. Given the geography of Sydney, based on peninsulas between the Hawkesbury, Parramatta and Georges Rivers, electorates tend to expand westward. The Parramatta River has not been crossed east of Rose Hill since 1978, and the Georges River has not been crossed east of Liverpool since 1973. The Lane Cove River is currently crossed at Hunters Hill, though in the past it has also been crossed at North Ryde. Middle Harbour is currently crossed at Roseville Bridge, though in the past it has also been crossed at the Spit Bridge.

In Sutherland Shire, shortfalls in the enrolments of Cronulla and Miranda will be corrected using the surplus voters in Sutherland. On the north shore, Davidson will need to expand to increase enrolment, shifting Gordon, Ku-ring-gai and Northcott towards the Hills District. Gladesville, Eastwood and Ermington will also be shifted, though the Commissioners may have to choose between incremental change, or a major re-drawing of boundaries in the Carlingford and Epping area.

Major change will be required in the St George and Bankstown districts. If the Georges River is not to be crossed at Alford's Point Bridge, this may result in the traditional boundary of Salt Pan Creek being crossed, or East Hills being pushed into Moorebank. On past record, the Labor Party submission will attempt to maintain the current east-west orientation of safe Liberal Georges River and safe Labor Hurstville, while the Liberal Party are likely to suggest two north-south oriented marginal seats.

West of Villawood Road, change to the electoral boundaries will be massive as a consequence of changes further east. There will be major changes to areas north of the western rail line and between Liverpool and Camden. The massive over-enrolments in Badgerys Creek and Camden mean that the new electorate will bear little relationship to the currently existing boundaries.

There is also a strong connection between topography and voting patterns in Sydney. Historian Peter Spearritt has suggested Sydney's suburbs could be categorised as being in "the dress circle and the stalls", with solid Liberal voting areas in the heights of the north shore, and Labor's vote spread out on the plains below.

Traditionally it was easy to define the divide, starting in a line around Meadowbank, heading west skirting the lower Hills district and then up Old Windsor Road. While today there are Liberal voting suburbs south and west of this line, it is still an area that will attract attention for both parties. Labor will suggest boundaries locking Liberal areas into safe seats, while the Liberal Party submission is likely to try and dilute its support along this line.

Parts of outer Sydney are a mosaic of very strong Labor voting booths in public housing estates around Mount Druitt and Campbelltown, and very strong Liberal booths in more expensive housing estates and semi-rural areas. Both party's submissions will attempt to lock their opponents votes in ultra-safe seats, while ensuring an even spread of their own support.

ELECTORATE MAPS

The following maps have been prepared to show all electorates likely to be outside the permitted 3% variation from quota in April 1999. Projected enrolments are derived from the April 1999 Column in table 3.5 on pages 25-28.

