

## **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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**THE HONOURABLE JAMES BURCHETT QC  
MR IAN CAMPBELL  
MR DAVID FARRELL  
MR WARWICK WATKINS  
MR BOB SENDT**

**PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE PROPOSED  
REDISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

**80 WILLIAM STREET, SYDNEY**

**9.07A.M., THURSDAY, 24 AUGUST 2006**

**Hearing continuing**

PN1

MR BURCHETT: Before we commence, I think I should make a brief explanation partly directed to the way we will proceed, which everyone will need to know, and partly directed to anyone who is not an expert or not fully aware of the details of electoral administration in Australia. Under the Commonwealth electoral law, there is an electoral commissioner who is Mr Ian Campbell, on my right, to administer the department dealing with electoral matters. There is also an Electoral Commission to determine electoral questions, and to do so at an independent level, holding the scales evenly.

PN2

It consists of three members; one, a chairperson who must be a Federal Court judge or former judge of that court chosen from three persons nominated by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. I am presently the chairperson and my name is James Burchett. The electoral commissioner is also a member of the Electoral Commission. The third member is presently the Australian Statistician, Mr Dennis Trewin. He unfortunately cannot be here in person because of illness, but he is listening in on the telephone so he is really taking part in this meeting. When a redistribution is required in any state, as it is now in New South Wales because population statistics demand there be one less division in this state than before, while Queensland has gained one, the legislation provides for a committee to work out a proposal.

PN3

The committee consists of the Electoral Commissioner, the Chief Commonwealth Electoral officer for the state, Mr David Farrell who is second on my right, and two New South Wales officials, Mr Warwick Watkins, the Surveyor General, who is on my left, and Mr Bob Sendt, the Auditor General, further to my left. What has happened so far is that the committee has made a proposal, which selects, for reasons the committee explains, the seat of Gwydir is the one to be abolished to make way for the reduction of one that is required. It makes a number of consequential and other changes, which it seems to be required by population movements. The procedure allows people and organisations to object, and many have as most of you know. The legislation then provides that the objections must be considered by a body called the augmented Electoral Commission.

PN4

The augmented Commission consists of course, first of all, of the three members of the Australian Electoral Commission, and they are augmented by the other persons who are on the committee. We are empowered to hold an inquiry, and that is happening today. There is limited time, not from our choice, but the Act lays down a strict timetable, which must be adhered to. The augmented Commission - am I not being heard clearly at the back? I'm sorry about that. Does this amplify at all?

PN5

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

PN6

MR BURCHETT: I assumed it was amplifying. Only for recording, is it? I was saying that there is limited time for the inquiry, not of our choice, but by reason that the Act lays down a strict timetable. The augmented Commission has been

studying the written objections and comments that have been received, but some 18 people have accepted the opportunity to address us on the problems that they have, in most cases, already raised by objection. Not all will, I expect, be covering every issue. Thank you. Probably you can hear us more easily, Dennis, than some of the people in the room.

PN7

MR TREWIN: I can certainly hear you, Jim.

PN8

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN9

MR BALDWIN: Chairman and Commissioners, my name is Robert Charles Baldwin, I am the Member for Paterson. Today I wish to discuss the electorate of Paterson and I suppose by way of inclusion, my adjoining seats of the seat of Hunter and the seat of Newcastle. When I originally read the proposed amendments, and there was a statement in that proposal by the Commission in dividing up the boundaries, that Raymond Terrace had a community of interest with Newcastle. I would submit to you respectfully that there is very little connection between the township of Raymond Terrace in the Port Stephens Local Government Area, and indeed that of Newcastle.

PN10

First and foremost and by way of submission, I have here for you for later perusal a series of maps that show the major roads in my electorate and the major towns in my electorate and I quite simply went to a website called Whereis run by Telstra's subsidiary. I would type in a township such as Hawks Nest through to Newcastle, and the route that it gives is down Pacific Highway right through Raymond Terrace and then down through Tomago and out to Newcastle. If I type Gloucester, it's the same thing; it comes down Bucketts Way through the township of Stroud, out onto the Pacific Highway, but importantly, through Raymond Terrace on the way to Newcastle. If I typed in Dungog, these maps show that it comes down Seaham Road, right through the township of Raymond Terrace and then through to Newcastle.

PN11

Indeed, pretty much every town including ..... shows a trafficable route through the township of Raymond Terrace. I would respectfully submit to you that the township of Raymond Terrace, being one of the largest population districts in my current electorate, is actually the central hub. Even though it's geographically located right down in the southern end of the electorate, it's the geographical hub for transportation through my electorate. In servicing the communities, whether the people are coming through Nelson Bay, the transport facilities that are provided, and I would remind the Commission that there is no public transport, no state-owned public transport, in the electorate of Paterson save for parts of the far western side, which are in the Maitland LGA, or indeed, the soon to be removed areas of the Newcastle LGA of Tarro and Beresfield where you have a train line, the reality is that through Port Stephens in particular, there is no state-owned public transport system.

PN12

Indeed, it's all private coaches. Can I also respectfully put to the Commission that the transport links, to go to Newcastle, all hub through Raymond Terrace. If you want to go via bus from any of those areas to visit anywhere in Newcastle, you actually use an interchange at Raymond Terrace. I would also put to you that this is not about a voting benefit to me, as indeed the boundaries as put forward by you as against the boundary submission put forward by the Liberal Party actually changes the net effect of a two-party preferred vote by around 0.2, 0.3 per cent. So this is not a plea to you to protect the patch based on personal interest or vote. Later on today, you'll hear from the Mayor of Port Stephens Local Government Area and he will put the argument which I support that Port Stephens LGA should remain as one consistent body.

PN13

There are difficulties at the moment in that the state electorate of Port Stephens and Maitland divide Raymond Terrace into two, and it makes it very difficult for a local government to work with two bodies, let alone with one body. In fact, let alone two individual Members in pursuing objectives for their communities. Can I also put to you that outlying from Raymond Terrace is also Williamtown RAAF Base. Williamtown RAAF Base is a major issue in the electorate of Paterson. Indeed, the aircraft noise that emanates from Paterson affects many of the areas through Medowie, through Tanilba Bay, up through to Nerong and Stroud. By separating Williamtown RAAF Base and Raymond Terrace from Paterson into Newcastle, then you will have two people dealing with the issue of aircraft noise.

PN14

There has been established a consultative committee at Williamtown to address aircraft noise and this is made up of state government, federal government agencies, local government and the whole idea is to bring the community of interest together surrounding aircraft noise generated by Williamtown RAAF Base under one banner so that problems can be addressed by the community as a whole. In separating Raymond Terrace, Williamtown, from the electorate of Paterson, we then divide the issues. We divide the communities of interest and we make it much harder for any elected representative to be a representative of an issue on the whole or a community on the whole, rather than be split in two.

PN15

Can I also respectfully put to you that in the separation of Raymond Terrace out of Paterson into Newcastle, there is postcode 2324, which is the postcode for Raymond Terrace, and indeed, it's also the postcode for Karuah. Karuah will be excised from the Raymond Terrace area by the division lines submitted by you. But to let you understand the community of interest in that, the federal government proposed and has delivered a program called Communities for Children. It's a some \$2m program based on the children of the postcode 2324, the 0 to 5 year olds. That program has been equally rolled out by the federal government with the support of local and state government agencies for the children of the postcode 2324.

PN16

So by having an imaginary line, which divides Paterson and Newcastle, splits Raymond Terrace and Karuah, we're now splitting the effort between that interest. So what I'm trying to demonstrate to you is the communities of interest between

Raymond Terrace, the Williamstown area, the industrial hubs through Tomago and Heatherbrae to the whole of the Port Stephens LGA and then as a part of a link back through to the entire current Paterson region. I'd also put to you that areas like Seaham, Clarence Town Road, are an integral part of the Port Stephens LGA, and the council chambers will now be removed under the seat of Paterson from that area. Indeed, the federal government has just committed some \$8m road funding in a joint funding project between Dungog Council and Port Stephens LGA.

PN17

It's the road that meets Raymond Terrace, through Seaham, through Clarence Town, up through to Dungog, because that's seen as the main traffic route where people go to do their business. There are very strong communities of interest there. The children from Seaham and areas around there actually attend Raymond Terrace High School. The sports school carnivals are in Raymond Terrace. They're not the Raymond Terrace children going down to Newcastle or to Windale to compete in regional sporting finals, they're all at Raymond Terrace and I would say to you respectfully that Raymond Terrace is a key part of the seat of Paterson. It is actually the hub. That's where most of the doctors, medical facilities, X-ray facilities, pathology facilities, it's where defence housing is which services the needs of people who are living as far out as Salamander, across through to Thornton and up through Seaham, Clarence Town.

PN18

Indeed, all over the area is based at Raymond Terrace. The other aspect of our submission is an example that Raymond Terrace Christian Life Centre, which is based at Raymond Terrace, has its outreach at Karuah, second part of the church, but importantly, sees the link so close that they established a \$1m centre up at Dungog called Lowther Park, because they see the community of Dungog basically linked to the community of Raymond Terrace, and of course the community of Karuah. Our Aboriginal Land Council doesn't see the dividing lines that we see, and these were probably established a long time before electoral commissions were here, indeed we were here, as they look at their traditional boundaries and the Worimi people who run the entire area from Fern Bay through Raymond Terrace, out through to Port Stephens and up to Hawks Nest, are one community.

PN19

One set of elders running one community, so what we would do here is we would split that community in half in their elected representation. Touching briefly, and I know that time is against us, on the proposed boundary by the Liberal Party in relation to Maitland. At current in the seat of Paterson, there is the whole of the Great Lakes LGA, the whole of Gloucester, the whole of Dungog, the whole of Port Stephens, two suburbs out of Newcastle LGA and a couple of suburbs out of Maitland LGA. Can I tell you, as a federal Member, in dealing with Newcastle LGA on the two little towns, it's actually been difficult to work with a council and draw their attention representing two of their small parts of their own constituency? Keeping LGAs as a whole is critical.

PN20

Now, the Liberal Party has designed its boundary change so as not to affect your boundary that you proposed between Hunter, or the boundary of Hunter. This is a

movement between the proposed areas within Newcastle and Paterson to take better effect for communities of interest and people located along the rail lines, along the public transport sectors, along the communities of interest, so that those people can, where they need, travel to Newcastle to see their local Member. As I say to you, and in conclusion, all of the roads as detailed in the submission that I have looked up on Whereis, and it's probably one of the most telling things, not controlled by any politician but by data, it shows all of the roads running through the Terrace.

PN21

So I would submit to you there's a very strong argument to keep Port Stephens LGA as a whole and then in the boundary shift over on the western side in relation to the Maitland district, looking at the transport corridor, the serviceability by the electrified and diesel rail lines, so that people can access those communities of interest. Thank you very much, gentlemen, and I put my submission - - -

PN22

MR BURCHETT: Before you sit down, Mr Trewin, you have heard this?

PN23

MR TREWIN: Yes, I have.

PN24

MR BURCHETT: Have you any submission to make?

PN25

MR TREWIN: No, I don't, Jim.

PN26

MR BURCHETT: Right. Thank you.

PN27

MR BALDWIN: Thank you very much.

PN28

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Mr Cameron Schraner and Dr Ingrid Schraner? You're the spokesperson, are you?

PN29

DR SCHRANER: No, I'll just speak first and then my husband - - -

PN30

MR BURCHETT: I beg your pardon?

PN31

DR SCHRANER: I'll speak first, and my husband speaks second.

PN32

MR BURCHETT: You both want to speak?

PN33

DR SCHRANER: Yes. My name is Dr Ingrid Schraner. I'm a resident of Rydalmere, which currently makes part of the federal electorate of Parramatta and is proposed to move to the federal electorate of Reid. As an economist, I need to provide some figures first, and I've put them on a paper. They should be available to you gentlemen. Parramatta is the capital city of greater western Sydney. It's

the third-largest regional economy behind Sydney and Melbourne; 10 per cent of Australia's economy, the GDP of greater than 58 billion per year, over 72 000 individual businesses, more than 150 of Australia's top 500 companies, and almost 20 per cent of Australia's top 500 exporters, and three of them in the top 10.

PN34

In light of these figures, I have to put a passionate plea to put forward that this economy powerhouse of the nation be given optimal conditions for development. What is in economic terms called an enabling environment. A key component of an enabling environment consists of the institutional framework and with that comes government structure, which in Australia consists of three tiers; local, state and federal. These three tiers of government need to have their interests aligned. In other words, their representatives need to pull in the same direction if they are to support economic development. In practice, this means that the local councils strategic planning can rely on a state and a federal Member whose interests are tied to the same constituency.

PN35

A community of interests between the three levels of government, independent of which party holds the seat at each level at a particular time. Yet this is not at all the case in the situation of the proposed electorate for Parramatta. The future Member for the proposed seat of Reid looks after the interests of Parramatta. She or he will do so at the expense of the interests of Auburn and Granville and vice versa, which is anything else but conducive to good economic decision-making. But even worse, the future Member for the proposed seat of Parramatta will have to look after the interests of a small part of Castle Hill, a small part of Parramatta, a small part of Holroyd and a slightly increased part of Baulkham Hills. Wherever she or he goes, only a small proportion of the people he or she meets at any one place are in his or her constituency.

PN36

What an incredible waste of resources of the federal electorate. As an economist, I feel compelled to bring this respectfully to your attention, gentlemen. What contribution did the Australian Electoral Commission think its proposed distribution was making to support the nation's third-largest economy? Or was this a consideration at all? Reading the report of the redistribution committee, the report is clear and honest. It was not one of their considerations, and I would respectfully like to put it to you to consider it. The proposed changes to the electorate of Parramatta are a consequence of the proposed changes to Parramatta's neighbouring electors. That is what paragraph 183 of the report states, and I quote:

PN37

*As a consequence of the committee's decisions regarding Reid, Prospect, Mitchell and Bennelong, the proposed division of Parramatta required significant additional electors to achieve statistical tolerance.*

PN38

The growth of Parramatta as an electorate is actually within statistical tolerance so by itself Parramatta wouldn't need to change at all. So respectfully, this is not good enough for the capital of greater western Sydney and its economy. I urge you to consider these facts. Thank you very much.



PN39

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes?

PN40

MR SCHRANER: Thanks very much, Commissioners. Cameron Schraner is my name. I am not an economist and I'm not an historian either, but I grew up in the area a little to the north of Parramatta, a place called Pennant Hills, originally called Pennant Hills, about 8 kilometres to the north. Having moved into the Parramatta area, it took that move to realise just what an area Parramatta is. It's not widely known that the Parramatta area actually includes more heritage buildings than The Rocks area of Sydney, in the Sydney CBD. I've provided maps that the local council has made. These are not the only maps that council has made. Usually, these are more informal maps also produced by council. There are 14 heritage-listed sites on that map and including these ones here, there are another 15 that can be added.

PN41

As you walk about Parramatta, you'll find countless buildings that are not listed anywhere, that are simply old. Some of them privately owned, some of them are commercial buildings. If the proposal goes ahead as planned, only five of these buildings will remain. Only five of those listed will remain in the seat of Parramatta. These are significant sites; the Cumberland Hospital being the most significant, also Parramatta Gaol, two cemeteries and perhaps the dairy precinct. One of my colleagues following will point out that when he was at the Electoral Commission the other day, he was not able to be shown exactly where the lines are for the proposed Parramatta electorate. It seems we would like some clarity on that. They're the very, very oldest sites in Parramatta, the dairy precinct, may or may not move into Parramatta or may or may not stay in Parramatta, depending on where those lines would be drawn.

PN42

But that is to say, of the 29 prominent sites, 24 of them will move to Reid. The areas that these sites cover, as I've listed, are very broad. They include government, military, education, health, welfare, legal, justice and prison, Christian and now other forms of worship, transport, recreation, commerce, agriculture, accommodation and burial sites. It should be added that not all these sites are ancient, or ancient in our terms. Only a few years ago, the new crew members of HMAS Parramatta did a march through Parramatta as a way of cementing their relationship with the town and the people and there's a monument to the first HMAS Parramatta that will also move to Reid. Of course, Old Government House, regardless of the ambiguity of the lines, will move to Reid.

