

## Redistribution of NSW federal electorates – an objection

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in regards to the proposed federal electoral boundaries for New South Wales at the next state election.

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed boundaries for the divisions of Cook, Hughes and Kingsford Smith. Rather than simply objecting to a particular set of boundaries, I have instead prepared an alternative set of boundaries which produce more sensible boundaries for those three divisions and also involve changes to six other divisions in the southern half of Sydney – Barton, Fowler, Grayndler, Sydney, Werriwa and Watson. This proposal would be consistent with the committee's proposal for the remaining 37 divisions.

At the end of this submission I have included maps for each proposed division, comparing my proposed boundaries to the 2022 boundaries and the original draft proposal from the redistribution committee.

I have also attached a KML file with the boundaries I propose for these nine divisions, and an Excel spreadsheet listing every SA1 in the nine proposed division, listing the division to which I have allocated each SA1.

Regards,

Ben Raue  
5 July 2024

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## Author background

I am an electoral analyst based in Sydney. I run a website called the Tally Room, as well as a podcast of the same name. Through this website, I analyse Australian elections (federal, state and local), writing seat-level guides for upcoming elections, analysing results and looking for trends in the data.

From time to time I also appear in other media publications analysing election results, including the Guardian Australia, the 7AM podcast, and many different ABC outlets.

I have written chapters on the results in the House of Representatives for three successive academic publications analysing Australian federal elections: *Double Disillusion*, *Morrison's Miracle* and *Watershed*.

I have written this submission in a private capacity. I am not a member of any political party.

## Reasons for objections

While I regularly analyse the prospects for upcoming redistributions and the implications of proposed and final boundaries, I have never previously made a submission about specific electoral boundaries in a personal capacity.

I was primarily motivated to make a submission here due to my disagreement with the proposed boundaries for the divisions of Kingsford Smith and Hughes.

In both cases, the electorates has been drawn in a way that combines two unrelated areas by crossing an area that contains no residential population. These changes are unnecessary, and there are better ways to manage the population shortfalls in these divisions.

In the case of Kingsford Smith, the inclusion of a thin strip of suburbs in the Rockdale area, separated from the majority of the electorate from the airport, completely fails to represent communities of interest.

In the case of Hughes, suburbs at the northern end of the City of Campbelltown have been included in a division primarily consisting of parts of the Sutherland Shire, while also covering some, but not all, of the suburbs of the City of Liverpool on the south side of the Georges River. The three areas surround the Holsworthy army barracks, and have limited transportation links.

In the process of preparing boundaries that would fix these problems, it also became possible to keep the division of Cook entirely on the south side of the Georges River. The committee's proposed boundaries for Cook would have only left it with a small beachhead on the northern side of the river, and left those voters with sub-par representation in a seat that is almost entirely based in the Sutherland Shire.

In the pursuit of divisions with a roughly equal number of electors, it is usually necessary for some divisions to be made up of different communities with a limited connection. But where

this happens, the relative proportions of these different communities can make a big difference to how the voters experience representation.

Where one community only takes in a very small share of an electorate, they can be easily ignored, but when the two are relatively similar in scale.

As an example, the division of Macquarie consists of two distinct communities: the Hawkesbury region and the Blue Mountains. The Hawkesbury region makes up 45.6% of the total enrolment, while the Mountains make up the remaining 54.4%. No local member will be focusing their efforts entirely on one of those two communities.

The existing division of Cook does this much more poorly. One quarter of enrolment is north of the Georges River in the St George district, with the remaining three quarters in the Sutherland Shire. The committee's proposed changes worsens this imbalance, with 91% of voters south of the river.

*Table 1: Share of enrolled voters on either side of the Georges River in the Division of Cook.*

	<b>2022 boundaries</b>	<b>Draft boundaries</b>
Sutherland	75.0%	91.0%
St George	25.0%	9.0%

The proposed boundaries for Kingsford Smith replicate this imbalance. Those suburbs in the former Rockdale area make up 9.7% of enrolment, with nine in ten voters in a coherent area to the north-east of the airport.

It is true that these new areas share a local government area with parts of the existing division of Kingsford Smith (Bayside Council), but this council is a new creation, and has been quite controversial locally. I don't think this justifies the inclusion of areas that are only connected via an airport.

In the case of the division of Hughes, this electorate has been split between Liverpool-area suburbs and Sutherland-area suburbs. Hughes has covered western parts of the Sutherland Shire and some or all parts of the City of Liverpool to the south of the Georges River since 1977. Hughes also covered south-western parts of the City of Bankstown from 2009 to 2016, and covered the Liverpool CBD from 2006 to 2009, but those core areas have been generally consistent.

Instead the committee has proposed adding suburbs in the north of the City of Campbelltown, specifically Glenfield, Macquarie Fields and Ingleburn. These areas have limited direct transport connections to Holsworthy, Wattle Grove and Moorebank in the south-east of the City of Liverpool. Indeed these Campbelltown suburbs lie directly across the Georges River from the unpopulated parts of the Holsworthy army barracks.

Voters in the Sutherland Shire make up about 80% of the roll in the existing division of Hughes. The committee's draft would leave Sutherland making up just under 3 in 5 voters in the electorate, with the remainder split roughly equal between the City of Liverpool and the City of Campbelltown.

*Table 2: Share of enrolled voters in distinct communities in the Division of Hughes on various boundaries.*

	<b>2022 boundaries</b>	<b>Draft boundaries</b>	<b>BR proposal</b>
Sutherland	80.3%	57.5%	48.8%
Liverpool south of river	19.7%	18.9%	24.1%
Liverpool north of river			19.2%
Bankstown			7.9%
Campbelltown		23.6%	

My proposal, which I will explain more clearly in the next section, would instead create a division of Hughes split into two distinct areas. The Sutherland Shire would make up almost half of the roll, while the remainder would be split between three areas close together, with stronger transport links, albeit divided twice by the Georges River.