KEY TO COLOUR CODING

Electorates under quota

[dark blue] Predicted enrolment more than 10% less than quota [light

blue] Predicted enrolment 3%-10% less than quota

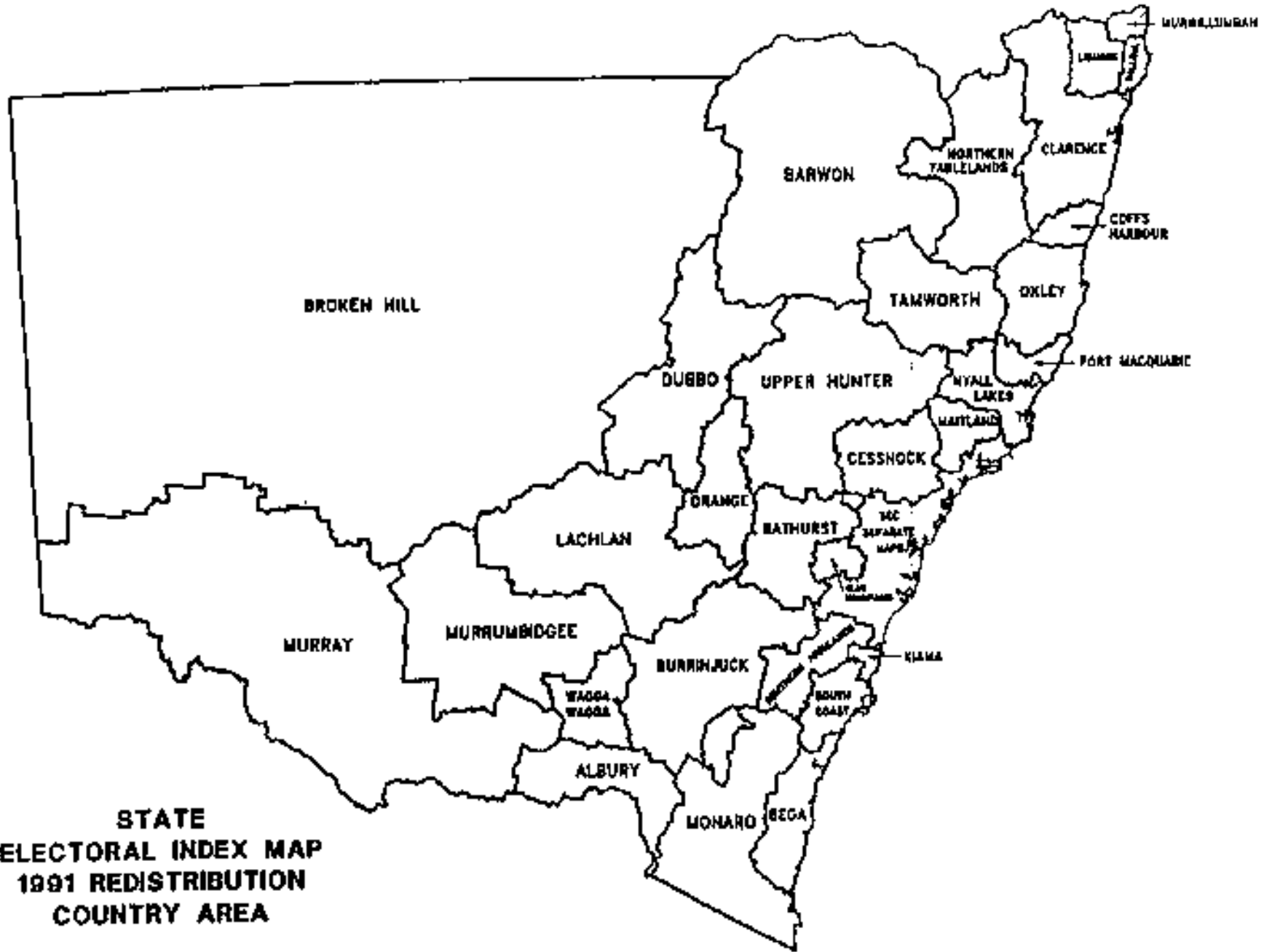
Electorates over quota

[red] Predicted enrolment more than 10% greater than quota

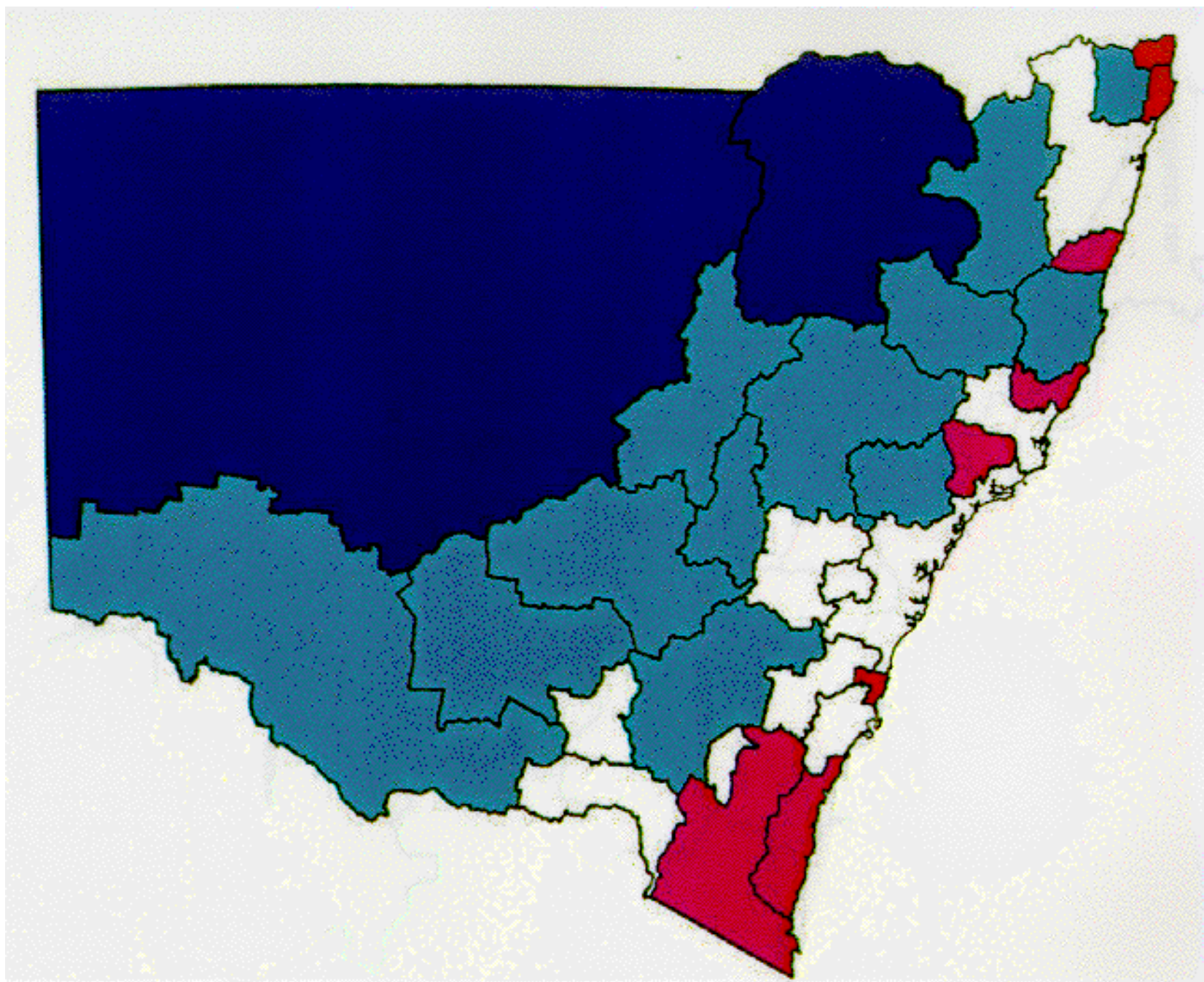
[pink] Predicted enrolment 3%-10% more than quota

Electorates not coloured are within 3% of the Predicted quota.

NOTE: Predicted enrolments are based on the authors own calculations derived from enrolment trends. The Electoral Districts Commission will issue its own estimates at the start of the redistribution.



**STATE
 ELECTORAL INDEX MAP
 1991 REDISTRIBUTION
 COUNTRY AREA**



STATE
ELECTORAL INDEX MAP
1991 REDISTRIBUTION
NEWCASTLE AND WOLLONGONG AREAS