PN43

Now, Reid has its own history. It's a much more recent history than Parramatta. If you look at any of the old sites and the old paintings and the old photographs of Parramatta. None of them include the areas of Auburn or Granville that make up the centres of Reid. It strikes me as a resident of the area that the proposals - if the proposed boundary changes go ahead, then a new Member for Reid will in fact be torn between a strong area in their north-west pocket, called Parramatta, and their traditional areas which they've serviced for a long time, called Granville and Auburn. It's going to be extremely difficult for any such Member to service the needs of all of those communities equally. My suggestion is that one or other of



them or both will suffer and that the history of Parramatta being what it is, it shouldn't be cut out of the seat for Parramatta. The Electoral Commission in its justifications for retaining the name of Parramatta used historical references to - - -

PN44

MR BURCHETT: The committee, you mean?

PN45

MR SCHRANER: Sorry, the committee. My apologies. The committee who wanted to keep the name of Parramatta did so mostly on the grounds of historical connections. In fact, they cut nearly all of those historical connections, including the most important ones and I would suggest that if the proposed boundaries were to be maintained, that in fact the name of the seat of Parramatta be changed and some other name adopted to reflect the fact that it's no longer in Parramatta at all, and that those historical connections are not strong enough to maintain that. But I would say instead that the present boundaries in fact serve the area quite well. Local, state and federal government areas mostly overlap and that this means that a focus of interest can be made on Parramatta itself.

PN46

It should be added that the local council in fact expects Parramatta to expand southward. That is, they'd see the river as being a natural boundary and so their plans for expansion are southward which would make it even more difficult, with respect, I would say, for the Member of Reid dealing with an even larger pocket of interest in their north-west hand corner, to take their focus away from where there have been focuses so far, which is Granville and Auburn. That's all I want to say.

PN47

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Mr Trewin, do you wish to ask anything?

PN48

MR TREWIN: No. No, I don't, thanks.

PN49

MR BURCHETT: Right. Thank you very much. We'll now move to Mr Kevin Costello. Yes, Mr Costello?

PN50

MR COSTELLO: Good morning, committee members. My name is Kevin Costello. I represented a locally based group calling ourselves the Keep Parramatta in Parramatta Committee. As the name implies, I'm talking about the Parramatta redistribution. As we've heard, Parramatta is Sydney's second-largest CBD. This is partly attributable to the synergies created by Parramatta having represented - the CBD being represented at all three tiers of government. I believe that some of these benefits will be lost if the CBD is no longer a part of the Parramatta federal electorate. As said, Parramatta is also home to some of Australia's oldest European history. Every day on my way to work, I walk past three heritage-listed farms. That is, Hamilton Cottage, Elizabeth Farm and the model farm, experimental farm, I'm sorry. Whereas the electorate itself was proclaimed at Federation.

PN51

Now, would you like these maps I have here - I have a large one over there - now or later?

PN52

MR BURCHETT: You can hand them to our assistant.

PN53

MR COSTELLO: Now, the proposed changes will divorce the electorate from most of this history I have just mentioned. Now, I propose that the current redistribution should be modified. The maps I've given you show the original - the proposed redistribution in orange. Now, this line was given to me by the employees of the Electoral Commission at the Parramatta office. It's as good an interpretation of the information as they had. They themselves would like to be given a clear picture. I say that because as it appears now, the boundary runs along Victoria Road through Parramatta Park, dissecting it to the corner of Railway Parade and Park Street, Westmead.

PN54

Now, my proposal is the green line. The green line follows the main western railway line to Parramatta Railway Station, and then turns north along Smiths Road, Parramatta. Following Smith and Wilde Avenue, to where it reaches the proposal, the orange line. Now, this comparatively minor change would bring most of Parramatta CBD, many of the historical listed sites and heritage buildings back into the electorate of Parramatta, but it would only include a handful of voters because the vast majority of the area I have described is either park or business. There are very few residences within the area suggested.

PN55

Now, I ask this committee to listen to the hundreds of people who are opposed to the redistribution, a redistribution which will divorce the electorate of Parramatta from many of its people, its history and its culture, and which can only be to the detriment of the business interests of Parramatta and the city as a whole. I have included a recent press release from the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce for two reasons; (1) to demonstrate that there is a community-wide opposition to this redistribution, and (2) because the local Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Ms Dale, has expressed herself so well and forcefully. I ask you to re-read her press release before coming to any decision. Thank you very much for your time.

PN56

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Can I just ask you, if the boundary change were made that you've shown on this map you handed up to us, how many heritage sites would change their boundary, as it were? We've been told by a previous speaker about 29, from which five were subtracted, I think. What do you say this would do?

PN57

MR COSTELLO: I couldn't give you that off the top of my head. I couldn't.

PN58

MR BURCHETT: That's all right. We can work it out. Thank you.

PN59

MR COSTELLO: Thank you.

PN60

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin, do you want to ask anything about this?

PN61

MR TREWIN: Mr Costello said only a handful of voters would be affected. Is that literally true, or do we actually have the numbers?

PN62

MR BURCHETT: Are we able to bring up those numbers immediately or not? It would take some time.

PN63

MR TREWIN: Okay. We can look at it later.

PN64

MR BURCHETT: We'll look at that later.

PN65

MR COSTELLO: There's only a few - as I live there and know the area, there are only a few residences in that area.

PN66

MR BURCHETT: Yes, but there are actual statistics, and we'll have to look at them. Very well. Thank you.

PN67

MR SCHRANER: Can I make a comment?

PN68

MR BURCHETT: Yes, all right. You're closely related to the submissions. Yes?

PN69

MR SCHRANER: I have quickly counted through the number and known sites myself. A further 11 of these sites, including some of the most important, would remain in Parramatta if this boundary change was accepted.

PN70

MR BURCHETT: So this boundary change would go some of the way to meeting what you've been putting?

PN71

MR SCHRANER: Correct.

PN72

MR BURCHETT: Is that right?

PN73

MR SCHRANER: Yes.

PN74

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. I think we should move to Mr Col Gilbertson. Yes, Mr Gilbertson?

PN75

MR GILBERTSON: Good morning, Chairman, members of the augmented Electoral Commission, including those of the original committee of inquiry. My

full name is Colin Bruce Gilbertson. I don't represent any organisation, and the division and region that I primarily wish to touch on is Berowra and Bradfield. But if I may, I'd like to just make some general comments. Firstly, I note that the vast majority of the 1989 objections and 156 comments on the objections have come from those residents or electors currently enrolled in the divisions of Gwydir which is a Federation seat, and Calare, which was created in 1906. In my submission that I have given to the augmented Electoral Commission, I note that there are many reasonable arguments put up by a number of people, but most of the arguments put up are merely form letters.

PN76

I have noted that I also wish to speak on the proposed changes to Parramatta and I won't dwell on the point, but I would like to add my support to the previous speakers concerning the problem of the CBD of Parramatta not being in the federal seat of Parramatta, and it's along similar lines, that my reason for being here this morning and my objection that I put in, in July, is based; that is, for changes to the federal division of Berowra. In the maps that I've given you, which are UBD maps 133 and 153, the pink line running down the F3 Sydney-Newcastle Freeway, to Pearces Corner, and then down the Ku-ring-gai-Hornsby local government boundaries on map 153, they are the existing boundaries between the federal divisions of Bradfield, which is to the right-hand side of the map or the city side of the map from Pearces Corner, and the federal division of Berowra which is to the western side of those boundaries. Berowra is - - -

PN77

MR BURCHETT: When you say "existing", you mean before the proposal was drawn up?

PN78

MR GILBERTSON: That is correct, yes. The boundaries drawn up in the 1999-2000 redistribution, which clearly follow the Ku-ring-gai-Hornsby Local Government Area boundaries. The proposed changes announced on 30 June are highlighted in blue, and that is, to take the Berowra-Bradfield boundary from the freeway across Ku-ring-gai Chase Road and down the Pacific Highway through Asquith, up through Hookams Corner which is the junction with Galston Road and then down through the CBD of Hornsby, across the main northern and North Shore railway lines immediately to the south of Hornsby station, and then follow the Pacific Highway down through Waitara and Wahroonga to Pearces Corner, where it will pick up the existing Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area boundary.

PN79

This change involves some 9 982 electors. Now, my submission is that the bulk of the people in Asquith, the few in Mt Colah because bearing in mind that I think Lord Street there is the boundary of Asquith and Mt Colah, and Hornsby, there is little if any community of interest with the seat of Bradfield which is a seat based on the North Shore and runs from Chatswood up to Wahroonga. My alternative suggestion is highlighted in yellow, and that is to bring the boundary across from Cockle and Hornsby Creeks and includes the remaining parts of Wahroonga because Wahroonga is - let me rephrase that. Wahroonga, under the boundaries prior to the changes announced on 30 June, was split so that if you went to look in

an electoral office document relating to Wahroonga which division am I in, you had to go to the street index.

PN80

My suggestion is that the area of Wahroonga and that to the east of Hornsby Hospital, across to Cardin Avenue, Wahroonga and then down through the Pacific Highway to Pearces Corner and to take the boundary down Pennant Hills Road. If that doesn't give sufficient numbers, then my suggestion is that the boundaries should follow the changes that have been made to the state boundaries. I should, for the benefit of those present here today, say that in the 2004-2005 changes to the state boundaries which will take effect at the state election on 24 March next year, the boundary for Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai has been taken from the freeway along Edgeworth David Avenue to the junction of the North Shore and main northern railway lines and then follows the main northern, that is the line via Strathfield, the main northern line to Duffy Avenue, Thornleigh.

PN81

The previous boundary between Hornsby, now Ku-ring-gai, and Epping of following the Ku-ring-gai-Hornsby Local Government Area and the Lane Cove River Valley, up to Pine Street, Normanhurst and then following generally north to Campbell Avenue, Normanhurst and then across to Dartford Road to the main northern railway line and down to Duffy Avenue is unchanged. My major concern is, as with the previous three speakers concerning the CBD of Parramatta being taken out of the seat of Parramatta, as I mentioned in my original objection lodged on 26 July, Berowra is a seat that was created in 1968 and is historically based on Hornsby.

PN82

To take the CBD of Hornsby and the suburbs of Asquith, Hornsby and Mt Colah out of Berowra and put them into Bradfield defies the community of interest requirement that the committee and the augmented Commission is required to take into account. I believe that the CBD of Hornsby rightfully should remain within the seat of Berowra, as Hornsby is a significant Local Government Area in the northwestern part of Sydney. The other thing that I would like the augmented Commission to take into account is that in my objection I mentioned that the existing federal Member for Berowra, the Hon Philip Ruddock and the Member for Hornsby, Ms Judy Hopwood MP, their offices are also within Hornsby.

PN83

So you would have the state and federal Members' offices no longer within the division that the Member would continue to represent. On that note, I thank the inquiry for the opportunity to address it.

PN84

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Gilbertson. You don't have any questions, Mr Trewin?

PN85

MR TREWIN: No, Chairman.

PN86

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Dr Amy McGrath?

PN87

DR MCGRATH: My name is Dr Amy McGrath. I'm president of the HS Chapman Society.

PN88

MR BURCHETT: I beg your pardon?

PN89

DR MCGRATH: I am President of the HS Chapman Society. Our concern is the same as yours, that one-vote one-value be delivered as the constitution requires to every voter. I don't represent, therefore, a division. I want briefly to introduce two or three crucial matters to your concerns, at the same time, saying how much praise I have for the awful responsibility you people have, to deliver a redistribution. It's an incredibly difficult job. I only know one example where a whole electorate has been taken up in recent times. That's in Victoria. The heavy responsibility you bear is worse than ensuring that there's no marginalisation of electorates, and that's where our concerns have most bearing because most elections are decided by no more than 20 marginal seats. As you know, sometimes even as low as 13 or eight.

PN90

I understand that you have decided to move up to circa 50 per cent of electors in four electorates. I was interested in this because Senator ..... analysis of the 1987 election, when there had been no habitation view since 1983 on which to base the results, and most of the results were way out of the median that's established for transfer of electorates in tradition. I was speaking to a former judge of the New South Wales Supreme Court about the number of redistributions in New South Wales and he said that those always started from a coast in the most heavily crowded suburbs and went inland, and that they usually tried to have a minimum of 5 per cent transfer of electors out of an electorate in the process.

I noted in your report to electors and their existing divisions where a collective agreement had been achieved. Now, there are certain factors that I think that are peripheral as to the fact that there are highly ..... effects which are not considered because yours is primarily a statistical job. That is the Members of Parliament, the federal Members of Parliament themselves and the electors, the voters who I tend to represent, the people at the bottom of the heap, there are four factors I want to introduce there. The first is considerable confusion that consists in absent voting by those who have been moved because they generally have to depend on advice in various other electorates, a number of which have also been affected. This not only causes confusion in the booths themselves, just the running of them, in delays, but I'll give you an example where absent voters were directed wrongly and it affected the result.

PN91

That was in Macquarie in 1993 when Alasdair Webster had held the seat for some years and this of course is ..... 11 000 voters were reallocated from Blaxland and 400 of those were redirected to Keating's electorate at Blaxland by mistake. Most people don't know where they've got to go. Alasdair Webster lost his seat by exactly 164 votes and the similar case in Queensland where the voter was redistributed in different electorates five times, there was a by-election. A separate ..... is that Members standing for re-election confront a whole new set of

places they don't know, people they don't know and ..... these include vacant land blocks and Macquarie, for example, a number of people were voting from ..... it's an area I know. Evidence of that was given, the fact that the house and landscapes are important because Members do two things to cleanse the roll. Members also cleanse rolls - they do return to sender mail, and familiarity is very important to guess where the return to sender mail might be important.

PN92

The other thing is the door knocking before elections, which is a very crucial part. They don't know the landscape, they haven't got the staff, they haven't got the supporters in the new electorate. For instance, Macquarie will have Bathurst and Lithgow and other - that could so happen in Greenway, and so they don't - haven't got any support in that area that they've built up over a number of years. If the electorates - close to margins and roll stating is usually targeted on marginal seats because everybody knows that that's where ..... but I haven't got time to concern - during the Shipton Inquiry into fraudulent enrolments in Queensland in 2000, which I followed acutely because Bob Bottom came into back me in - whom you know who he is, from the year 2000 onwards, because he had found 834 people enrolled in ..... Passage on the water, in a row along several kilometres of ..... Passage.

PN93

So it does happen. That was 1989. During the Shipton Inquiry, one whistleblower had a long dialogue with reporters on the Courier Mail, that the teams - several teams - the teams of his supporters have gone around several state and federal elections, as in Fisher in 1987, won by 730 votes, and watered the election ..... by going around and door-knocking and finding people were still on the roll who had moved on and forgotten to remove their names or left them or died, et cetera, or a caravan park site. The second thing is how accurate is the continuous roll review? Your statistical - - -

PN94

MR TREWIN: How accurate is?

PN95

DR MCGRATH: The electoral roll. Your statistical - you're based on the presumption of reasonable accuracy on the electoral roll. As in 1987, now, from 1997, the accuracy of the roll has deteriorated. Six years ago, nine senior experienced Queensland divisional returning officers wrote to their then Australian Electoral Officer to say that the only system that the AEC now used, computerised continuous roll review, was not working. One of them said we all know there's fraud, but we don't know how much. The reason for that is habitation reviews were abandoned from 1997 and in England, of course, they still have habitation reviews, they have less fraud.

PN96

The ideal enrolment, just a couple of words to that, ideal enrolments being defeated by state governments twice in bills in two previous terms of office of the Labor government, and we now have another one, third one through, and they're on the signs it might be defeated for a third time, without reintroduction of enrolment on - re-enrolment, you will not get an accurate roll. You have about 150 000 to 200 000 new enrolments on the roll in every election in the last seven



days from close - since 1987, for 20 years. That means there were no consideration of birth or date - no consideration of birth or date accuracy until very recently, late 90s. So no one - as the habitation reviews have been abandoned, that will not be picked up.

PN97

The final thing I want to say - two things; the failure of the AEC to adopt the data-matching process which was originally designed by the Department of Social Security for them, 1983, they've always refused to adopt it. It became linked with the Data-Matching Act of 1990 and the AEC refused to take it up. This was - as used by the 100 points of the banks, is a very important failure. Finally, the audit of - of the Auditor General, in which he claims the roll is very accurate is nonsense. Two arguments in the back of the Auditor General's report belies their statement that it is accurate, a number of electoral authorities refused to cooperate with it and there were 650 000 names that could not be accounted for, apart from using Medicare and one of the people who was working on that data-matching program for the AEC in early years rang me twice to make sure I knew that they were very suspect. Thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me - - -

PN98

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Dr McGrath. Yes. Mr Kerry Bartlett, Member for Macquarie. Yes, Mr Bartlett?