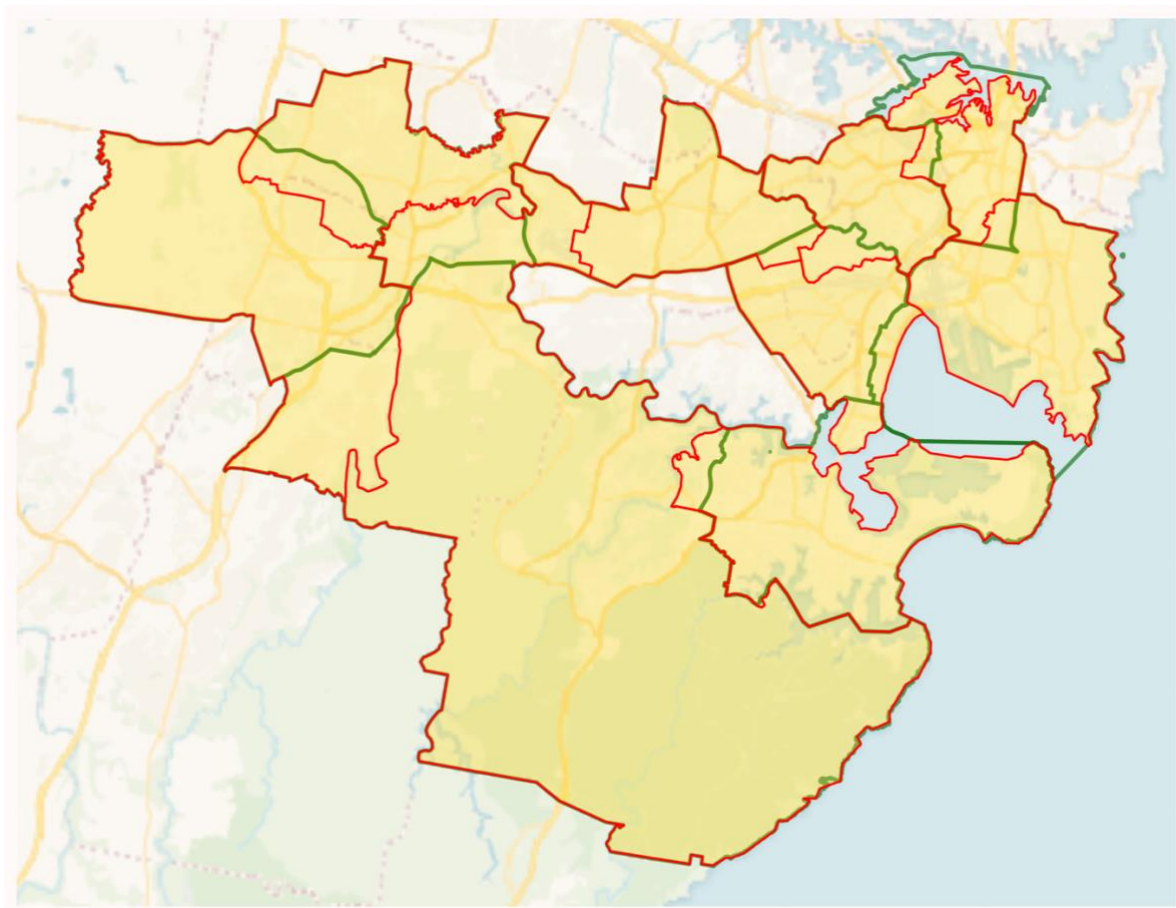
In addition to objecting to some specific boundaries, I object more generally to the committee overly valuing existing boundaries and minimising the number of electors moved between electorates. This has forced some unusual decisions to allow neighbouring seats to be moved less than would otherwise be necessary.

In the case of Kingsford Smith, the extension of the division south of the airport minimises how much the divisions of Sydney and Grayndler need to move. I don't agree with that approach.

Across the whole state, the committee's proposal moved 12.8% of electors to a new seat. My proposal increases that figure to 14.5%. In the nine affected seats, the proportion moved increases from 18.0% to 26.9%. I think this is quite reasonable and produces electorates that are more coherent and easier to represent.

## Details of alternative proposal

My proposal involves changing the boundaries of nine divisions, and otherwise leaves the boundaries of the other 36 divisions the same as in the original committee draft. I make no changes to division names, and I don't make any change to the north shore, where the division of North Sydney was abolished.



*Boundaries proposed by the redistribution committee in green, boundaries proposed by myself in red.*

### Kingsford Smith

We commence with the division of Kingsford Smith. I returned Brighton-Le-Sands, Kyeemagh and Monterey to Barton. Instead, Kingsford Smith expands north-west to take in Beaconsfield, Rosebery and Zetland in the south-eastern corner of the City of Sydney from division of Sydney.

No changes are proposed for the division of Wentworth. By expanding Kingsford Smith into Sydney, you can avoid Wentworth impinging further into the Sydney CBD.

There are much stronger connections between the southern end of the City of Sydney and the former Botany Bay council area than there are between the two halves of the new Bayside local government area. These areas have been unified in the state electoral district of Heffron for a number of decades. This proposed boundary resembles the Kingsford Smith

used in 2007, when Rosebery was included in a division covering parts of the Randwick and (then) Botany Bay council areas.

## Sydney

These changes then leave Sydney under quota, but it is easy to bring it up to quota by expanding Sydney further into the northern end of the inner west. The committee's draft added to the Balmain peninsula to the division of Sydney, but the peninsula was not connected to the main bulk of Sydney by land.

I propose expanding Sydney by taking in Annandale and Stanmore from Grayndler.

This boundary resembles the former boundaries of Sydney. The division of Sydney consistently included most of the current City of Sydney along with the Balmain peninsula from 1992 until 2016, and throughout this time the northern half of Annandale was always included. The southern half of Annandale was also included from 2006 to 2016.

## Grayndler

I have maintained most of the boundaries of Grayndler as in the committee's draft, with Grayndler taking in the suburbs on the north shore of the Cooks River from Croydon Park to Tempe added from Barton and Watson.

To compensate for the population lost in Annandale and Stanmore, I propose Grayndler expands over the Cooks River to take in Earlwood from Barton.

## Barton

Barton becomes an electorate almost entirely contained in the St George district, covering the entire former Rockdale council area, with Kingsford Smith and Cook leaving the area. I propose no changes to the division of Banks, so the border between Banks and Barton remains the same in my proposal as in the committee's draft.

## Cook

Cook takes on much clearer boundaries, losing Sans Souci to Barton, in addition to the other suburbs lost to Barton, Kingsford Smith and Banks in the committee's draft. My proposal then expands Cook further west in addition to the changes made in the committee's draft, taking in the remainder of Como and Jannali, all of Bonnett Bay and parts of Sutherland and Woronora.

## Hughes

The 2022 version of Hughes was very much dominated by Sutherland Shire suburbs, with over 80% of electors in the Shire. The committee's draft already started push Hughes into other areas, but my proposal turns the electorate into a seat made up of two coherent parts, each making up about half of the roll.

The western suburbs of the Sutherland Shire make up about half of enrolment, while the rest is made up of those parts of the City of Liverpool south of the Georges River, the Liverpool central business district, and a part of the City of Canterbury-Bankstown right across the river from those Liverpool suburbs: Georges Hall, part of Bass Hill and Bankstown Airport. While these areas are divided by the river, they have strong connections and are in close proximity, unlike the parts of northern Campbelltown added to Hughes in the committee's draft.

## Watson

My proposal pulls Watson slightly back towards the east, expanding south of Canterbury Road to gain Clemton Park and parts of Campsie, Canterbury and Belmore. This transferred area was split between Barton and Watson on the 2022 boundaries, and had been entirely contained in Barton in the committee's original draft.

At the western end, I shifted Georges Hall, Bankstown Airport and part of Bass Hill to Hughes. This area had been part of Blaxland in 2022, but had been moved to Watson in the committee's draft.

These changes actually mean that a smaller share of Watson's electors would be new to the electorate on my proposal, even though I have generally been comfortable moving more electors.

## Fowler

Fowler was left largely untouched by the committee's draft, just gaining the remainder of Bossley Park and part of Wetherill Park from McMahon on the northern edge. While that is an admirable goal, I don't think it justifies the unusual changes to Hughes, and it makes more sense to make greater changes to Fowler which allow the necessary population shifts to move through the seat without losing the identity of the division.

Fowler loses the Liverpool central business district, Chipping Norton and Warwick Farm to Hughes, and replenishes its quota by suburbs in the cities of Liverpool and Fairfield on the south-western fringe of the division, including Ashcroft, Bonnyrigg Heights, Busby, Heckenberg and Sadleir and parts of Bonnyrigg, Cecil Hills, Green Valley and Mount Pritchard.

## Werriwa

The committee's draft proposal saw Werriwa contract at its western and southern edges, but otherwise maintain its boundaries.

My proposal instead sees some of those southern areas stay in the electorate, and areas further south around Ingleburn are also added to Werriwa. Ingleburn was consistently part of Werriwa from 1977 until 2016, often right in the centre of the seat.



To make up for taking in those southern areas that were included in Hughes in the committee's draft, a strip of suburbs along the northern fringe were moved into Fowler.

## Appendix 1: Enrolment statistics

*Table 3: Enrolment summary for proposed electoral divisions*

Proposed division	Enrolment as at 9 August 2023		Projected enrolment as at 10 April 2028		Projected growth
	Number	Percentage variation from quota	Number	Percentage variation from quota	
Barton	119,467	-1.28%	131,295	1.29%	9.90%
Cook	113,986	-5.81%	128,848	-0.60%	13.04%
Fowler	116,823	-3.46%	132,842	2.48%	13.71%
Grayndler	125,350	3.59%	130,183	0.43%	3.86%
Hughes	115,618	-4.46%	127,208	-1.86%	10.02%
Kingsford Smith	118,897	-1.75%	125,361	-3.29%	5.44%
Sydney	129,303	6.85%	126,425	-2.47%	-2.23%
Watson	113,980	-5.81%	127,671	-1.50%	12.01%
Werriwa	109,110	-9.83%	133,983	3.37%	22.80%

*Table 4: Proportion of electors new to each proposed division*

Proposed division	Committee draft boundaries		Raue proposed boundaries		Change
	New electors	Proportion of total roll	New electors	Proportion of total roll	
Barton	25,748	21.50%	39,211	32.82%	11.32%
Cook	22,000	18.96%	30,415	26.68%	7.73%
Fowler	4,655	3.98%	33,176	28.40%	24.42%
Grayndler	34,413	27.93%	47,950	38.25%	10.33%
Hughes	26,600	23.60%	37,923	32.80%	9.20%
Kingsford Smith	11,415	9.66%	12,099	10.18%	0.52%
Sydney	22,259	17.12%	33,679	26.05%	8.92%
Watson	44,267	38.67%	41,882	36.75%	-1.92%
Werriwa	0	0.00%	9,895	9.07%	9.07%
<i>New South Wales</i>	712,851	12.81%	807,724	14.51%	1.70%

*Table 5: Areas transferred between redistribution committee proposal and Raue proposal*

<b>Committee proposed division</b>	<b>Raue proposed division</b>	<b>Enrolment, 2023</b>	<b>Projected enrolment, 2028</b>
Barton	Grayndler	13,537	15,009
Barton	Watson	8,658	9,064
Cook	Barton	10,488	11,797
Fowler	Hughes	28,767	31,902
Grayndler	Sydney	11,420	11,267
Hughes	Cook	8,415	9,483
Hughes	Werriwa	26,600	33,411
Kingsford Smith	Barton	11,415	13,076
Sydney	Kingsford Smith	12,099	13,175
Watson	Hughes	9,156	9,919
Werriwa	Fowler	28,521	31,800

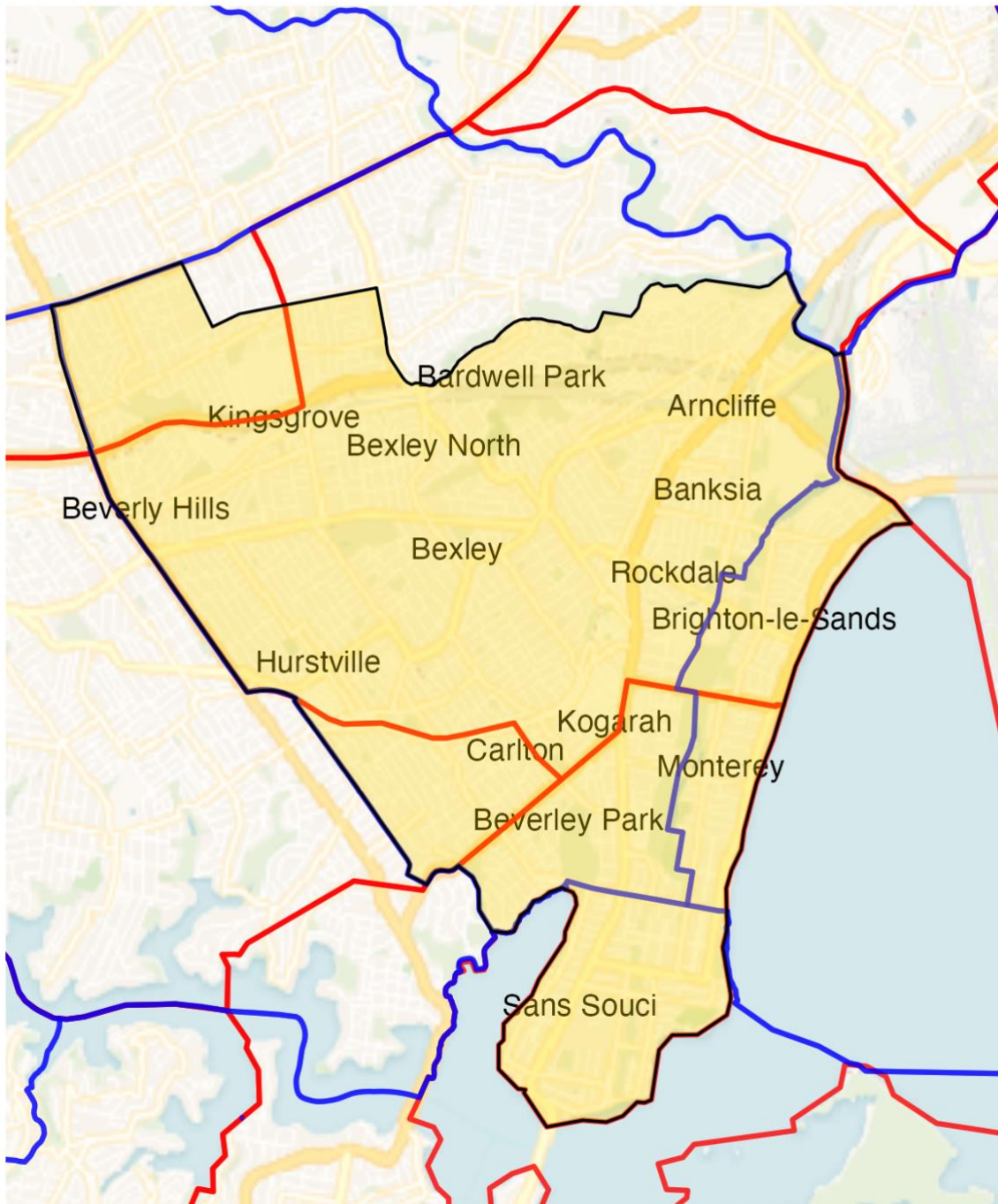
*Table 6: Numbers of electors moved between redistribution committee proposal and Raue proposal*