PN99

MR BARTLETT: Thank you. Mr Chairman, committee members, my name is Kerry Bartlett, Federal Member for Macquarie, and my concerns are particularly related to the division of Macquarie and the proposed changes thereto. My concern is that the proposed boundary changes would create significant upheaval for the division of Macquarie, removing 41,916 current enrolled voters and adding another 47,338 new voters to the division of Macquarie. Can I say at the outset that my concerns do not in any way reflect a reluctance to represent those new voters, the areas of Lithgow, Bathurst and Oberon, and indeed, I would consider it a privilege to represent those new voters?

PN100

However, my concerns are that the proposed changes significantly undermine the criteria listed in sections 66(3) and 66(3)(a) of the Act related to those particular divisions. With respect, I would argue that the proposed changes fail to adequately address the communities of interest, the means of communication of transport, the physical features and the boundaries of existing divisions, and I would like to in turn address each of those four criteria with relation to the proposed changes to Macquarie, and indeed, the adjoining divisions. First of all, in terms of communities of interest. Can I make this point very strongly, that the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury communities share much greater common interests than the Blue Mountains does with the proposed new areas in the central west and more than the Hawkesbury community does with the proposed new additions there, of the areas of western Sydney that are currently in the seat of Greenway.

PN101

The current connection of interest between the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury is far stronger than the proposed changes would be, either to Greenway or to

Macquarie. Equally can I say that Bathurst has much stronger connections with Orange than it does with the Blue Mountains and sits much more comfortably in its existing position in the seat of Calare. I'd like to expand on this in a number of areas, if I can, in terms of community of interest. The first point is simply this, that the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury are both outer metropolitan areas. They are classified as outer metropolitan, they share all of the interests, all of the issues, all of the challenges that outer metropolitan areas have, in terms of transport, in terms of commuting to the city, in terms of work patterns, in terms of communication, housing, social activity and commercial activity.

PN102

They are both outer metropolitan regions. The issues that they face, the issues that the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury face are very similar, and on the other hand, they are very different to the issues that central western towns such as Bathurst in fact face. The commonality of issues of the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains makes it essential that the one Member represent both of those communities. Secondly, I make the point that both the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury communities in that context have very strong commuter flows to the city. The orientation of the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are to the east, not to the west. The 2001 census figures show that for the Blue Mountains community, close to 42 per cent of the Blue Mountains community actually work in the Blue Mountains. Nearly 40 per cent, just over 40 per cent of Blue Mountains residents work in the western suburbs or in the city.

PN103

In other words, the overwhelming majority of Blue Mountains residents who don't work in the Blue Mountains travel eastwards to the western suburbs or to Sydney for work. That's the same, in fact, as with the Hawkesbury community. Two per cent of the Blue Mountains community work in the Hawkesbury. In contrast, and this is the important point, and this is in the 2001 census figures and in fact quoted in the ALP's original submission, by contrast only one per cent of the Blue Mountains community - one per cent - work in the greater Lithgow region and even fewer would work west of Lithgow. So the fundamental point is this, that the overwhelming orientation and the overwhelming pattern of commuting for work of Blue Mountains residents, as with Hawkesbury residents, is eastwards, to Sydney CBD and its western suburbs, rather than westwards across the Great Dividing Range.

PN104

The third point I make is that this distinction is clearly recognised by the Local Governments Association and their regional organisations of council. The Blue Mountains council, Local Government Area, in conjunction with Hawkesbury Local Government Area, is part of WSROC, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils. On the other hand, Lithgow Council, Bathurst Council, Oberon Council and indeed Orange Council, are part of CWROC, the Central Western Regional Organisation of Councils. So the whole classification, recognised by the Local Government Association, recognises Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury as part of western Sydney, recognises those towns in the central west as part of a different regional organisation of councils. So it very clearly reflects a different community of interests and different orientation.

PN105

The fourth point I'd make is that the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury communities are strongly linked in terms of many government and semi-government services. They are both, along with Penrith, part of the federal government's and the PNAs care-planning region. They are both part of the state government's Area Health Service, they are both part of Telstra Countrywide Service, based in Penrith. They are both served by the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, both Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are served by the Family Relationships Centre recently established in Penrith. They are both part of the federal government's Western Area Consultative Committee of Sydney for Regional Partnerships Program and most labour market programs include Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains as part of western Sydney.

PN106

Indeed, the recently established Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith school industry partnership is one example where Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are linked with Penrith in western Sydney and not across to the west of the Great Dividing Range. Many other examples; they are both part of the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment system and both rely on Sydney Water for water and sewerage services, whereas west of the range, the services are provided by totally different authorities. Both the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage area and indeed a greater part in area of the Blue Mountains World Heritage area is in the Hawkesbury Local Government Area than the Blue Mountains Local Government Area.

PN107

Related to that World Heritage listing, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury communities share an enormous amount in terms of their focus on tourism related to world heritage issues. The great circular tourist drive, admittedly that also takes in Lithgow and Oberon, but it very strongly links the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury. The World Heritage Interpretative Centre for the Blue Mountains World Heritage area will be located on the Bells Line of Road either in or very close to the Hawkesbury community. Mt Tomah Botanical Gardens and the associated tourist botanical way links the Hawkesbury community with the Blue Mountains community, so in terms of commerce, in terms of tourism, in terms of that world heritage linking, the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are very much at one.

PN108

Another very important point in terms of the community of interest is the dependence, the co-dependence of Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains communities on Sydney electronic media. Both are serviced by Sydney television stations, Sydney radio stations. Whereas across the west of the Divide, very clearly those communities in the central west are served by regional television, Win Television, Prime Television, Regional ABC Radio and regional commercial radio stations. In fact, if you look at the map on the ACMA website, it shows very clearly that the Great Dividing Range is the division between Sydney electronic media and country electronic media. Not only does that very clearly reflect different communities of interest, I would argue, but it has very serious implications for the role of a federal Member trying to service his or her community based on Sydney media that is very different to regional television and regional radio.

PN109

In other areas socially, in sporting events, Veterans Affairs, the dependence on the Rural Fire Service and Bushfire Brigades, the connection between Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains communities is far stronger than the connections between either of those and areas to the west of the Great Divide or between the Hawkesbury and those parts of western Sydney involved in the Greenway electorate. The division again is recognised by the churches. For the Anglican and Catholic churches, the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are both part of the Sydney diocese. For the Catholic Church, Bathurst, Orange and Oberon and Lithgow are part of the Bathurst diocese. For the Anglican Church, Bathurst, Orange and Oberon are part of the Bathurst diocese, whereas Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are both part of the Parramatta diocese.

PN110

So in all of these areas, be it in terms of work patterns, be it in terms of social interaction, be it in terms of electronic media coverage, there is a very clear connection between the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury communities as recognised in the current division of Macquarie that sits very well with both of those communities, and those communities of interest are far stronger than any connections that will exist across the Divide. Could I then go on to the other three criteria, just more briefly, in section 66 of the Act, the means of communication and travel within the proposed division? In paragraph 49 of the Commission's draft proposal mention is made of the improved communication links between the west and the east and that that ought to be considered in devising the new boundaries.

PN111

I would just make this point that improved communications links including the improved communication of the Great Western Highway, do not in themselves constitute communities of interest. They provide for better connections between the central west and Sydney, but most of that is through traffic. The better transport links do not in themselves build better communities of interest between the Blue Mountains and the central west. The second point I'd like to make in respect of this is that paragraphs 70 and 72 of the draft proposal suggest that there ought to be three main connecting routes between the west and the east. It mentions the Hunter, it mentions the Great Western Highway in the Blue Mountains and it mentions the Hume.

PN112

Yet having mentioned those three possible corridors of connection, nearly all of the adjustment is thrust on the division of Macquarie. It proposes taking 41 916 voters out of Macquarie, 12 837 out of Hunter and 13 818 out of Hume. So notwithstanding what the Commission said in paragraphs 70 to 72, nearly all of the burden of adjustment is in fact imposed on the division of Macquarie. A third point I'd make just in relation to that, is that transition is much more readily, much more smoothly achieved, as the Commission actually acknowledges in the draft proposal, along the Hume corridor than it is across the Great Dividing Range. The tradition and the pattern of previous determinations by the Electoral Commission actually recognises that.

PN113

The third criteria, just quickly, I know my time is going, are the physical features and the area of the proposed division. The physical boundary determined by the Great Dividing Range has long been recognised as a very sensible and reasonable and rational boundary. More to the point, even, is that that is a boundary that is well-recognised by voters. Voters see the Great Dividing Range as a very logical separation of the city from the country, and voters recognise that as a very sensible division between the different electorates. Paragraphs 56 and 57 of your draft proposal recognises that there's a much more gradual transition along the Hume corridor. I would respectfully suggest that that is why previous Commissions have accepted that any adjustments between the east and west have more appropriately occurred along the Hume corridor than across the Great Dividing Range because along the Hume corridor, the changes from rural to semi-rural to regional are much more gradual.

PN114

Whereas across the Great Dividing Range, there's a very sudden change from rural and regional to outer metropolitan. I would contend therefore, with respect, that the proposed boundary changes do not adequately reflect those very clearly defined and well and long-recognised physical boundaries. The fourth point in terms of the fourth criterion in section 66 is minimum disruption to existing boundaries. Again, with the greatest of respect, I would suggest that the proposed changes substantially create significant upheaval to a number of electorates, not only obviously to the division of Parkes and the overwhelming number of submissions of course to the - the overwhelming number of objections relate to the changes to the division of Parkes.

PN115

But in addition to that, the maximum disruption has been caused to the division of Calare, the division of Macquarie and the division of Greenway, where half of each of those - roughly half of each of those three divisions will be removed and half of - and a new half of voters added to each of those three divisions. So the point is this, it creates significant upheaval, it creates unnecessary confusion to voters and it creates very significant change that could, with respect, have been avoided had a metropolitan division been abolished rather than a country division. As the Commission acknowledged in paragraph 64 of its draft proposal, communities of interest are far less clearly defined in suburban areas than they are in rural areas, but the proposal to significantly change three regional areas and an outer metropolitan area causes much greater disruption to the status quo than would have been created by removing an inner-urban area.

PN116

Paragraph 64 makes very clear the reasons for that. In conclusion, can I suggest, and it's only a personal view, that consistent with sections 66(3) and 66(3)(a), those four criteria could be more easily met by a different proposal than the one that's contained in the draft redistribution proposal. Can I suggest three options? In my view, and it's only a personal view, the preferable option would be to go back to square one in fact and rather than abolishing a country seat with massive upheaval and ramifications that involves, to abolish an inner-urban seat and that would be, with the greater fluidness of the boundaries there, cause much less upheaval to communities of interest. If that is not to happen, can I suggest a second best option would be to retain the long-held practice of previous

Commissions to consider the Great Dividing Range as an appropriate divide between boundaries.

PN117

That is well recognised and has been accepted for very good reasons in terms of better containing communities of interest and causing minimal upheaval. The third option, can I suggest, is at least in terms of communities of interest, to restore Bathurst to Orange and recognise the very strong connection between Bathurst and Orange, those twin towns in terms of a twin growth area, in terms of social and commercial links, means that those two towns much better belong together in the electorate of Calare. In conjunction with that, could I suggest then that in exchange for the 20 000-odd voters there, that consistent with the Liberal Party's submission, that the seat of Macquarie at least then ought to move eastwards from the proposed changes to consider the very - the boundary along the line of the Hawkesbury Nepean River which forms a very distinct and recognisable physical boundary consistent with the Liberal Party's objection.

PN118

That would provide voters with a very clearly-defined boundary and can I say those areas west and north of the Hawkesbury River that comprise the Local Government Area of Hawkesbury have a lot in common with the Blue Mountains in terms of those features that I've already enunciated. So those three options, can I suggest with the greatest of respect, would pay much greater attention to the criteria in section 66 of the Act than the proposed changes in the draft proposal put out at the end of June. Thank you very much for your time.

PN119

MR CAMPBELL: Mr Chair, I just want to make one observation, Mr Bartlett. Thank you for your very lengthy presentation, but I do actually need to make a slight correction. You asserted that section 66 of the Act has as a criteria minimum disruption to existing boundaries. It does not have such a condition. It says that the committee and the augmented Committee should give due consideration to boundaries. I think for the record this should be corrected. It is not minimal.

PN120

MR BARTLETT: Okay. Point taken, but due consideration to existing boundaries.

PN121

MR BURCHETT: We understand your point. Mr Trewin, do you want to ask anything?

PN122

MR TREWIN: No, Chairman.

PN123

MR BURCHETT: Right. We'll take our quarter-hour break now.

**<SHORT ADJOURNMENT**

**[10.23A.M.]**

**<RESUMED**

**[10.40A.M.]**



PN124

MR BURCHETT: There is still room at the bar table there because we're not sitting as a court. If people can't hear clearly at the back there's a remedy. Well, to start, Peter Olson. Yes, Mr Olson.

PN125

MR OLSON: Yes, good morning, gentlemen. My name is Peter Olson, I come from Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains. I'm a private citizen, I'm not representing any organisation and the division I wish to talk about is Macquarie. Firstly I'd like to point out that I am in favour in principle of the need for this distribution and it is part of our democratic system to keep ourselves up to date with population shifts and modern day needs in regard to electoral boundaries. My concerns are the changes put forward by yourselves in regard to the seat of Macquarie and that as far as the Act is concerned there seems to be no rhyme nor reason for the suggested boundaries.

PN126

The section of the current seat of Macquarie, that is the Blue Mountains, is essentially an outer metropolitan area and this is recognised by most authorities that is government, semi government, media and private industry. Other than those employed in local service industries, most employment is gained from Penrith and the Richmond Windsor and east to the CBD of Sydney and all areas between, in other words, the Blue Mountains, its east. This also applies to other pursuits including newspapers, television, radio, theatre and shopping. Education opportunities are also east of the mountains, some high schools, private colleges and major universities.

PN127

One of the strongest ties to the outer metropolitan area is the hourly electric, and sometimes half hourly in peak hour, train service to and from Penrith, Blacktown, Westmead, Strathfield and Central Stations for daily commuters and all other and many varied reasons Blue Mountains residents need to travel within their extended community. The proposed area within the current boundaries to be deleted from Macquarie are, amongst others, Kurrajong, Richmond and Windsor which have much commonality with the Blue Mountains in the area of employment, education, social activities, tourism and family connections. Both share a connection of the Blue Mountains National Park Royal Heritage area.

PN128

To replace this deletion the proposed re-division adds a part of the electorate of Calare, which includes the central west City of Bathurst. Bathurst and most of its surrounding district have no commonality with the Blue Mountains at all. It is a major rural centre and an historic centre of the central west of New South Wales and it is closely tied to Orange almost as a twin city. The only public transport to Bathurst from the Blue Mountains is the XPT, which stops at the terminal once a day, that's about quarter past eight in the morning, and only picks up a handful of passengers whose destinations are as far as Dubbo. The only area of Calare that has connection with the Blue Mountains is the Jenolan Caves, Oberon, Megalong, Kanimbla, Hartley Valleys and Lithgow which are historically part of the Blue Mountains tourist area and because they border the Blue Mountains Royal Heritage area.



PN129

Lithgow is also the terminus of the electric rail from Sydney. It was seen that Bathurst has only been added to Macquarie to make up population numbers and to expect a Member of Parliament to properly represent two entirely different types of communities diminishes both and I ask that true consideration be given to rectifying the situation. Thank you.

PN130

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. And thank you for being so brief.

PN131

MR OLSON: Thank you.

PN132

MR BURCHETT: Is Bruce Ferrier here?

PN133

MR FERRIER: Yes. Heavens, I stand on a platform at six foot seven. Thank you for this opportunity, Chairman and committee members, my name is Bruce Ferrier. I run a radio syndication company called Grace Gibson Productions, which is based in Sydney. I myself actually live in Katoomba itself and I'm a member of the Macquarie electorate. The reason for my appearance today is really to draw to your attention the anomalies that exist, I believe, between the proposed redistribution boundaries and the media coverage areas that Macquarie will now be split into and towards that if I may, if I could pass up to you a series of maps here that hopefully endorse my argument.

PN134

Very importantly, you'll see on those first two maps television coverage maps and they probably outline my case more strongly even than the radio maps do, although the same argument applies in both radio and television. If you look at that first map, Sydney TV1, that gives an outline of the coverage area of the Sydney commercial and ABC channels and you'll notice there that it covers the areas right up to and including Mount Victoria right through the Blue Mountains and down and including the current Hawkesbury area. It doesn't go over the range; it stops at the top of the range, which is pretty well where the current electorate of Macquarie does also.

PN135

If I could now move to Southern New South Wales TV1, you will notice the basically opposite version of the map of the Sydney TV1 and that shows that the regional TV channels, Prime, Ten, Regional and WIN all cover the Bathurst, Lithgow area that they don't penetrate into the mountains. Next along if we could to the radio, commercial radio maps there. You will notice the first one of the State of New South Wales and I'm sorry about the size of this, it's pretty small, but you'll notice a grey area in there with Katoomba highlighted in that area, Katoomba down into the Hawkesbury and including Penrith and that is supposedly an overlap licence area. In other words, Sydney radio gets in there but so too supposedly does Katoomba radio, but of course Katoomba radio these days is now operating out of North Ryde in Sydney. It's the old 2KA is now called The Edge is aimed at strictly to 10 to 17 audience with what they call hip hop, R and B format. Not a mention of the Blue Mountains come into that mind you.

PN136

The next maps, if we could briefly look at them, are the Lithgow radio area map, and you'll see that that interestingly does include the Katoomba and Lawson areas minorly but cuts out at Lawson. It doesn't go anywhere further than that and interestingly, as I've made comment in my written statement to you, the radio station itself has very little success in penetrating the Katoomba, Lawson markets, Wentworth Falls and so on, simply because it is regarded by people in the Katoomba and east areas as being a regional rural radio station focusing on the Lithgow West areas. Very, very few people listen to that radio station in the Katoomba area and there's very little revenue gained mind you for the operators, the commercial radio station operators in that area.

PN137

The final map of course is the Bathurst region, which basically merges together with the Lithgow one and the reason I've included that map is that it marries it together; it shows you the coverage of where Macquarie currently is and where Macquarie is proposed to go. It's very difficult, well nigh impossible I believe, for anyone who's trying to represent an electorate to be forced to confront such totally different media animals as the Sydney metro one and the regional rural areas of Lithgow and Bathurst. Keeping in touch with rural constituents is very, very different to how radio and television works in regional areas. Campaigning also from a political viewpoint is very different in the metro areas compared to completely rural markets.

PN138

They have totally different requirements and what we're looking at now is a situation where the Macquarie electorate presently looks east into Sydney. If anything, it should be continuing further into the Sydney area. There are great commonalities at the moment in Macquarie, not only just in media but also in the, emerging in the two areas as far as tourism is concerned. They're both heritage areas with the Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains. West of the ranges; very different kettle of fish altogether. So I draw those to your attention. ABC radio by the way and 2GB Sydney, 2UE to some degree and 2WS, all cover the Katoomba area these days. They're regarded as being part of their coverage area. Whenever you get weather reports on the hour those radio stations include not just Sydney but also Penrith, the Hawkesbury, Richmond, Windsor and Katoomba.

PN139

Lithgow I don't think even worries about doing that. I can't promise you because to be perfectly frank I don't listen to it. Thank you for your time, I appreciate it.

PN140

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Mr Trewin, do you have any question on this?

PN141

MR TREWIN: No, Chairman.

PN142

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN143

MR FERRIER: Thank you kindly.

PN144

MR BURCHETT: Just for the benefit of anyone who has come in since I told you the situation, we have Mr Trewin who is the third member of the Electoral Commission connected with us by telephone which is why I asked him if he would like to ask anything and will continue to do so from time to time. He unfortunately is unable through illness be with us at this moment but he's fit and well enough to be on the other end of the telephone. Now, Mr Andren.

PN145

MR ANDREN: My name is Peter Andren, I'm the federal Member of Calare and I wish to discuss not only the suggested boundaries but indeed wider and Gwydir and rural representation in general. I presume the process is to just deliver what I wish and then be questioned, is that how it works probably?

PN146

MR BURCHETT: Yes. Well, when you say what you wish, were you here when I made my introductory remarks?

PN147

MR ANDREN: No, we just arrived, just driven in.

PN148

MR BURCHETT: Well, the only thing I'll say is bear in mind that we have limited time which is not our choice but the product of the legislation which lays down a strict timetable. Consequently would you just bear in mind that other people have to go after you.

PN149

MR ANDREN: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Mr Chairman. In preparing my original submission to the committee I adhered to the following guidelines, the maintaining of communities of interest, the redrawing of federal electoral boundaries for maintaining integrity of existing Local Government Areas and where this hasn't been possible, prioritising locality borders and existing federal electorate boundaries for best preserved communities of interest and meeting the projected voter population targets. With the help of some very expert assistance and my own staff we drew the boundaries for the north and south coast, the 25 metropolitan boundaries that I believe can and should be drawn in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the rural representation and I don't know quite how the Electoral Commission has proceeded with the drawing of the boundaries that you have suggested. But I would have thought - - -

PN150

MR BURCHETT: This is the committee.

PN151

MR ANDREN: That is the committee, I'm sorry.

PN152

MR BURCHETT: You should understand, not the Commission.

PN153

MR ANDREN: The committee. I would have thought that it was quite possible to maintain the rural representation in this case with seven seats west of the Great Divide, those seats being New England, Gwydir, Parkes, Calare, Hume, Farrer, Riverina, as being able to be maintained with all of the projected voter

populations required and still come out with an outcome that maintained that representation. I consider what has happened is that the electorate boundaries have been drawn in the city, that the committee has come out into the rural areas and in the creation of Farrer particularly with Broken Hill and Albury making no sense in a community of interest context and the last and 49th seat in the far north-west corner of the State becomes a very unworkable electorate in my estimation.

PN154

I was only last night going through the Broken Hill Council's submission or objections where I think they quite succinctly point out how Broken Hill is absolutely crucial to the community of interest of western New South Wales, I followed a bus down today, the gateway to the outback, and to isolate that as they suggest into an Albury centric southern federal electorate makes no sense to me at all. Now, the seat that has been created, the 49th seat, has again no communities of interest, which I'm sure will be spelt out to you very clearly in your visit in Narrabri tomorrow. But let me move then to having eliminated one of those country seats which I think was completely the wrong way to go given that over time every seven years or thereabouts redistribution occurs.

PN155

Now, assuming that over the next two redistributions of New South Wales there may have been eventually a requirement for a change in the number of country seats, but I think that using the more common Hume corridor, along the southern tablelands as has been used in years past, to if you like, use that as the shock absorber where gradually it will be topped up without metropolitan electors and having been brought up in Camden and know that southern tablelands area very well, there is a very marked and distinct community of interest between Camden Local Government Area, Moss Vale, even down to Goulburn.

PN156

I remember as a kid, you know, the Hume Highway running through the centre and it still is, as I said in my submission, projections that it's a community of interest by dint of say Group 6 rugby league competition, very, very similar in its make up and its communities. Now, had that been used as a shock absorber and given that over the next 14 years one would hope that with the development of broadband capacity, with the decentralisation which must occur, then to zap one of those country seats as a first step strikes me as creating a rod for the back of the Commission down the track when it could have been otherwise to have created the sort of seats that quite humbly I suggest are capable in the submission I made originally, or variations thereof.

PN157

At this point let the city absorb the loss of any seat quite readily given that the shifting by a suburb of two, or indeed from Parramatta Road to Ryde Road or whatever the requirement is, there is far more community of interest between a Ryde and a Parramatta, indeed a Lane Cove and Parramatta than there is between Warialda and Lake Cargelligo, or indeed as the suggested Calare, between the Weddin Shire and the Mudgee Gulgong area. In Calare alone there will be six major and, you know, you could argue that Grenfell is a substantial population centre, seven areas that would need a Member to cover, I would argue, on a two day a month basis. I have looked through my dairies over a decade now and 20 days a month or thereabouts is required to work in the main electorate office with

your main electorate staff with the major issues that are entailed in servicing the whole electorate.

PN158

If you've got 20 days there or even 16 days there, 14 days seven times two for the other major centres, you've got a month's work without any parliamentary sittings and it's almost an impossibility, I would argue, to cover that in the same manner that rural electorates are covered at the moment, notwithstanding some of the distances involved in the existing seat of Parkes. So I then come to the suggested seat of Macquarie and I listened briefly to comments of the former speaker who I don't know and I don't know what he was representing, but he certainly represented a lot of the thoughts that I've had about that very configuration.

PN159

I must again draw your attention to not the fact that the Lithgow Council has voted or decided to take no action on the suggestion boundaries, but the papers of the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Lithgow Council on 17 July where they said that the Member of Parliament would be under pressure to represent the more highly urbanised parts of the electorate to the east. While the entire Lithgow LGAs propose to be located in Macquarie division, this division does not fully consider the established working partnerships between local government authorities such as CENTROC. Within the proposed Macquarie division there are a different economic social philosophical values.

PN160

Mobile coverage and communications generally, the black spot television difficulties of Hartley Valley, the mobile phone difficulties, the internet connection, the ADSL connections and so on are a vastly different collection of peculiar problems to not only that eastern portion of the existing Calare but indeed to all of central western New South Wales and for the Commission, with respect, to suggest that there is a common communication process involved here and that the highway linkages and transport linkages tie those regions together, I would argue strongly to the contrary and the 2LT radio manager I was talking to yesterday was saying exactly that, that the media footprints across the central tablelands out of Orange, out of Dubbo, are specific to those regions and that creates as a former news editor of the Prime television network in that area, I know full well over 30 years just what a community of interest the particular tablelands region is.

PN161

Of course I did not suggest any changes to the existing seat of Calare, not because it happened to be convenient for me, but because long after I've gone from politics that sort of electorate that we have there is an absolutely ideal community of interest, a collection of communities of interest, and I would argue that the existing seven seats west of the Great Divide are exactly that and to tamper with that is to, I truly believe, is to reject the wishes and needs of rural Australia at a time when they need as much fair representation as possible in an age when the city centric interest not only of Australia but globally are the predominant ones.

PN162

It is absolutely imperative in our democracy that we provide as much representation to as many sectors of our community as possible within the

democratic requirements of your brief and that is possible, that could have been achieved had you started I think, or had the committee started by drawing up those country boundaries first, working your way into the city, allowing that buffer between city. Hey, it may be otherwise. It may be that we do see a growth and back to not only a seven, one day down the track we'll be looking at an eighth seat west of the Blue Mountains. But the way you've done it is, I believe, completely contrary to the best interests of rural New South Wales and, you know, nationally I would argue as well.

PN163

Finally, might I just say that in the original submissions I don't want to make this very political in any sense, but the fact remains that the Labor Party did not recommend the Macquarie that has been suggested. In fact they were recommending that the seat of Riverina be eliminated and I'm interested to see now that there's a somewhat an enthusiastic response to the Macquarie that has been suggested. And I don't know that it is a reflection of the real wishes of the Lithgow community that their council defied, if you like, chose to ignore the very strong recommendations from their own general manager, their own council and the several hundred concerns that have been expressed through my office from the electorate about this configuration and they now seem to argue it's a good thing and the Liberal Party likewise have abandoned the bush by and large by failing to argue for the retention of the seat of Gwydir and those existing seats in country New South Wales.

PN164

I think I will leave it about at that and just point - if you would just briefly look at the maps I gave. I know you can't see the towns but that was the configuration of seats that I suggested and the seat of Parkes as suggested would, of course, include part of the lower Riverina, or the upper Riverina, the Griffith, include Broken Hill, include Cobar, Parkes and Forbes as well spread out and significant population centres, Farrer largely unchanged except for that part in the central portion where the border would then largely follow the Murrumbidgee River. The Riverina would move east and would inevitably need a renaming and Gilmore a slight change, Eden-Monaro a slight change. Hume is that seat which I think should be the buffer between city and country, not the configuration in Calare that the committee has suggested, for all of the reasons outlined by the previous speaker and those that I've outlined now.

PN165

So I would just implore on behalf of many thousands, many, many tens of thousands of country people who have expressed concern about the suggested boundaries that are in the proposed redistribution. Thank you.

PN166

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin, do you have any questions?

PN167

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN168

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Andren.



PN169

MR ANDREN: Thank you.

PN170

MR BURCHETT: Mr Peter Stark.

PN171

MR STARK: Thank you, Mr Chairman and Commissioners, thank you for time to let me express my views on the proposed redistribution.

PN172

MR CAMPBELL: Excuse me, Mr Stark, the acoustics in the room aren't that good. For the people to hear you, you might speak up, I'm sorry. The microphones are more for recording than for amplification.

PN173

MR STARK: I do mumble as a natural habit.

PN174

MR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

PN175

MR STARK: My name is Peter Stark. I don't represent anyone other than the people who have spoken to me but I really represent myself. I live in Calare and that's primarily my concern, although I do have overall concerns about the general redistribution. I'm concerned generally about the representation in the future for the people living west of the Great Dividing Range. I think the elimination of one seat out there and creating a huge seat of Parkes I think is going to deny many people in that part of the world real representation because it's going to take a great deal of time and effort for any elected representative to actually get to meet face to face his constituents, his or her constituents. I think that is a major problem with the proposed redistribution.

PN176

On the same sort of tack with about distance and time and representation can I if it's not too late, if it's possible to have a further hearing at least to the west of State? Having two hearings only, this one in Sydney and one in the bush, there are a lot of people - I've seen letters in the local paper saying we can't afford to get to Sydney, we can't afford to get to Narrabri and we would like to a comment at these hearings but people can't get to it. So if it's possible, a further hearing at least. My major concern is the carve up of Calare, especially when the reduction of seats can be achieved in other ways as the previous speaker mentioned. The reasons for - - -

PN177

MR BURCHETT: It is a great shame, the acoustics are not good in this room but really you need to try and keep your voice a bit further up and perhaps if you look out a little more to your left, we're closer to you and we can hear you.

PN178

MR STARK: My major concern is the carve of Calare, the way it's been done to achieve the necessary reduction of seats when that can be achieved in a better way as the previous speaker mentioned. The reasons given for removing the eastern portion of Bathurst Local Government Area and joining it to Macquarie could equally apply to at least one other rearrangement and I believe that you could join



the southern portion of the seat surround Woy Woy and Gosford to the northern end of Mackellar. It's fanciful, I know, but you can use the same arguments that have been used to join Calare to Macquarie. The southern part of Robertson and the northern part of Mackellar, each are a common recreational facility, which attracts both local and international tourism. They're joined by road and rail links and can both be accessed by water from Broken Bay and Broken Bay provides the common ground, as it were, that they share.

PN179

Yet in the proposal the Hawkesbury Bridge is ruled out as a linking factor between these divisions. As with Macquarie and Calare, between Robertson and Mackellar there's a major barrier, one is wet and blue called Broken Bay, the other is a green national park. Both these barriers provide inseparable walls, which demarcate quite different communities of interest. Many of the people of Gosford commute to Sydney for work and some of Lithgow citizens do the same. The common factor is they both have easy access to the railway line, to the electric rail line. However, the majority of Lithgow citizens; and I'd suggest all of the rest of Calare and Oberon; rely on local employment.

PN180

In other words, the suggestion in both these scenarios of joining across Broken Bay and across the edge of the Blue Mountains, both those scenarios I think are ludicrous. A road linking these two areas does not substitute for a community of interest. Don't get me wrong, I don't seriously consider joining those two coastal electorates, it's not serious, it's a daft idea, but I suspect it's equally daft to join two electorates across a major physical geographical barrier called the Blue Mountains. As I said in my written submission, with communications either electronic or physical with roads and railways, you can always get there from here. You can link any area in the country. The linkages don't make for the community of interest and I think in the report that was issued it made out as though those linkages are important in linking Calare and Macquarie but they're non-existent when you go across Broken Bay.

PN181

I lived for some time in the Blue Mountains and for the past 24 years I've lived north of Bathurst at Sofala I know the difference between the two areas. The Blue Mountains is predominantly residential and Calare is a mix of mining, agriculture and industry. Both have tourism industries both then considering that tourism is one of Australia's largest export earners the whole country has this thread running through it and it can't be then used as an argument to link two electorates because we all share that industry. It's probably the one industry that runs right through the whole country.