<b>Proposed division</b>	<b>Enrolment, 2023</b>			<b>Projected enrolment, 2028</b>		
	<b>Added</b>	<b>Removed</b>	<b>Changed</b>	<b>Added</b>	<b>Removed</b>	<b>Changed</b>
Barton	21,903	22,195	-292	24,873	24,073	800
Cook	8,415	10,488	-2,073	9,483	11,797	-2,314
Fowler	28,521	28,767	-246	31,800	31,902	-102
Grayndler	13,537	11,420	2,117	15,009	11,267	3,742
Hughes	37,923	35,015	2,908	41,821	42,894	-1,073
Kingsford Smith	12,099	11,415	684	13,175	13,076	99
Sydney	11,420	12,099	-679	11,267	13,175	-1,908
Watson	8,658	9,156	-498	9,064	9,919	-855
Werriwa	26,600	28,521	-1,921	33,411	31,800	1,611

# Barton

Enrolment (2023): 119,467 (-1.3%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 131,295 (1.3%)

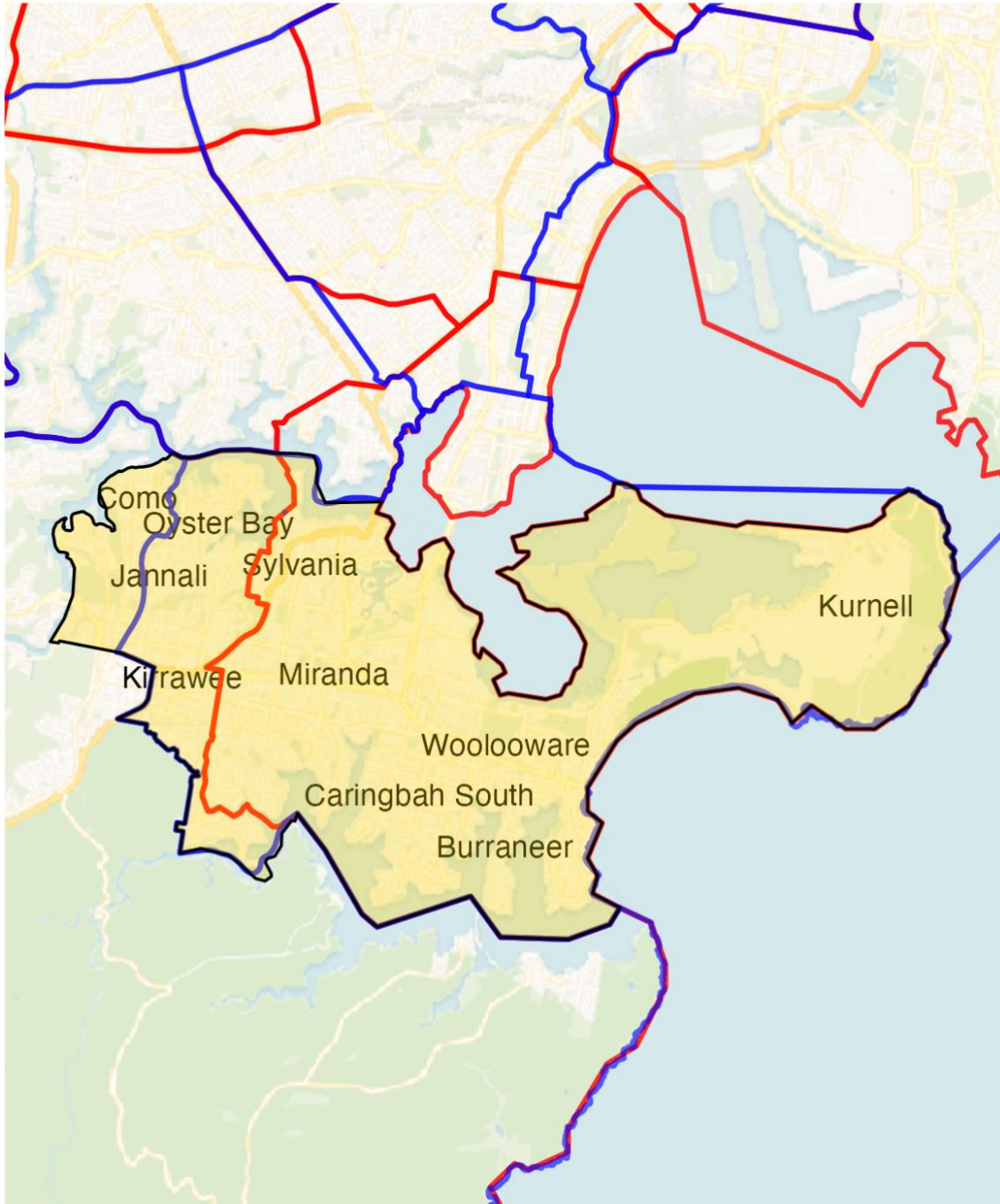


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Cook

Enrolment (2023): 113,986 (-5.8%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 128,848 (-0.6%)