PN182

On page 19 of the Commission's report the Commission states that by amalgamating Parkes and Gwydir and then linking the rural areas with outer Sydney they were able to -

PN183

*Able to lessen the impact of some of New South Wales' most significant geographical and physical features on the drawing of electoral boundaries.*

PN184

I believe this is a disingenuous and self-justifying remark. How can anyone lessen the impact of 1 000-foot cliffs across acres of bush with probably 10 to 15 kilometres of inhabited land alongside the road, most of which is national park? That boundary between those areas of the mountains and to the west is the equivalent of Broken Bay. It's a very big demarcation line. I presently sell a brand of hot water system. The area head office refers to the area that I have as Central Tablelands. My area stops at Lithgow. Now, I think if you went around and looked at all other commercial operations who have reps or that sort of organisation throughout the State, I'm sure you'd find that most of them have areas that are demarcated as west or east of the mountains. That is a line where there is a very different set of circumstances for the people who live either side of that line. That's all I can say. Thank you for your time.

PN185

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Anything, Mr Trewin?

PN186

MR TREWIN: No, thank you.

PN187

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Mr Michael Hatton. He's apparently not here, well, we'll move on. Ms Anne McNiven. Yes, Ms McNiven.

PN188

MS MCNIVEN: My name is Anne McNiven, I live at 40 Green Lane, Orange. I am not part of any formal organisation other than voter in this country. I wish to discuss just briefly the Calare region but particularly the Parkes and wider areas. Having said that I am in the electorate of Calare, although I am not happy about the proposed changes to the boundaries for Calare, I was very sure that Peter Andren would and has documented that precisely as I would like it to have been done. He's a very valuable asset to our country. He is a great communicator, he's honest, he's fair, he's reliable and he's an extremely passionate man. He needs to be listened to and he needs to be heard and I hope that his suggestions are taken into fruition.

PN189

But my main objection is the loss of one voice in federal Parliament for rural New South Wales if the proposed amalgamation of Parkes and Gwydir seats is allowed. Communication is a basic need, a basic requirement. Once again we have this issue of coastal versus rural and people trying to be heard. Country people are tired of being treated as inferior, not counted, not valuable. Country people are frustrated by trying to be heard. To propose that a seat cover 47 per cent of the State of New South Wales is preposterous, bizarre, ridiculous, not practical, detrimental and idiotic.

PN190

For a Member to be expected to adequately service an area of this size is an enormous task, one I suspect is impossible. He or she, like the people that they would be trying to represent, face the unenviable issues of distance, isolation, roads and communications, the very things they are trying to improve. There is continuous talk to encourage populations and business west of that Great Divide. How aptly named it is. This proposal is detrimental to this challenge. I have lived

in the wider electorate for 10 years. When I was sent a form for my 20-year school reunion, it had a thing on it, travel. I went to school in Sydney. I wrote on that form:

PN191

*Travel? Everywhere from Moree, you travel.*

PN192

They all wanted to know if I'd been to Paris or London. I lived in Griffith for two years and I taught down there and I have lived in Sydney for 12 years over my lifetime. I was born here. I choose to live in Orange, so I understand and sympathise with the people of rural New South Wales and have lives in all these areas that are under question, so I appeal to you to listen and to hear the objections and the reasons that are put to you re these absurd proposed boundary changes. It is not too late for common sense and fairness to prevail. Why not just create another seat in Queensland?

PN193

MR BURCHETT: Anything you want to ask, Mr Trewin?

PN194

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN195

MR BURCHETT: Mr Roger Fletcher.

PN196

MR R FLETCHER: My name is Roger Fletcher.

PN197

MR BURCHETT: Would you also please try and keep your voice up and if you orientate yourself a fraction more to the left, because we're closer and we can hear you, certainly I can hear quite easily, but obviously if you don't speak a bit louder, other people won't.

PN198

MR FLETCHER: I noticed that down there. I represent a lot of farmers and a lot of employers and employees. We're the largest employer in the proposed new seat and started my life out as a drover, droving over all that country. I do understand some of the initiatives and problems we've got. Also I represent on a lot of boards and had a lot to do with federal parliamentarians over different access issues, into marketing and that and we're the largest private exporter in that region.

PN199

The abolition of Gwydir and the proposed new Parkes represents a mega seat. It further silences the voice of country people and devalues the people in the communities have one Member to get around an enormous geographic area. The proposed operations is that the area is getting smaller, but we've got to look, in the last five years we've had the worst drought in memory and that means we've had virtually no cotton crops, our stock numbers are down and that's had some influence on us, so you've got to take that, that it can turn around and I think that's quite possible, where we're going.

PN200

Dubbo should retain as the major centre of Parkes and one of the reasons for that is all the main roads and tentacles going up from there and that's where your infrastructure can come from, but to pull it all - to have 47 or 48 per cent of New South Wales under one seat I think has got a lot of dangers with it. One of the issues that we do need desperately and which will change the whole population is the road over the Blue Mountains and I can't believe it was the first road built in Australia and it's the oldest road so, therefore, it's still only a convict track. I think it's deplorable on the whole of this country and that's one of the greatest pushes we've got and I think that push will disappear with one seat disappearing.

PN201

Dubbo is the major area of livestock coming in. Our operations, we kill two million sheep and lambs a year which is the largest in Australia. We're the largest wool top making plant left in Australia and we see that as a major issue of trying to get into those export markets and we do need representatives to support us in that issue. It's very difficult to have 48 other Members in New South Wales and virtually one representing the rural side, to put up arguments that we do need in Parliament.

PN202

One of the major issues and one of my passions, which really concerns me is the breakdown of the Indigenous people. That I think is a disgrace to us, all of us as Australians and I think we can overcome the issue. We have the issues in Dubbo, we're working on it as a team, trying to make life better for them and that they can be part of the community. Losing one Member I think is really - they're probably the most people that's going to be hurt and that troubles me. It breaks my heart.

PN203

The mining industry is changing and there's a movement out there of more mining so we need more infrastructure and there'll be more people employed. The population is coming down. I think we'll turn around and one of the other issues that's changed that a lot is fighting to get the university at Dubbo, where people will stay in the country towns instead of moving to the city. As I look at Sydney, the last premier said it's full and if you look at the whole situation, this is only pushing to fill it up further and gridlock the place.

PN204

We've got water problems, sewerage problems, road problems and I think this is what - we're trying to push more people into the city. I can't believe we're going down this road. The other new industry that's on the horizon for us is the fuels, bio-diesel and ethanol, which will generate employment in those areas and I think that's one way of going forward. The other issue that really affects one Member in that wide area is floods. I know we've forgotten about them, but coming from my drover's background, black soil plains, you're not going to travel much.

PN205

When we have a big problem there, we'll need more than one Member to solve some of those flood problems of getting food to livestock, opening up the roads again and there's a huge lot of problems with that. The other issue out there, the health services and GPs, it's been a struggle to get people out there. We're working towards that and we've been going forward there, but this will put a stop to it and I just can't see where common sense prevails.

PN206

I come here passionately as a person of the people that work with me, the farmers that I represent and I just was shocked when this came up, because there are other ways around it. I believe you can divide the seats up a lot better and come up with examples that can work. Thank you.

PN207

MR BURCHETT: Anything you want to ask, Mr Trewin?

PN208

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN209

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Fletcher. Mr Graeme Faulkner, the general manager of Hawkesbury City Council, is he here? Yes.

PN210

MR FAULKNER: Thank you, Mr Chairman, panel members, Mr Trewin, and thank you for the opportunity to present today at such short notice. My name is Graeme Faulkner. I am the General Manager of the Hawkesbury City Council and I am here representing the Mayor at his request at short notice.

PN211

MR BURCHETT: Would you also try and keep your voice up, please?

PN212

MR FAULKNER: Council has in fact lodged a submission with the Commission and I believe that's been looked at. My presentation should be very quick, less than four to five minutes. I should say at the outset that council is totally supportive of the committee's and the Commission's deliberation in this matter. We understand that the Commission and the committee is always caught between a rock and a hard place and council identifies with that increasingly and local government.

PN213

We're certainly not here to criticise anything that's before the committee, but, rather, to ask the committee to consider something that council believes has been unfolding in recent times and that's more to do with the development of the north-west sector which is proximate to both the Greenway and Macquarie electoral divisions. Council was in its submission focused on the process that was involved in developing the federal electoral boundaries.

PN214

That process looked at the cohort component algorithm, the subsequent consultation that occurred through the census district officers and the relevant statutory authorities and council and that process from our point of view was bona fide. It's just occurred to us more recently that as part of that process and certainly where council officers were involved in consultation that in projecting the population numbers for 3.5 years from the original date set, when it came to considering the possibilities of the growth in the north-west sector, from our council officers' point of view, that was not facilitated.

PN215

They took that as perhaps impacting population growth in some five years out, so from council's point of view, through that consultation process, we didn't raise that

as an issue and I understand it may not have been raised as an issue in considering the population growth in the northwest sector. If our suspicions are correct and the growth is going to far exceed what was anticipated in that 3.5 years, then it may well be that it has an impact on the Greenway Macquarie division boundary, shifting it slightly to east with subsequent impacts on other boundaries accordingly. I think basically that's what I'm wanting to say, Mr Chairman.

PN216

The concern is simply that if, in fact that analysis is correct and we haven't properly catered for through our consultation process, the impact to the north-west sector, there are forces at play now both through the market and also as a result of state government processes that are going to bring a lot of that population growth on far sooner than we expected. There are a number of press releases that have been made by the state minister for planning, talking in terms of 3 200 new homes in Sydney's north-west with the MP for Riverstone, John Aquilina, saying that residents were expected to move in as early as 2007. Just to give you an idea of some of the pressure that's been brought about by the state government for the growth to continue as early as possible, these quotes attributed to Mr Sartor as recently as this year, quote:

PN217

*Under the new growth centre's commission, the time it takes to get land to the market can be slashed from seven years to as little as three years and in order to bring as much land onto the market as quickly as possible, a precinct acceleration protocol will be developed for other areas within the growth centres.*

PN218

They're talking in terms of 12 500 new developments possibly within the three and a half year period used under the projection process adopted by the Electoral Commission, so council's position summarily is that it would respectfully request consideration be given to the impact to the north-west growth sector and the potential for those population projections to be brought forward, whereas previously on the basis of evidence that we have through our consultation process, we dismissed that and that it was a five year plus horizon.

PN219

The indications are that it's going to occur a lot sooner than later and certainly council has asked me to indicate to you also that as far as the Hawkesbury Local Government Authority is concerned, we are split at state level in three different ways at the moment, so we're well represented at state level and so I guess Hawkesbury is well positioned to cope for any further splits, should that occur. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

PN220

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Before you go, Mr Trewin, do you have any - - -

PN221

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN222

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN223

MR FAULKNER: Thank you very much.

PN224

MR BURCHETT: Mr Craig Bauman. I apologise if I've got your name wrong. You can tell us your name when you arrive. Have I pronounced it correctly or not?

PN225

MR BAUMAN: Pretty close, Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, commissioners, my name is Craig Bauman. I'm the Mayor of Port Stephens and I speak on behalf of the council and the community of Port Stephens. Port Stephens is a rural community that occupies an area of 980 square kilometres and has a population of only 63 000. I'm here to support a minor change in what the AEC is proposing to keep the rural hub of the Port Stephens Local Government Area within the Patterson electorate.

PN226

I have the unanimous support of my fellow councillors on Port Stephens council, as well as the councils of Great Lakes and Dungog. Council would respectfully disagree with the commission's original proposal, paragraph 110, that, quote:

PN227

*Raymond Terrace and Williamtown had a strong community of interest with Newcastle.*

PN228

Other than that we are adjoining Local Government Areas and we both happen to support the Knights, there are no public transport links with Newcastle and no private bus service between 6 pm and 6 am. Port Stephens has no public transport, rail or state buses and most private transport is hubbed around Raymond Terrace. The physical geography of the proposed Patterson electoral boundaries provides no reasonable access for the community to a major service centre due to waterways and other physical constraints.

PN229

In fact, the physical link between Port Stephens and Newcastle is via two bridges, Stockton Bridge and the Hexham Bridge and most government services are available in Raymond Terrace and Raymond Terrace provides a service centre for the existing Patterson electorate and most of the residents of Port Stephens. Services available in Raymond Terrace and used by the whole community are shopping, health, education, with two of the three high schools in Port Stephens situated in Raymond Terrace, state and federal agencies, local media and, in fact, the only banks servicing most of the Local Government Area are in Raymond Terrace.

PN230

RAAF Williamtown is our major employer with 3 500 personnel, the majority of whom reside on the peninsulas and Medowie. The Williamtown weapons range consultative committee was formed four years ago to discuss the issues that affect the Department of Defence, the RAAF and the community and the major issue there is noise and will probably continue to be noise. Under the proposed changes, the cause of that noise will be in Newcastle. The effect will fall in Patterson and I can't see how that committee will continue to function.



PN231

In summary, Mr Chairman, commissioners, Raymond Terrace is the regional, commercial, transport and social hub of the Port Stephens Local Government Area and Paterson. As Mayor and councillor, splitting the Local Government Area will complicate the management of the Local Government Area and divide what is a rural community. I've worked well with both Labor and Liberal Members for Paterson. This is not about politics; this is about keeping a regional community united. Thank you.

PN232

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Bauman. Mr Spencer Ferrier, is he here now?

PN233

MR FERRIER: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

PN234

MR BURCHETT: If you would please bear in mind what several others have had to be told. Speak up if you can and tend to face away diagonally so the people at the back can hear you.

PN235

MR FERRIER: Thank you very much, Chairman. My name is Spencer Ferrier. I'm a private citizen and the region of interest is the Parkes wider electorate division. I'm a former office-holder in the National Party. I'm a former president of the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales. I'm a lawyer in private practice. In the course of these activities, I've had the opportunity to travel across New South Wales extensively over nearly 30 years, much of it by aircraft and thanks to my previous connections, in consultation and company with politicians and it is to the political side of the electorate division that I would like to draw attention.

PN236

In particular, the areas which represent western and northwestern New South Wales, are remote, they are connected by roads of poor standards. Some of them have been upgraded and are acceptable, but many are dirt roads. Over the course of my connection with the National Party, two Members have very sadly lost family members in car crashes whilst they have been travelling the staggering distances that we who live in the city and I do live in the city, have no conception about.

PN237

Those who travel the distances that those politicians travel often travel the distances that we wouldn't think about doing on our holidays, on a driving holiday, and that's a matter of great concern to me. I believe that the creation of an electorate the size of the amalgamated electorate that is proposed will put a pressure not only on the voters in that region, but pressure on our entire political system with particular attention to those who have to service the voters as politicians.

PN238

A politician should do more than go to Canberra and sleep and that's about all a politician can do if he is really going to care for an electorate of the size that's now proposed. I really believe that it has paid no fair attention to the demands of the people who will represent those in that area and insofar as it doesn't pay fair attention to those people, there is no fair attention paid to the voters themselves.

With that in mind, my proposal would be that if there is to be an electorate reduced in this state, it should not come from western New South Wales.

PN239

It's quite evident from anybody who is aware of life in this city that alteration to boundaries is really a matter of little or no consequence insofar as the crucial matters of access to a political representative and the ability of a political representative to represent the people in the Parliaments. They have all of the facilities necessary whilst those who live in these distant areas and we're very proud of our remote Australia, those people are not getting a fair go.

PN240

Mr Chairman, there are many areas and communities in western New South Wales. It's quite evident to one who has travelled in all of these regions that there are separate areas, but nonetheless they're areas that share a sense of region and insofar as they are to be treated as regions, those regions should take into account the commonality of interest and the facility of being able to be represented. Sadly, there are almost no air services in this state. That means that trips must be made by roads.

PN241

Again, it would be a very serious proposition that even leaving the electorates as they stand, it would be a proper and reasonable thing to do to call for any representative in these regions to be serviced with an aircraft, to avoid the man breaking distances that really do have to be faced. There are regions like Lightning Ridge and Walgett which have got very special areas of interest and insofar as they are to be tied in with, proposed, the region of say Lake Cargelligo or even the remote region out around Broken Hill, in my view doesn't make any sense.

PN242

I think that if there is to be a reduction or an increase in area, it is no place to do it in this region because no politician can fairly represent those with these areas. I have seen life in Wilcannia and we're well aware because it makes it into the newspapers here that those who live in Wilcannia see lawyers and public servants drop from the sky only to condemn them for their behaviour and then disappear again. The people in Wilcannia really don't have much community of interest with the east and if they are to be taken away from Broken Hill, I think that we are doing the people of Wilcannia a serious disservice insofar as their political representation is concerned.

PN243

I have focused my words on the matter of the wider Parkes amalgamation and, of course, I'm aware that that includes some snipping off of the edges and the most significant snip-off of the edge, which I also wish to object to is the inclusion of Broken Hill in Farrar. In my view, exactly the same conditions apply and my recollection is most clear of attending the funeral of Noel Hicks who, having been elected with half a period to go, ran up a quarter of a million kilometres in half an electorate period, trying to service an electorate between Broken Hill and Griffith and coming down to Wagga.

PN244

It would seem to me that it's essential to take into account the fact that those big distances also exist in the electorate of Farrer. If a politician is going to have to seriously travel between Albury and Broken Hill, he's not really going to do the job that we in this community vote people to Parliament to do. We've been very lucky that we've had men of great stature look after people in these areas, but they have not done so in these areas where they would indeed spend most of their life travelling. That's the submission, commissioners. I believe that if there is to be a reduction of seats, that reduction should occur in a place where it is more commensurate with the interests of the people of the state as a whole and in particular pays close attention to the welfare of those in far and remote areas for whom a visit to a politician or by a politician should not be a matter of extraordinary unusual part of their life. Thank you.

PN245

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Ferrier. Any comment, Mr Trewin?

PN246

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN247

MR FERRIER: Thank you, commissioner.

PN248

MR BURCHETT: I believe Mr Michael Paag is now here and as we've completed our schedule before lunch, we've got time to take you now, Mr Paag.

PN249

MR PAAG: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name is Michael Paag. I am a private citizen. I live in Blackheath in the Blue Mountains and I wish to talk about the seat of Macquarie. The reason why I come here today and take the time to present to you in relation to the changes to the seat of Macquarie is my concern about the impact of including the area of Bathurst and Lithgow and the impact that that will have on the seat of Macquarie and its constituents.

PN250

My wife and I live in Blackheath. We travel each day by train to work in the city. We, along with many other people in the upper Blue Mountains, work in the city. We conduct our affairs in the City of Sydney or in the area of Penrith. We have an eastward direction in our focus. From my contacts in Blackheath as a member of the Blackheath Chamber of Commerce, I would say that I know of no one who lives in Blackheath and works in Bathurst.

PN251

The upper Blue Mountains is focused on tourism of which we depend upon the Sydney market. Our area is focused towards Sydney; our services are Sydney based. Our media is Sydney based. Our shopping and our recreational facilities are Sydney based. I say that in splitting the - in adding the areas of Bathurst and Lithgow to the electorate will complicate an arrangement that currently benefits a national heritage area being the Blue Mountains and will create potential conflicts because the area of Bathurst is by nature an agricultural area that is dependent upon the agricultural produce of the areas surrounding, whereas the Blue Mountains depending upon tourism, most of which comes from the Sydney area, is primarily focused eastward.

PN252

In coming to you today, I'd say that in the Blue Mountains, the focus being Sydney dependent would extend further. Primarily, all our services are Sydney based. You often hear of people having to travel to Sydney for medical services or to access other services that aren't provided in our area, whether it be government or whether it be legal or more professional services. I don't often see, I don't often hear of people travelling to Bathurst to access these services.

PN253

I would say, too, that in coming here today, that the area of Bathurst is very different to the area of the Blue Mountains. It has different needs; it has a different focus. Its community is faced with different challenges to what our communities faced. Being an environmentally sensitive area, we are very conscious of the environment and because of our tourism base, we need to protect our environment and maintain that focus.

PN254

Our current arrangement, whereby we have included in the areas of Hawkesbury and the lower Blue Mountains, enables us to focus primarily on the needs of the electorate as a whole and I feel that if we were to split the electorate by adding Bathurst, it would stretch and re-divert the focus away from what is really primarily the main aim of the Blue Mountains and that is to look after its local businesses, to promote tourism and to promote those that live in the Blue Mountains who primarily work in the Sydney basin.

PN255

Our train services are focused towards Sydney; our highway is focused towards Sydney. I'd say that in coming to you today, if we were to have Bathurst in our seat, it would mean that it would pose great difficulties for many of our constituents to access the local Member. Currently the local Member is located in Springwood, which is a short drive or reasonable train trip. If we were to have an area - if we were to include Bathurst, it would mean that most likely the sitting Member would have to have his office in Bathurst, being a large town. This would mean that for those who live in the Blue Mountains, especially the mid Blue Mountains, it would pose great difficulties for them to access their local Member and I, like many others in the Blue Mountains who work in the city and travel each day, would find it difficult to arrange times to travel to a Bathurst office to visit our local Member to discuss issues of that nature.

PN256

Currently, we have an arrangement whereby our local Member is available either after hours at a reasonable notice or early on the weekends which suits parents who have children, who take their children to sporting events and it also suits those who are working in the city area who then can make arrangements to come up by train and drop in to Springwood, or by car, drop into Springwood to visit their local Member to discuss their concerns.

PN257

My parents who live in Mount Victoria also work in the Sydney area and they travel each day by train to Sydney. I would say to you that they don't have a car and for them to travel to Bathurst to visit there, if the Member was located in Bathurst, would take a three and a half to four hour round trip at least and that's only allowing a small window, given the very limited public transport services

that are provided to Bathurst from the Blue Mountains area, bearing in mind we only have a two hour train service to Lithgow and from that, there's only about three or four buses per day from Lithgow to Bathurst, so for someone who doesn't have a car or for an elderly person who can no longer drive, that would pose great difficulties for them to make a trip to visit their local Member, my parents primarily being included in that group.

PN258

So I ask you today, as someone who lives in Blackheath and who is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, who is also a director of the Blue Mountains Credit Union and a member of the Commuters' Association, highlighting the transport concerns that we have, especially public transport, the distances that will now be presented for those living in the Blue Mountains to have to travel to Bathurst if their local Member was based there and which we must say the likelihood of that would be very real given the size of Bathurst, would present great difficulties and I think would limit the ability of the local Member to provide the service of which we in the Blue Mountains are accustomed to.

PN259

I would say, too, that as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, businesses are very concerned on trying to get tourism opportunities from Sydney. The focus is Sydney. We are trying desperately to get more people from Sydney to come. I'd say that in all our promotions of our area, none of them is based at Bathurst; none of them is based westward. The focus is eastward. The focus on the whole Blue Mountains is eastward. Whether it be international tourists, whether it be interstate tourists or Sydney based tourists to come up, our economy in the upper Blue Mountains is very tourism dependent.

PN260

I'd say if you look at the break-up of our electorate, 50 per cent of the people in the Blue Mountains leave the Blue Mountains each day by car or by train and I'd say 95 per cent of that 50 per cent would be for work in the Sydney basin. The other 50 per cent that are employed in our electorate are employed in businesses of which the majority are connected or dependent upon tourism. Therefore, I would say to you that given the Sydney focus for tourism which is a key factor in our economy, given that our transport links are Sydney focused and given the weaknesses of our existing and our public transport for the westward part of Bathurst, given that we are included in Sydney and treated as part of Sydney for our water, our electricity, given that our current arrangements with the local Member having his office in Springwood which services the people of the Blue Mountains very well, given that we have an environment that is totally different to Bathurst and has different needs, different challenges and is not agriculturally affected or dependent, I would say to you that to change the boundaries of our seat and to include Bathurst and those areas in our seat would disadvantage the Blue Mountains, the people of the Blue Mountains and I think would result in the people of the Blue Mountains having a lower standard of government representation in Canberra, it would result in a local Member having conflicting interests, especially in the area of the environment and in tourism.

PN261

I would say to you that having an electorate that's split, ie. on the one hand having a national environment heritage to an agricultural base would also present other

challenges. I would also say to you that having the City of Bathurst included in our electorate would see the down-grading of the focus of the federal Member on our area and so I say to you today that I think the best thing for the people of the Blue Mountains is in any consideration of a boundary change that these issues be taken into account and factored in so that at the end of the day, we get the best result for the people of the Blue Mountains as a whole and that's my submission for you today and I thank you for the opportunity of allowing me to speak. Thank you.

PN262

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Paag.

PN263

MR EASSON: Your Honour, I am Shane Easson from the Labor Party. I would just like to make a comment about the number of hearings that's been raised. I don't intend to discuss any aspect of the redistribution submission, but it would take me about five minutes. I would like to place on the public record our concerns over the fact that the commission has only decided to hold hearings on two days.

PN264

Your Honour, this is the fourth public hearing for a federal redistribution in New South Wales. Public hearings were established, when the Electoral Act was changed in 1983 by the Hawke government. In 1984 and I've been at each of these hearings representing the Labor Party, there were 411 objections, two days of hearing in Sydney, two days in Griffith. In 1991 there were 190 objections, four hearing days were in Sydney and one in Wagga Wagga.

PN265

In the year 2000 I admit there was only one hearing day. I complained at the time to Mr Farrell's predecessor over that aspect, but as it turned out, there weren't that many contentious or major objections and the parties got through with Patterson and Parramatta, but I think it's important for the Commission to realise why the Act was changed in 1983. It means that the electoral process of this country fitted better with the tradition of increasing public accountability for public action. The Commission in this instance in our view with a number of objections received are going against past practice and the trend of greater public accountability.

PN266

Now, in our view, in the future the Commission should reserve more days. They should prior to announcing the number and the place of hearing days, they should discuss with the political parties and others how many issues, how long they would need to present. We accept that you've decided to have two hearing days only, but we ask in the future and I'm only putting this on the record now that it's a better thing in conforming with the Act to err on the side of caution when you're deciding the number of hearing days and also accept that there is an obligation for the Commission to listen to as well as receive in writing objections and so forth.

PN267

MR BURCHETT: Thank you, Mr Easson. The Commission does recognise that there is the desire that we listen as well as read, but by one means or the other or both, the objections have been so far at least conveyed to us and they are able in that way to be considered, but we will take your comment on board. You would



be aware that one of the factors that we have to be influenced by is the timetable that the legislation lays down and we can't go outside that.

PN268

MR EASSON: It would allow you a couple more days.

PN269

MR BURCHETT: Well, it might, but at any rate, we will now go to lunch. I'm just wondering, since you are here and you are scheduled to be the first after lunch, whether you would like to bring that forward to 1 o'clock, since we're finishing a fraction early.

PN270

MR EASSON: I think I can. I can cover areas to which I don't have - - -

PN271

MR BURCHETT: It's not an invitation, of course, to take any longer than you intended to take. We'll bring others forward, too, and it just makes for a little extra flexibility. Very well, we'll try to resume at least by five past one, anyway.

**<LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

**[12.02P.M.]**

**<RESUMED**

**[1.06P.M.]**

PN272

MR BURCHETT: Are you ready, Mr Easson.

PN273

MR EASSON: You'd prefer me to go there?

PN274

MR BURCHETT: I would prefer you to go there so that other people can hear you. I think you were probably here when attention was drawn to the fact the acoustics are not good in this room, unfortunately. These things are not amplifiers, but recorders, and the same would apply to the one in front of you, so if you can look out ahead of you rather than with your back to the audience. We can hear you, we're closer to you. Make sure they can hear you, too.

PN275

MR EASSON: It might depend on whom I think is my real audience today. Your Honour, thank you for the opportunity to address you on behalf of the Labor Party. I would like to begin by dealing with the appeal which we'll describe in general terms as the Eden-Monaro appeal and for that appeal, I have the Member for Monaro, Steve Whan, to speak in particular about the Tumut Tumbarumba proposal by the Commission to place those two Local Government Areas within Eden-Monaro. What will happen is I'll just talk briefly about the rest of that particular submission. Steve Whan will speak for a few minutes and then we'll deal with the next matter which will be Parramatta, if that's okay with you.

PN276

MR BURCHETT: Yes, go ahead.

PN277

MR EASSON: Thank you. Your Honour, I mentioned earlier that Steve Whan will deal with Tumut and Tumbarumba. I will leave those places alone for now.

However, I also accept or we accept that that's the core basis of our appeal, that the Labor Party opposes these shires coming in. If we look at the rest of the ALP objection, I ask the commissioners to note that the Liberal Party objection, like the Labor Party objection, tries to place Gundagai from your proposed Riverina into Hume. We're the same in regard to that aspect.

PN278

The Liberal Party also proposes that Murrumbidgee Local Government Area go into Riverina. The Labor Party tries to do the same. What the Labor Party does, if we can deal with the division anti-clockwise, starting with Farrer, we put Tumbarumba back in. We put into Riverina both the shires of Murrumbidgee and Hay. You have representation, notably from the Member for Riverina, Kay Hull, arguing why Hay should go into Riverina. In the case of Murrumbidgee, you've got that shire putting in an objection requesting that they remain in that division instead of being, as proposed, taken out.

PN279

Now, many, many years ago, I used to work for Jack Hallam from 1978 to 84. He was at one time the New South Wales minister for agriculture. He came from Griffith and for many years, I used to go to Griffith and I consider myself for a city slicker quite familiar with that area and I can assure you, your Honour, as we put in our objection, that if we're dealing with the core MIA towns which in our view should not be split if it's possible not to do so, those towns are Griffith, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera.

PN280

The current Riverina contains all four of those Local Government Areas. The Labor Party objection retains all four of those Local Government Areas together. By placing those two Local Government Areas, Hay and Murrumbidgee, back into Riverina where they are currently, we remove Gundagai with Riverina and the only change required for that division. Now, if we look at the Gundagai, Tumut, Cootamundra, Junee, Yass, Harden and so forth, Young, they would be considered in a geographic sense as part of the old Burrinjuck area, if we can describe an area that has contained a state electorate for time immemorial.

PN281

Under the Commissioners' proposal, that area is to be split three ways between Riverina, Hume and Eden-Monaro. I'm referring here to Tumut in Eden-Monaro. Under the Labor proposal, the Burrinjuck area would be split between Hume and Riverina. There is a history of the areas either being placed in a division called Hume when it doesn't contain Wagga Wagga or in an adjoining division incorporating Wagga Wagga, so in times gone by, you have Wagga Wagga part of Hume. Presently and for some years, it hasn't been part of Hume, but my general point is that these areas are in general terms either in Hume or in a division with Riverina. That has been the historic connection since time immemorial.

PN282

Dealing quickly now with Hume and Gilmore, in the case of Moss Vale, currently in Gilmore proposed by the Commissioners to be taken out, we put it back in to Gilmore. Now, admittedly that means that the Commissioners' intention of not splitting Wingecarribee shire, you intend to put it all together in a division, we don't do that. However, we believe that the argument for retaining the current

northwest boundary of Gilmore is very powerful when you consider our point about Tumut and Tumbarumba.

PN283

Moreover, Moss Vale has been in Gilmore since it was created in 1984 and secondly the current boundary between Gilmore and Hume has been in place since 1991, so whilst you have a shire split, you have a separate town, separated from the other major centres within Wingecarribee shire and that's why Commissioners in the past have decided if we need to split the shire, we put that section in Gilmore. The final point before I call on Steve Whan is in regard to the boundary between Gilmore and Eden-Monaro.

PN284

Both the Commissioners' proposal and the ALP objection split Eurobodalla shire. We can't do otherwise. I did read a submission from former Democrat Queensland senator John Cherry saying that Snowy Mountains could go out of Eden-Monaro and that way, you wouldn't need to split the shire, but for the same reasons, why we oppose Tumut and Tumbarumba going in, we would oppose that suggestion, so you would have no recourse then to split Eurobodalla shire.

PN285

The Commissioners looking at their proposal, I assume that they took great care not to try and split Batemans Bay and that was a possibility as you were looking at your proposal, but the Labor Party objection actually makes use of the river at Batemans Bay, to put it all in Eden-Monaro and you've got a clearer - bearing in mind that we have to split the shire, a clearer boundary than the good boundary that the Commissioners came up with, but our boundary in our view is even better because it makes use of the river. Your Honour, that sums up what we do elsewhere and I'd like to call on Steve Whan, the Member for Monaro.