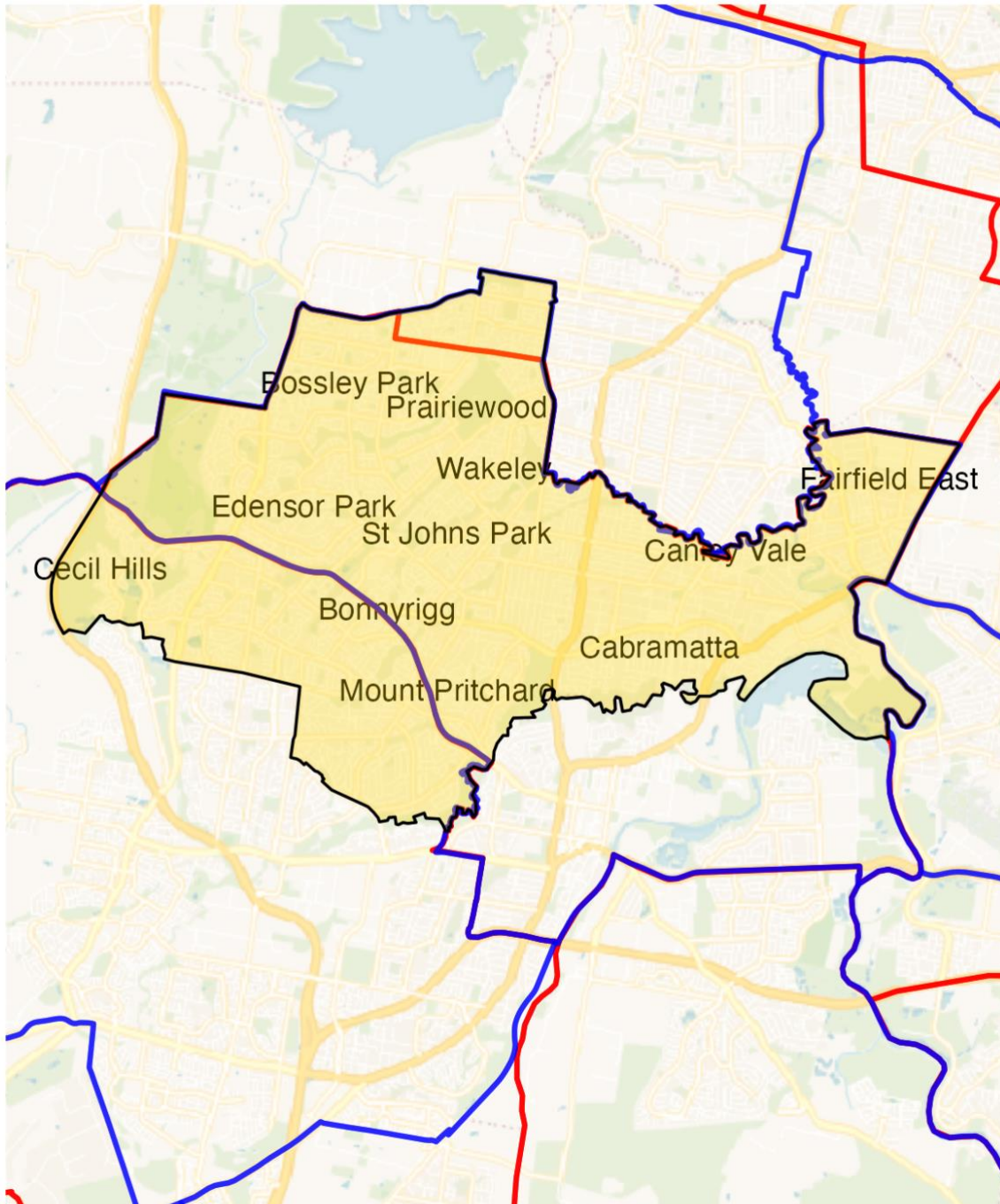


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Fowler

Enrolment (2023): 116,823 (-3.5%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 132,842 (2.5%)

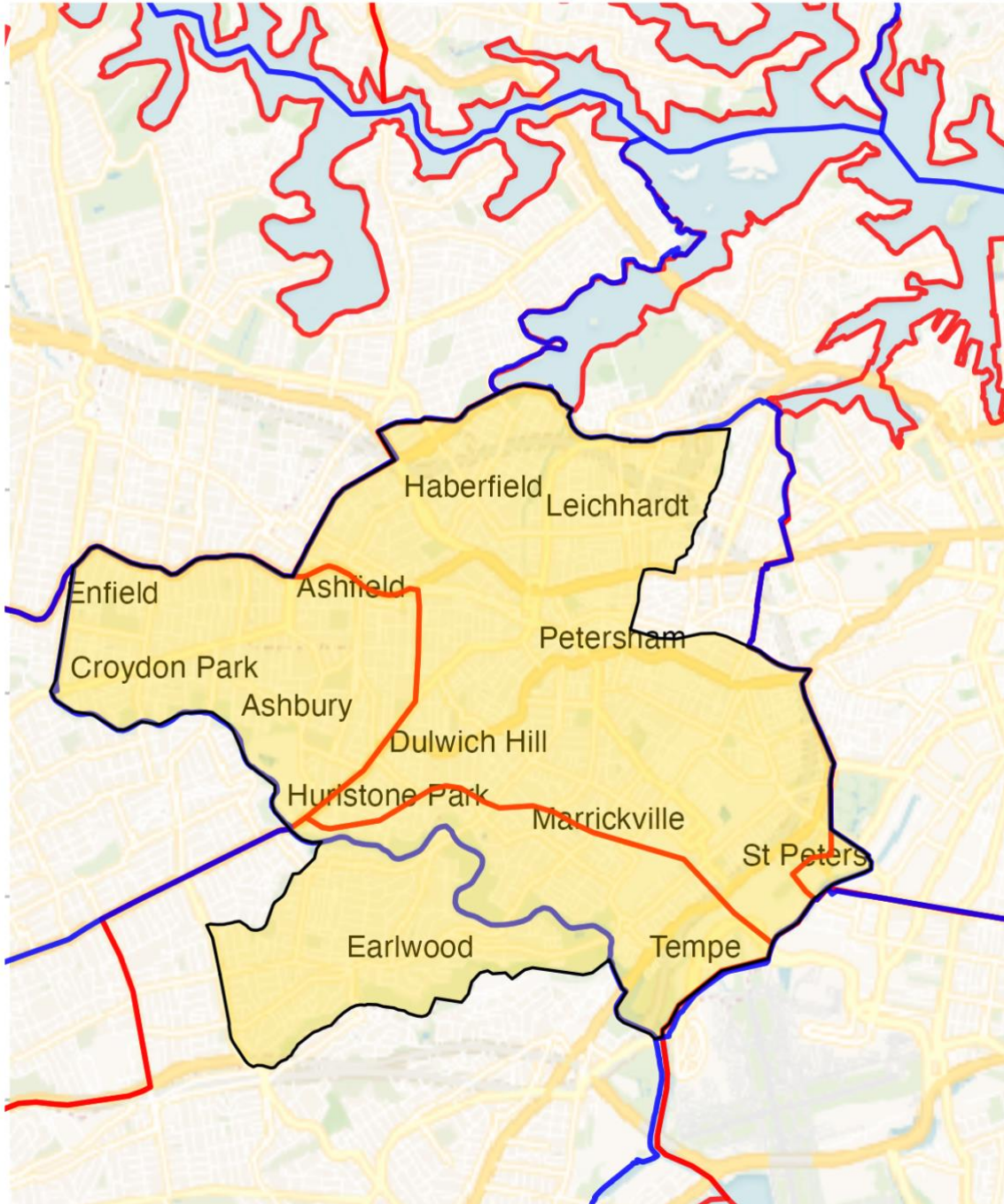


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Grayndler

Enrolment (2023): 125,350 (3.6%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 130,183 (0.4%)