PN286

MR WHAN: Your Honour and Commissioners, as was said, I'm Steve Whan. I'm the state Member for Monaro, so I represent the shires of Snowy River, Bombala and Cooma Monaro in the state Parliament as well as Queanbeyan and ..... but I have four points that I wanted to make about the suggestion that the Tumut and Tumbarumba shires should come into the federal electorate of Eden-Monaro and basically that mountain range which is there, which is Australia's highest mountain range, has been the natural boundary for Eden-Monaro for the entire time of its existence, so it's a federation seat and that boundary has been there for that time.

PN287

I wanted to make four points relating to arguments which I've seen, the Snowy Hydro to the nature of travel between the areas, the forestry argument and tourism. As I said, the mountain range in the area there is a natural boundary, it has been since the seat was first founded and, of course, the mountain range which is Australia's highest, along the main range has been a good natural boundary and a logical boundary for the communities as well, because over many years it was in the winter time impassable. It was difficult even to get to Kiandra for many, many years. Now, of course, global warming and improvements in snow clearing have made that better, but it is still a natural boundary.

PN288

There's a point, which has been made which is that the proposed boundary to bring in Tumut and Tumbarumba shire would unite the areas covered by the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Now, the Snowy Mountains Scheme certainly does cover that whole area, but it's not something which actually gives them all the same community of interest. There are very different interests in the Snowy Scheme on the eastern and western side of the mountain range and the most fundamental of those is the fact that the western side of the range has the water flowing down it, diverted from the eastern side of the range, so the problems and the issues which face Tumut, for instance, are that the Tumut River for example often has too much water going down it and that causes its own problems.

PN289

On the other side of the mountain, the Snowy River has not enough going down and so there is sometimes conflicting objectives there about who gets water, about where the diversion goes and how you look after the environment in that area. The Liberal submission or objections I noticed, comments on our objections, stated that uniting the area would mean they all had a common interest, for instance, in the recent fight to save the Snowy scheme.

PN290

Well, in fact, that's one thing which illustrates the different interests for the region because one of the shires, Tumut I think it was, of the two on the western side, actually supported the sale of Snowy, privatisation of Snowy, while the shires that I represent in the Parliament, the New South Wales Parliament, Cooma, Monaro, Bombala and Snowy River are all vehemently opposed to the sale and privatisation of the Snowy Scheme, so there's some very different issues there and I don't believe that the Snowy Scheme's presence is something which unites and creates a community of interest.

PN291

The nature of travelling directly between the two areas is a really key issue and the submissions put the Snowy Mountains Highway as being the key road link community of interest. In fact, in our region traditionally and still to this day, the Monaro Highway is the link which provides the community of interest and that runs north/south from the shires of Snowy River, Cooma Monaro up to Queanbeyan and it leads the natural trade and service traffic that way. The shires of Tumbarumba and Tumut tend to find their service centres in Wagga and Albury and their highways lead there.

PN292

Yes, the Snowy Mountains Highway, as the Liberal comments pointed out, is a sealed highway and in the summer time it is in good condition, but in the winter time there are still occasions where you need to use chains and it is in peak season and in a decent winter which we haven't had this year, but in a decent winter you have to carry chains to get either to or drive along those roads. There was a weekend where I was actually on that highway in 2004 where the road was cut and it was compulsory to use chains on the road that weekend and on that weekend, I actually witnessed, for instance, a four-wheel drive unsuccessfully trying to get a horse float up the road just out of Adaminaby which is not very far up the road. It was unable to get there, so it is not uncommon in the winter for that road to be not a particularly good means of communication between Tumut

and Snowy River Shire and that's why over many, many years the community links have not developed in the same way as community of interest has developed to the north in the area.

PN293

The issue of forestry industries was raised by the Liberal comments, where they said that there was a community of interest between Bombala and the Tumut and Tumbarumba shires because they all have a plantation pine forest industry. Now, it's true that Bombala shire does have a plantation pine forest industry, but so does Albury, so does Oberon and in many senses, Tumut and Tumbarumba's link to the Albury plantation forest industry is far stronger than it is to Bombala.

PN294

The Liberal comments suggested that Bombala forests have their product processed at the Visy mill at Tumut. In fact, there is very limited chip which goes to there as a by-product of what the mills actually process in Bombala and there are two mills currently in Bombala, hopefully another one developing soon, but the Bombala timber is processed at the Timberman's mill in Bombala - sorry, a Timberman's mill is about to be built which will process the mills there and they also truck timber to a mill at Hume, along the Monaro highway which is in the ACT and by the Wilmot Forests mill which is in Bombala.

PN295

There is very little link across the Snowy Mountains Highway to Tumut for that forest industry and there is even less link for the actual people who work in the industry, so I think that's something which shows that the community of interest based on forestry is not something which is a legitimate community of interest for the area. The other area, which is noted is the ski industry and there is a comment in the Liberal Party comments which suggests that the Snowy Mountains Highway is a key route of access to the ski industry for Victorian skiers who wish to travel to the New South Wales ski fields.

PN296

In the winter, the fact is that the vast majority of people who come to the New South Wales ski fields do so down the Monaro Highway from points north. People from Albury and from Victoria tend to go to Falls Creek and Mount Hotham and those Victorian ski centres, so they do that because again the road links take them that way in a much easier fashion than does the Snowy Mountains Highway across to the New South Wales ski fields.

PN297

The Snowy Mountains Highway is used to access the Selwyn ski fields which is a point made in one of the submissions, but again that's generally done from the Adaminaby or the Snowy River shire end of those ski fields and, in fact, as I said before, you often need chains to actually get that far, so in summary, Commissioners, I really just want to emphasise the point that for the communities in the region, that mountain range which is the main range of the highest mountain range in Australia, is a natural geographic boundary and it's a natural boundary on community of interest.

PN298

There is points which are made about Tumut, for instance, having common interests with Queanbeyan because they're near the ACT, but what that ignores is

the fact that there is a range and a national park in between those two centres. There's no direct road between Tumut, for instance, at the ACT, which is sealed, there's a very bad dirt road. There was one suggestion there on water, which suggests that they might share similar interests with Queanbeyan on trying to get access to ACT water. The water would have to flow over hill and over a mountain range to do that. It's not a practical link for the area, so, Commissioners, I really would like to emphasise that from a local point of view in the area, the community of interest is with the north and that is why I think that over the 105 years that Eden-Monaro has existed, its boundaries have tended to move at the northern end of the electorate, rather than at the western side where the main range is.

PN299

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes, Mr Easson.

PN300

MR EASSON: If there are no questions, I'll go to Parramatta.

PN301

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin, do you want to ask a question at this stage, or will we hear Mr Easson out?

PN302

MR TREWIN: Yes, we'll hear him out.

PN303

MR BURCHETT: Yes, carry on.

PN304

MR EASSON: Thank you again. Your Honour, we have Julie Owens, the Member for Parramatta, as part of the ALP case. As the Commissioners are familiar, the ALP objection tried to make changes to four different divisions, but I'd like to start, were I one of you, one of the Commissioners, I would be asking myself, well, shouldn't we put all of Parramatta in Reid and I was just arguing about a name and that is the point which Julie Owens will be addressing you on, but suffice to say that we heard earlier this morning witnesses talking about the regional importance of Parramatta and so forth, but when we deal at the local level with Parramatta, I would ask the Commissioners to consider whether there are some suburbs that relate more closely with Parramatta CBD than others and, furthermore, have the Commissioners placed those suburbs which relate most to Parramatta CBD in the same division.

PN305

Now, in answer to that question, the Commissioners have placed a significant number of those suburbs that relate most to Parramatta CBD into Reid, but not all. Some are left out and remain in Parramatta and that is why the ALP is trying to change the nature of the boundaries of that division and, incidentally, we also acknowledge the efforts of the Liberal Party, albeit from a different starting point, I think the border was South Australia and Queensland at the far corner of the state, but they end up in Parramatta, a different starting point, but they tried to do the same thing.



PN306

Now, let's look at those suburbs which relate most to Parramatta. One of those suburbs is Westmead. The Commissioners have split that suburb between Parramatta and Reid. Another suburb is North Parramatta. That has been placed under the Commissioners' proposal in Parramatta. A further suburb is Northmead. The Commissioners admittedly do put half of Westmead, Harris Park and Rosehill in their division together with Parramatta CBD, but they've kind of split Parramatta CBD as well as these earlier suburbs which I've identified.

PN307

Moreover, I said earlier that there are some suburbs in this area that more relate to the CBD than others. The ones that I've just been talking about, ie. those suburbs split between your proposed Parramatta and Reid relate strongly to the CBD. If we look at, say, the Telopea, Ermington type area, there is a major shopping centre in Ermington. They have less need to shop at Parramatta. The other suburbs don't have the large shopping centres. If we're looking at Carlingford, for example, you've got Castlewood shopping centre in Castle Hill. They're all part of Baulkham Hills council where the seat of government is at Castle Hill.

PN308

Now, I'm trying to be quick, but let me just, before I call on Julie Owens, deal with the changes with Greenway and Mitchell that we seek to achieve under our objection. In the case of Greenway, we put an area southeast of the little triangle here, if you're looking at your map, bordered by Sunnyholt Road and Old Windsor Road. That area, if you went to the other side of Sunnyholt Road, you would see industrial, you would also see a little further north newer suburbs of Blacktown Council.

PN309

What the ALP does via its objection here is it actually unites the suburb of Kings Langley, which under the Commissioners' proposal would be split between the divisions of Parramatta and Greenway. Moreover, when we're looking at the - we take an area out of Greenway, you've got to put an area back in. As we mentioned in our objection, we put Rouse and Rouse Hill together in our appeal. They're on either side of Old Windsor Road and they're both relatively new suburbs.

PN310

In the case of Mitchell, I earlier referred to Carlingford, currently in Parramatta, proposed by the Commissioners to remain in Parramatta, but which we propose should go to Mitchell. I mentioned earlier that Carlingford is part of Baulkham Hills LGA. It has less strong connection, I'm not saying it doesn't have connections with Parramatta, but its connections with Parramatta are less strong than those areas, which we seek to incorporate together with the CBD.

PN311

In the case of the change, the Liberals referred to this funny mushroom head or whatever with our proposed Reid, but I ask the Commissioners to note that under their proposal, they split the Telopea, Ermington area between three divisions, they being Parramatta, Bennelong and Reid. What we do is we make that split between two divisions, Reid with a 5 000-odd electors with the Commissioners' proposal in Bennelong. We do less of a split of that community than what do the Commissioners.

PN312

In the case of Reid jumping over the Parramatta River, well, that's been done by the Commissioners, but I ask the Commissioners to note that in that area, Rosehill, both sides of the Parramatta River are within Parramatta Local Government Area, Parramatta state electorate and the existing division of Parramatta. Trying to be quick, I'll now ask Julie Owens to address you, unless you have any questions.

PN313

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN314

MS OWENS: Good afternoon. I'm Julie Owens. I'm the federal Member for Parramatta and I'm adding to the Labor Party objection for Parramatta. The proposed electorate of Parramatta essentially contains five large communities with the services and social centres of each of those communities based outside of the electorate. We seek to consolidate five of those split communities unfortunately not perfectly. We couldn't do that without impacting on a large number of electorates and we tried to limit, so it's not a perfect solution at all, but we do believe it's better.

PN315

One of the reasons why those communities are split is that the community led services that provide services to those areas are largely supported by local councils over many years and they tend to grow within those council boundaries and concentrate around the council nodes. We have four nodes surrounding the new Parramatta, but none in Parramatta. Baulkham Hills is centred around Castle Hill to the north, the Blacktown LGA is at Blacktown which is in Greenway, the Parramatta LGA centres around Parramatta which is in the new proposed Reid and the Wentworthville area is centred in Holroyd which is down in Merrylands.

PN316

Add to that that the five areas are covered by three major local paper regions which don't overlap, add the shopping centres which are largely all outside of the new Parramatta, Carlingford shops in Mitchell or Bennelong, North Rocks shops in Mitchell, Telopea Dundas shops in the new Bennelong, Northmead, North Parramatta shops in the new Reid, Wentworthville does actually shop in Wentworthville but also Parramatta, that's the exception and the new Blacktown regions tend to shop in Greenway and Blacktown.

PN317

The employment hubs are in Greenway and Reid and Epping. The universities are now in every electorate around Parramatta, including the TAFEs. They're in Mitchell, Greenway, Reid and Epping, but not in the new Parramatta. The transport hubs are in Greenway, the new Reid and Bennelong, but not in Parramatta and what you have is very strong recognisable communities, that each have stronger links outside of the electorate of Parramatta than they do within it.

PN318

I'll name the five, just in case I don't get to them all in the time frame. There's Parramatta and its urban fringe. There's Rydalmere, Telopea, Dundas, Ermington. There's Carlingford, North Rocks in the north. There's Seven Hills, Kings Langley and there's Toongabbie, Old Toongabbie, Wentworthville, Pendle Hill,

Girraween. We propose as I said to consolidate those five areas. Firstly, the Parramatta and the urban fringe, we propose that that be put back together and be put back in Parramatta.

PN319

We're not talking about a shopping centre, we're not talking about where Westfield is. That actually doesn't matter. We're talking about a social, economic and services hub that serves a region. Parramatta has two functions. It's the capital of western Sydney, so it serves a very broad region, but it also is a very local hub, which tends to service the northeast and west of Parramatta more than the south, apart from bits that you actually have included with Parramatta, Harris Park, Rosehill.

PN320

South of the highway, if there's an RSL club in Parramatta, there's also one south of the highway in Granville. It has its own. If there's a migrant resource in Parramatta, there's also one in Granville. The people in Granville, Merrylands and Guildford are more likely to go down the highway or down the train line to Auburn, Lidcombe, Strathfield than they are to cross the highway and travel cross country into the Parramatta CBD.

PN321

I have a very good database of community organisations. It's not perfect and I wouldn't count on the figures 100 per cent, but it's a very good indication. Currently 70 per cent of the organisations that serve the current electorate of Parramatta are in the electorate of Parramatta. Thirty per cent of them are in Castle Hill, Merrylands and Blacktown because of the local council issues, but 70 per cent of them are actually in Parramatta. If you take the bit of the current Parramatta that remains in the new Parramatta, only 30 per cent of the service organisations that service that area are actually in the electorate.

PN322

Seventy per cent of them are elsewhere, representing larger communities that include electorates outside Parramatta itself. The new additions of North Rocks which will bring in more services out of Castle Hill and the new areas of Greenway which will bring in more services out of Blacktown, will make that number worse, not better, so what we have here is an electorate where only around 30 per cent of the service organisations and the community driven solutions are found with their heart in the electorate. The rest of them serve communities that extend into other electorates.

PN323

The second region is Dundas, Dundas Valley, Rydalmere, Ermington, Telopea, which is a coherent area where the people in it think of it as one area. Ermington/Rydalmere is actually quite often used as the name of the suburb and until very recently, no one really knew where the borders were between those suburbs. They're very, very close. They're served by 60 community organisations that serve all five suburbs. That's how close they are. They were built at the same time, they have the same kinds of issues in terms of development, crime, public housing, et cetera, and the AEC proposal splits them into three, three electorates.

PN324

Our objection puts them back into two. It leaves Ermington in Bennelong. I hate that, but without impacting on yet another electorate, we sort of compromised to put it back into two. There is a strong connection between that area and the area south of the river, a strong connection with Reid. It has a lot in common with Merrylands, Guildford. It has similar industrial and environment issues in the old industrial sites along the riverfront that they have in Homebush and further down Silverwater Road and Duck Creek.

PN325

In a strange way, the refurbishment of the environment as a recreational hub around Homebush highlights the connection between that side of the river and the Ermington/Rydalmere industrial estate and the Parramatta River and Duck Creek, so there is a growing sort of community of interest around old environmental issues and recreation in those areas as well. The Silverwater Road forms a funnel, which does pull people down into Auburn and Homebush. You can see Reid, the old Reid from most of this area as well. It's quite visible.

PN326

The third region is Carlingford and North Rocks which has a natural split from the rest of the electorate along Pennant Hills Road which is a road that runs along the top of a hill, those on one side go down and those on the other side go down. It's a natural geographic barrier. Even the public transport goes down one side and down the other, so people in Carlingford and North Rocks also split from the rest of the electorate by the large King's School and Lake Parramatta which is a very large geographic boundary, can get to Castle Hill in Mitchell or Epping in Bennelong far faster than they can get to Parramatta and that's what they do.