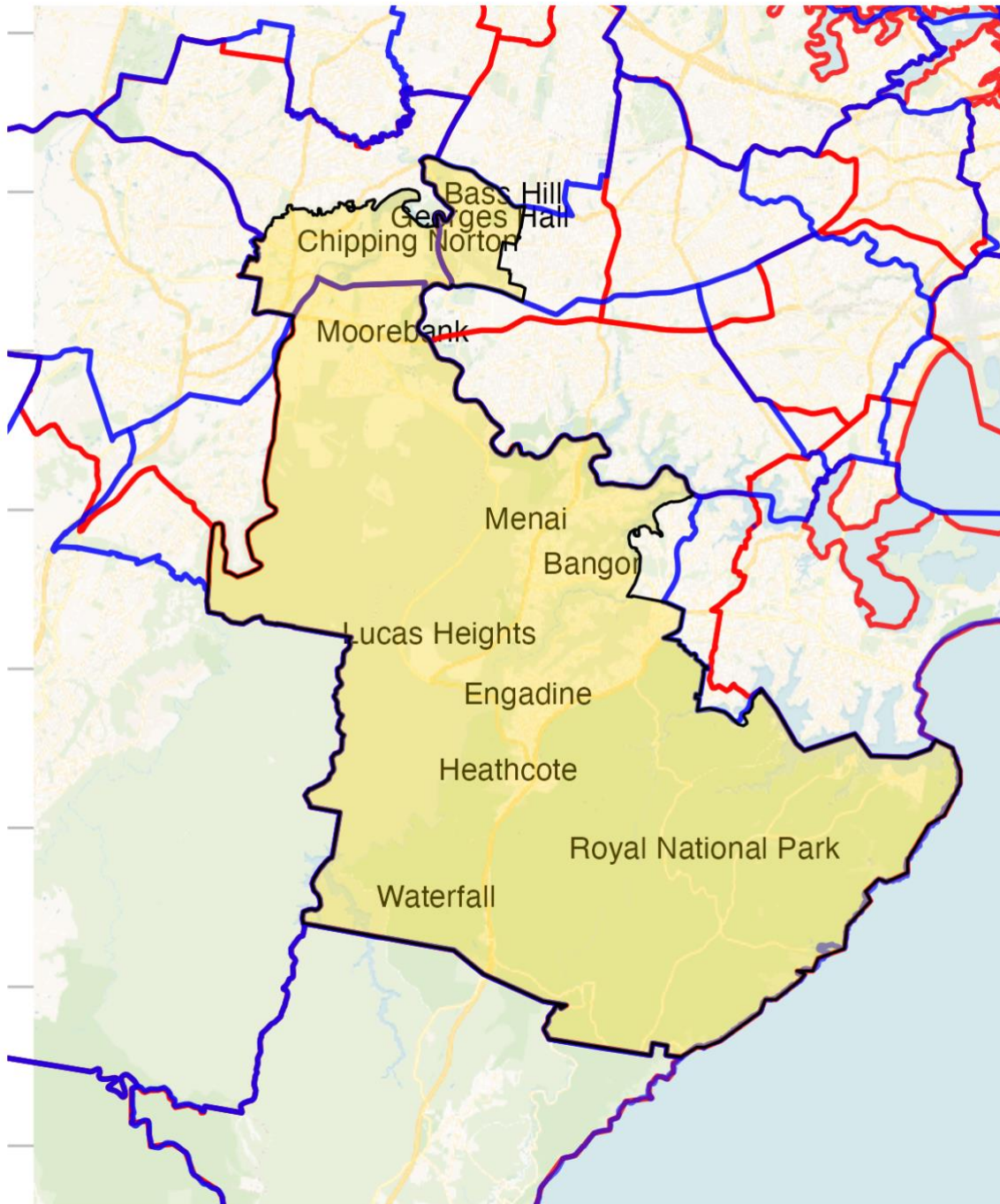


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Hughes

Enrolment (2023): 115,618 (-4.5%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 127,208 (-1.9%)

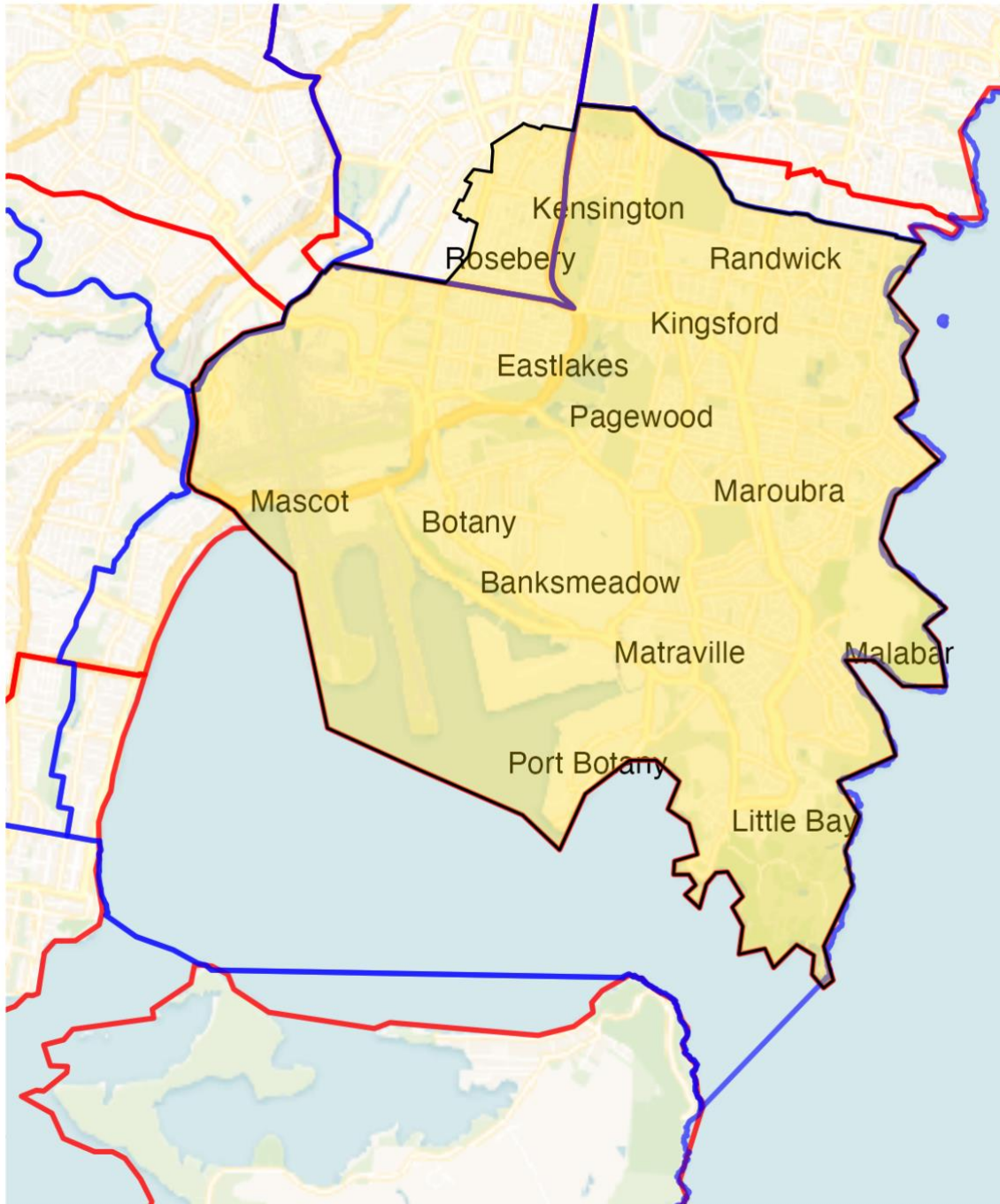


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Kingsford Smith

Enrolment (2023): 118,897 (-1.7%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 125,361 (-3.3%)



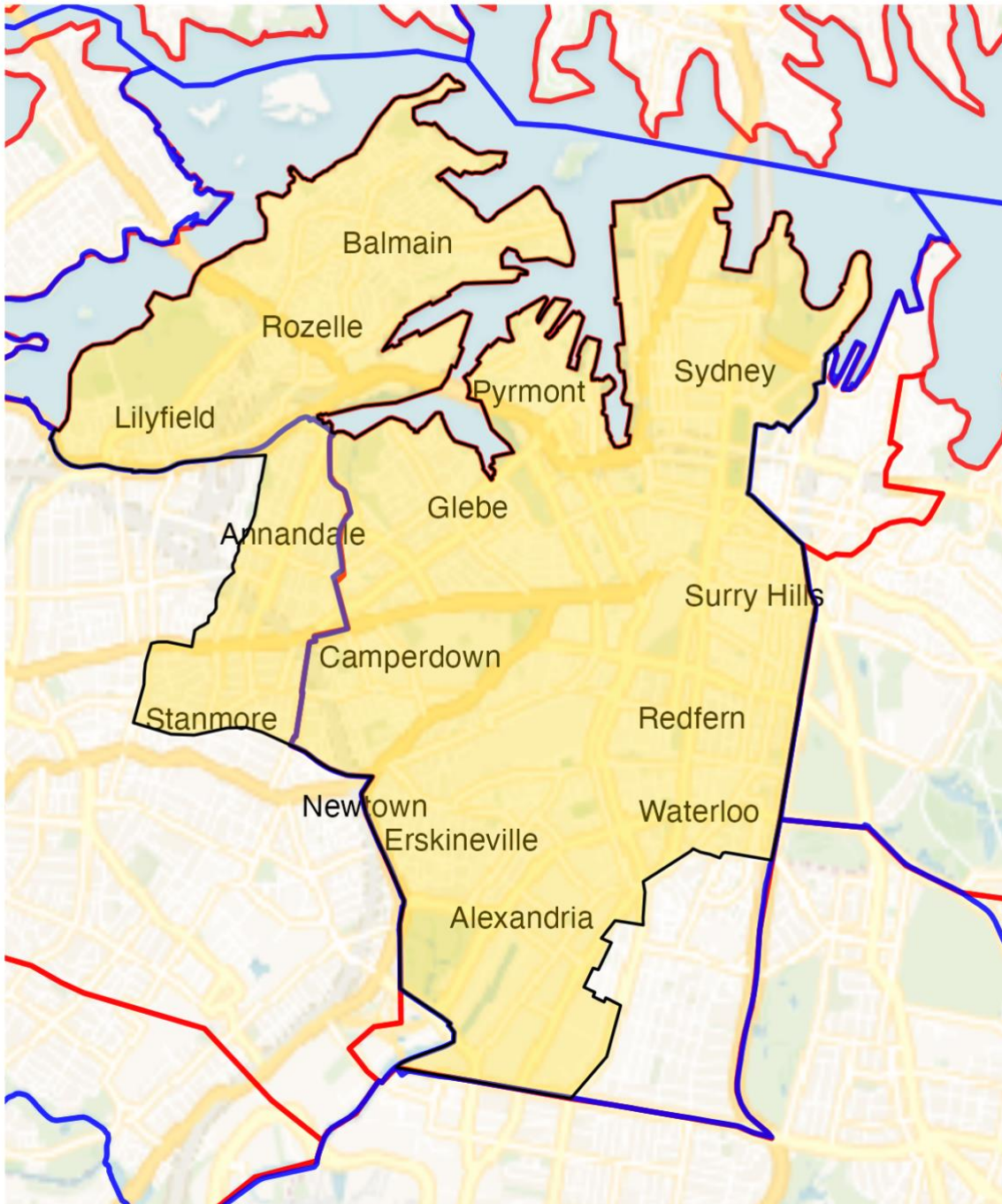
*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*



# Sydney

Enrolment (2023): 129,303 (6.9%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 126,425 (-2.5%)

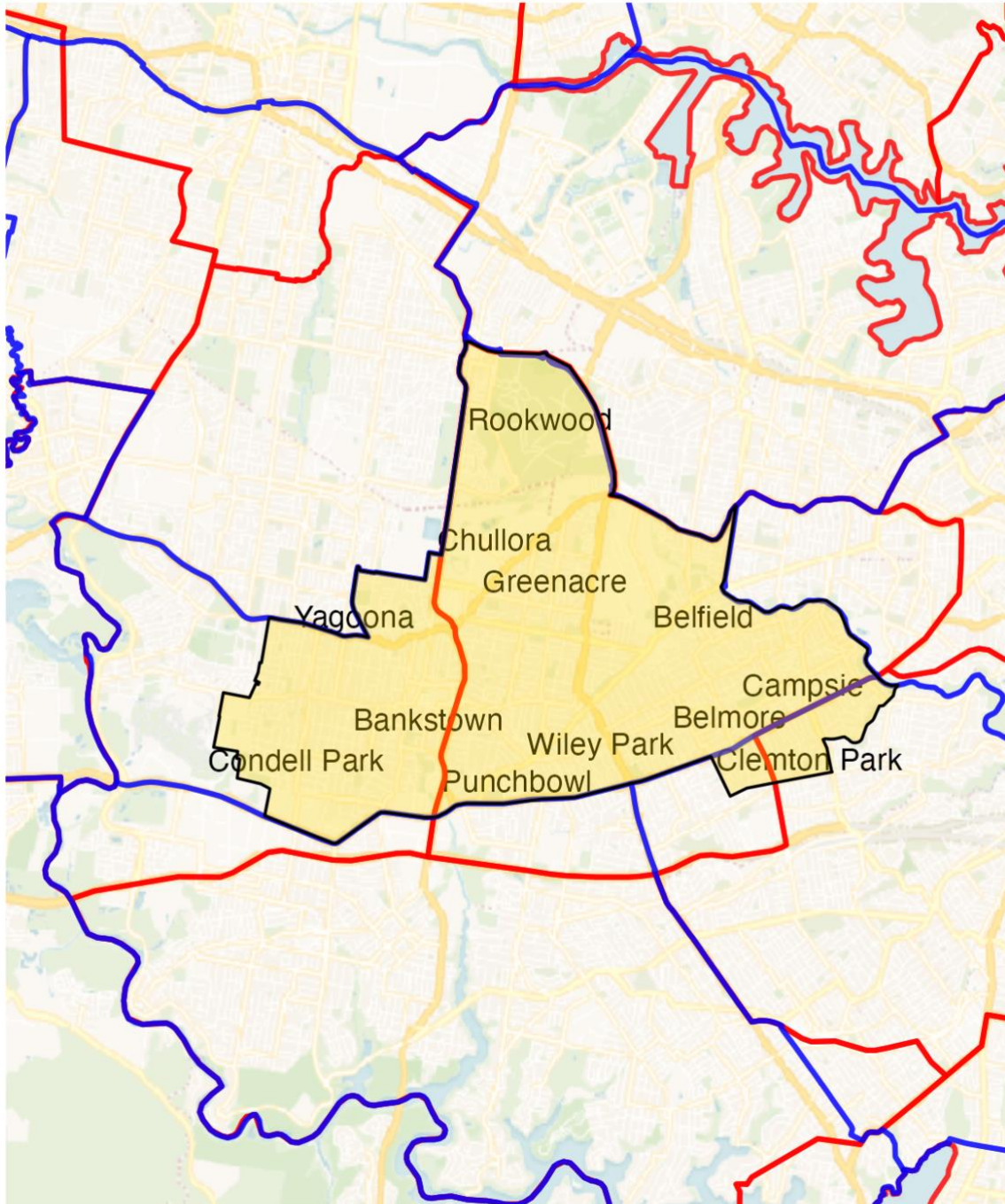


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Watson

Enrolment (2023): 113,980 (-5.8%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 127,671 (-1.5%)

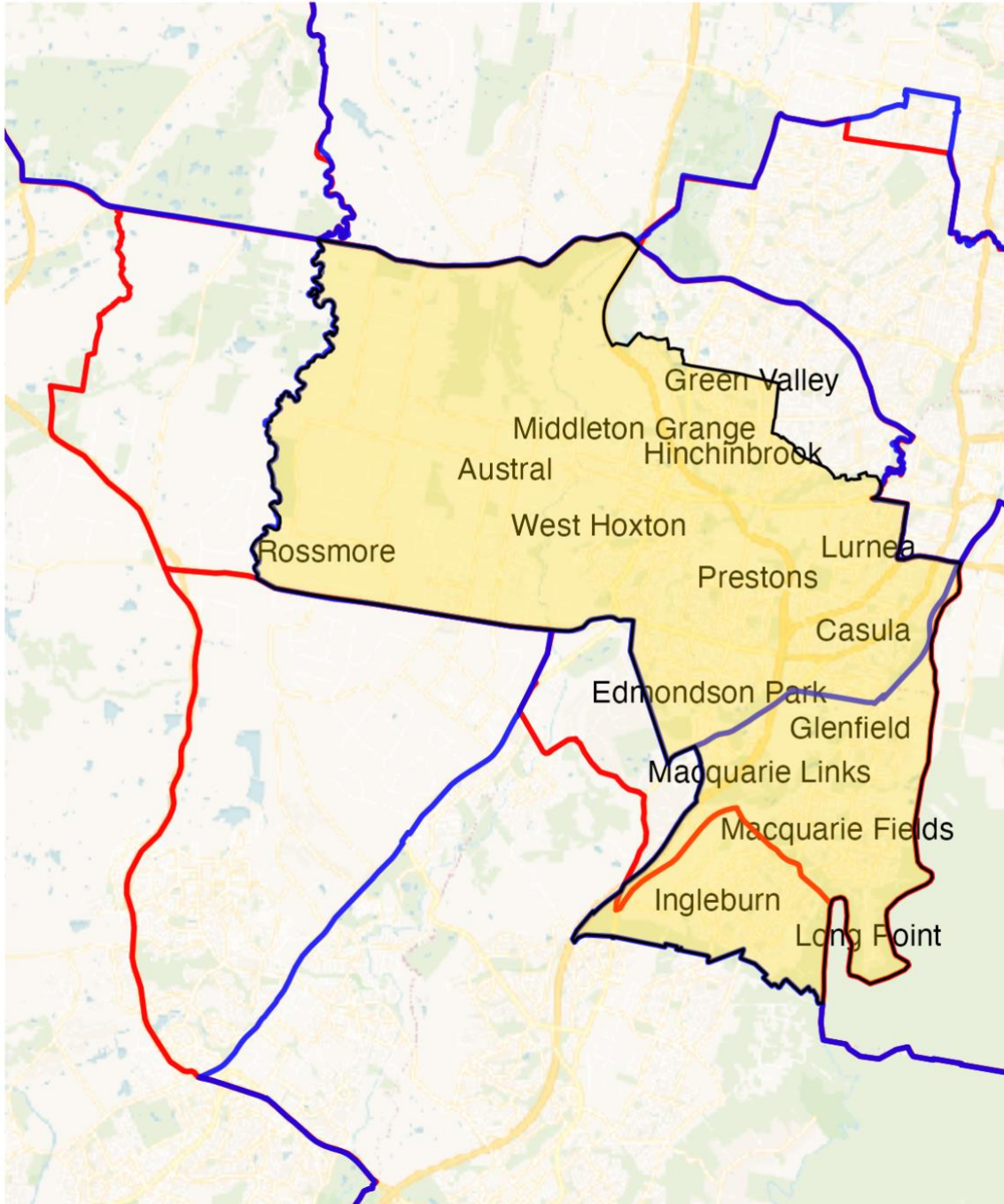


*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*

# Werriwa

Enrolment (2023): 109,110 (-9.8%)

Projected enrolment (2028): 133,983 (3.4%)



*Raue proposal marked in gold. 2022 boundaries marked in red, committee proposal marked in blue.*