PN327

They get in their cars and they go to the Epping train station, they shop in Castle Hill. The new Epping to Chatswood rail link will accentuate that. It's also served by a different council, again, which is based in Castle Hill and by completely different local papers. Labor's objection proposes that the boundary largely follows the Baulkham Hills council boundary. It's not exact because you've made some changes to it already and again we didn't want to go as far as we would have liked. We've sought a compromise position.

PN328

I won't talk about the Blacktown, Seven Hills, Kings Langley because Shane has and secondly because being the Member for Parramatta, there actually hasn't been a great deal of reason for me to get to know that area because it is actually quite separate. By bringing in the additional suburbs to the north, it does create a substantial area of common interest, still centred largely around Blacktown, but an area that is large enough within the electorate to have a power of its own.

PN329

The final area is Toongabbie, sorry, Old Toongabbie, Wentworthville, Pendle Hill, Girraween, which is in the old electorate of Parramatta and the proposed new electorate of Parramatta and remains in it in the Labor Party proposal. It is a coherent area of its own. It's known as the third settlement, it's the original farm. It sees itself as a coherent area, has strong connections to Parramatta because of the train line which runs through and the ease of driving along the Great Western Highway and the M4, so it tends to shop and get its services from Parramatta as

well as the centres of Holroyd and even though there is no proposal on the table to alter that at the moment, I just thought I'd mention it in case you decide to change things and I hadn't mentioned how important it was to hold that community together.

PN330

In summary, the proposal as it is provides a very difficult electorate in terms of community cohesion because each of its major five communities have stronger links outside than within. I would say that it's also very difficult to serve because whoever the Member is will spend 70 per cent of their time outside of the electorate dealing with people who aren't their constituents in order to reach those that are. I hope that's my problem at some point in the future, but it may not, so in summary, we seek the consolidation of those areas. Thank you.

PN331

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes, Mr Easson.

PN332

MR EASSON: Your Honour, I am mindful of the time. I only have one more witness to deal with the next case. The Labor Party has six objections, the last three I'll summarise after we've dealt with Michael Hatton, the Member for Blaxland. Now, the matter we're now coming to is about Bankstown and what the ALP is proposing is to unite Bankstown in one division, being Blaxland, where it has been continuously for the last 40 years.

PN333

Moreover, the ALP believes in its objection that we come up with better, more recognisable, traditional boundaries than what the Commissioners have proposed ..... boundaries ..... being an electoral boundary for Blaxland or which are currently a boundary between Bankstown and Auburn, so with that summary, I'd now like Mr Hatton to address the Commission.

PN334

MR HATTON: Commissioners, thank you very much. Michael Hatton, federal Member for Blaxland. There are a few maps around the place. I've given you some now older development planning maps for the City of Bankstown, which had an inset at the top and gives you a full picture of Bankstown's central business district which is where I want to start. That's the core of our submission, that in the draft proposal, Bankstown central business district is split into two.

PN335

Commissioners, choosing to use the railway line and as an extension of that, then Marion Street, has the effect of splitting that central business district into two. If you look at the large maps, you'll see that the blue areas, which are the business CBD are split north and south of that railway line and that has a significant effect. What we say is simply that if you don't use the railway line, you can in fact unite that CBD, not have the problem with someone looking to go to the butcher or the baker or the fish shop on one side of the street or the other, or be in Blaxland on one side of the railway line when they're in the middle of the CBD, but on the other side of the line they'll be in Banks.

PN336

There used to be a much stronger up until this point in time division between the two. In bringing them together in this way in the middle of the CBD, we think that is a significant problem. In particular, if you look at what Bankstown City Council is currently doing, there are a series of major changes to upgrade the intersection between the north and south of Bankstown and that's page 3 of my submission. At the bottom, the CBD improvements include reconstructing the existing railway underpass between North to North and South Terrace to allow four lanes of traffic and signalised intersections, including car parking to the north and south of Bankstown's plaza, creating a two-way bus priority corridor between Restwell Street in the southern part of the CBD and Centro Bankstown bus station in the northern part of the CBD and re-opening the Chapel Road rail bridge for bus access, so what they're aiming at is to consolidate the north and south of Bankstown's CBDs and get them interacting in a stronger fashion and part of what they've done is to take the north and south bus terminals and create one new bus/rail interchange in the southern part of the CBD beneath the railway line.

PN337

In the Commission's draft, that would be in the electorate of Banks. In our proposal, the whole of the CBD, if that's reunited again, that bus interchange which affects the whole of the City of Bankstown and the electorates of both Blaxland and Banks would be reunited. Further to that, there are a whole series of significant places in the southern part of Bankstown's CBD as I've outlined on page 3 which are cut adrift from Blaxland, despite the fact that they've been there since 1969, so if the core of our argument is about the CBD being reunited, the fundamental thing here is how land is used and how it's zoned.

PN338

That CBD grew on either side of that railway line. It's been embedded and improved over time and it has greater significance than it originally had, but where it's divided by the railway line, the community has sought to get better intersections between that and as people come to Bankstown from all over my electorate, to go to both parts of that CBD and interact and do their main business there. If there's a problem in terms of the railway line dividing, when the Commissioners chose to then take an extension of that in the second part of my argument, if we could have the second lot of maps, the Commissioners chose to then run along Marion Street and the Marion Street boundary between Blaxland and Banks and the Commission has argued that one of the most ..... Marion Street was a divisional local boundary and it was also a main road and it was a very identifiable boundary between the two and it's been argued elsewhere, of course, it's also a state boundary between the seat of East Hills and the seat of Bankstown.

PN339

To that I'd argue this. At page 1 of my submission, although Marion Street is all of those things, for half of its length it divides Condell Park and Georges Hall. For the other half of its length, it divides Condell Park and Bankstown and Bankstown and Bankstown and both Condell Park and Bankstown are all in the 2200 division. They're part of Bankstown North and the broader Bankstown South. Although Marion Street runs from the centre of Bankstown to the Georges River, the existing boundary of Milperra Road is an extension of Canterbury Road which runs from the centre of the city out through Milperra Road, through my



electorate and both Canterbury Road and Milperra Road, from there Newbridge Road runs right out to Liverpool.

PN340

It's a highway. It's the same as the Hume Highway. It's a very significant road. If you look at the land use on either side of Marion Street, you'll find that land use is 2A, residential, low density, throughout the whole length of Marion Street, until you get to the end of it, when you get to some industrial on the left-hand side next to Bankstown airport. If you look at the land use in relation to Milperra Road, what you find is not that, but general industrial and light industrial on both sides of Milperra Road.

PN341

You also have Bankstown airport as a special use. There is only a very small section in Blaxland where you get housing. There's a larger section on the southern part in Banks where there's housing, but fundamentally that connection is about the higher use in terms of industrial and commercial land. If that's so, if the existing boundary that's been there since 1969 has been strong and identifiable in the modern era that people have identified strongly with it, if it's superior to a far less clear and identifiable one in Marion Street, then I would argue that in choosing Marion Street as an extension of that, the railway line running down to Punchbowl Road, that that's not as good a proposal in terms of trying to find a place of 16-000 people as the ALP objection, so if we go to the third part of the ALP objection, if you've given that we should unite the CBD of Bankstown, both the blue parts and the associated areas, which if you look over on that map a long way away, you'll find that surrounding the blue parts on the western side of Stacey Street are areas that are a dark red.

PN342

For the past 30 years, the north and south of Bankstown, north and south of the CBD have been determined for flat development, so there are three storey walk-ups and the CBD itself, they now have up to seven to 10 storeys of unit development both in the northern and southern parts of the CBD, but clustering and surrounding that only to the west of Stacey Street, you also have highly identifiable areas with common communities of interest, largely with people renting and they're there for 12 to 24 months at a time.

PN343

The other sections running along Marion Street and to the east of Stacey Street, it's 2A residential, so long-term people, very stable, it's housing and housing for couples, families and so on. What the ALP is arguing there is very simple and it's a bit hard from this extension, but if you look at the strength of Milperra Road as a boundary, bounded by industrial land and commercial land on either side, if you then come to the intersection of Milperra Road which becomes Canterbury and Stacey Street and run straight up Stacey Street, you end up with an extremely strong boundary.

PN344

This is a metro road. It's not a small thing in any way. In fact, I drove here today; I drove down Stacey Street. It's either two or three lanes throughout its whole length through Bankstown. You pay no toll, but when you cross Canterbury Road and turn onto the M5, you go onto a two lane either way road. Stacey Street is

much more significant as a boundary. In 1969, the Commissioners may or may not be aware, I just pulled out an old map, this is Blaxland in the modern era, if you look at when the seat changed in 1969, Condell Park and the southern part of Bankstown were there, but if you look at Stacey Street as a boundary, apart from that little bit, Stacey Street half way up was a boundary for this seat in 1969, was a boundary between Stacey Street and Lang.

PN345

Fundamentally, the ALP's proposal is to keep this 1969 boundary and then to take Stacey Street, which is much more consolidated and much more identified as a boundary now than it was about 37 years ago, to take that up to the Hume Highway where you end up with a two nodal point conjunction between Stacey Street as a major metro road and Hume Highway, move up to what's not the best, but what is at Rawson Road the boundary between Auburn and Bankstown state electorates, so that instead of pushing Banks north-west, you push Banks north-east, moving into the area that Lang occupied here and further into what Blaxland had at that period of time, but with the most identifiable road feature in the whole of the area, stronger I think than the Hume Highway, stronger I think than Canterbury Road or Milperra Road and that's the core of our argument, that if you put Bankstown CBD back together and make it whole and take note of the fact that the land use in the CBD is surrounded by high density development north and south, you reunite Bankstown north and south.

PN346

If you then choose, which you may or may not, you then choose to recognise that Marion Street is a vastly inferior boundary and less identifiable than Canterbury Road and Milperra Road is and if you then take the point that Stacey Street gives you the strongest possible boundary between the east and the west, you can in fact satisfy the demand of the numbers. What we've proposed is not perfect. We could in fact have gone right up to the Hume Highway, taken in Chullora. That would have been more sensible, but there's about 4 000 people there.

PN347

That's over the tolerances and in doing this, what we've done is effectively just a simple swap between Blaxland and Banks with a minor effect on Watson, but they're completely within tolerance, anyway. Thank you, Commissioners.

PN348

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes, Mr Easson.

PN349

MR EASSON: Your Honour, thank you again. I now wish to deal with some of the other objections. I don't have witnesses for them. I believe I can sum them up fairly quickly. The first one is Lowe. Now, there are some things, which we would hold self evident and true, but some people might disagree with it, but in the case of Lowe, we are dealing with our proposal to essentially unite Strathfield Local Government Area together in one division.

PN350

What the Commissioners have done if you look at the map is that they've actually split Strathfield Local Government Area, containing only about 15 000-odd electors five ways. Most of it, all but 1 000 electors are within Lowe, but two little pockets are placed in Reid. One of those pockets is just next door to

Rookwood cemetery so there is quite a gap between those residents in Homebush West and the remaining part of the Reid division, so they'll be voting in Lowe because they won't be able to walk to a polling place in Reid.

PN351

The second thing which the Commissioners have done as I've mentioned, they've split Strathfield into two different pockets of Blaxland. Now, fortunately, the Commission's Lowe is at the minus three per cent end of the spectrum and by consolidating those parts of Strathfield, we're only dealing with 1 000 electors into Lowe, no consequential change is required for either Reid or Blaxland, so on that basis, we think that the Commissioners should support the ALP objection.

PN352

If there are no questions, I would go to the next matter. The next matter concerns Bennelong and Berowra. What the Labor Party objection seeks is retain the boundary, except for the part of Beecroft, which under the Commissioners' proposal they would move from Berowra to Bennelong. The Liberal Party in their comments have supported the Commissioners' proposal to make more use of the M2 freeway. However, I think they've over-blown their supporting case because I assure the Commissioners that locals do not use the toll road to go about their daily business.

PN353

We have stated in our objection that the M2 is not a road that separates communities, unlike, say, the Parramatta Road where communities have grown around it. It's a recent innovation, it's a toll road as I mentioned, so the people in that area are not affected in their local arrangements. Moreover, under the Commissioners' proposal and the Labor Party objection, the suburb of Beecroft, the postcode of Beecroft is still split between the division of Bennelong and Berowra, so we have an existing boundary.

PN354

What the Commissioners have done by putting the 1 700-odd electors from Berowra and Bennelong, they've taken Bennelong above the quota average and they've put Berowra significantly below. If you return those electors to Berowra, you'll have both more close to the combined average, so what we're saying is that here the Commissioners have proposed a change which isn't necessary, so what we're saying is why not leave them where they are under the criteria of giving due consideration to existing boundaries and that way you've got those electorates or divisions closer to the average future quota.

PN355

The last matter where the ALP made an objection concerns Wentworth. Now, your Honour, I'd like your indulgence, your advice here, I mean. Would you like me to - I've hardly got anything to - I have nothing much to say about our particular proposal there, but would it be okay - I am mindful of the time, et cetera, what I would like to do after that case is respond to - - -

PN356

MR BURCHETT: I think you should proceed with Wentworth now.

PN357

MR EASSON: I beg your pardon?

PN358

MR BURCHETT: I think we should deal with what you do have to say about Wentworth without delay.

PN359

MR EASSON: Which is mainly a commentary on the other objections.

PN360

MR BURCHETT: Well, that's all right. We've had the others, we've read them, considered them, the same as we have yours, so that's all right.

PN361

MR EASSON: Just to be clear, so that the other parties are aware. I would like to cover Wentworth, then Paterson and I'll take your opinion as to whether you'd like me to cover the Macquarie Calare appeal earlier this morning. I am happy to stop with those first two matters and we can maybe deal with those later, but it's up to you. I can deal with them all at once.

PN362

MR BURCHETT: I think you should cover what you have to say. I am mindful of the time and please bear in mind there are others to follow you.

PN363

MR EASSON: All right. Well then, in that case, let's deal with Wentworth. The Labor party objection deals with only about 190 electors. I don't intend to add to what was said earlier, except to remind you that the Commissioners view South Dowling Street as the boundary. We support that. However, by the time you come to Flinders Street, Flinders is the natural extension of the South Dowling Street boundary, rather than its continuation at that level triangle.

PN364

As I said earlier, you're only dealing with 190 electors. Now I wish to deal with the Liberal Party case for the division of Wentworth and other surrounding divisions. In so doing, I'd like to briefly summarise what has happened with eastern suburbs divisions over the last many years. If you go back to 1949, New South Wales had 47 divisions, not that dissimilar to what we've got today. In the eastern suburbs, there were five divisions in 1949. Today there are two divisions in the eastern suburbs.

PN365

The eastern suburbs since the war has had a chronic shortage of electors, its growth has not been anywhere near the state average, reflected by the fact five divisions are now two. Moreover, if we look at the division of Wentworth, with the creation of Phillip in 1949, Phillip was abolished in 1991 with effect from 1993, with the establishment of Phillip in 1949, Wentworth had no surf beach suburbs, from 1949 until 1993 so it's original suburbs, the beach suburbs were contained in Phillip itself, Bondi Beach, Kingsford Smith Coogee, and Watson had Maroubra and so on.

PN366

After 1955, Kingsford Smith had Maroubra to La Perouse; Phillip had Coogee and Bondi Junction; Wentworth had neither. In 1969, two of those eastern suburbs divisions were abolished, namely East Sydney and Watson and in 1993 Phillip was abolished. Now, from that year for the first time, Wentworth incorporated a

beach for the first time since 1949. Let's look, successive Commissioners over the years decided to preserve Phillip, okay, probably in my view looking in hindsight, wonderful things we will say.

PN367

Probably they should have abolished it earlier than 1993, but by the Commissioners retaining that division, Wentworth in 1955 moved to Kings Cross. In 69 it took in Darlinghurst and Surry Hills, in 1977 had moved into the CBD and part of Redfern, even when the Parliament was increased in the case of New South Wales by eight MPs with the expansion of that year, Wentworth and the eastern suburbs in general had to take in more population and that year it took in Woolloomooloo, so you had Wentworth moving way to the west, incorporating the CBD.

PN368

Similarly, Kingsford Smith also moved into areas of South Sydney, which you wouldn't associate with what most of us would call the eastern suburbs. Then, and this point is important because some of the areas which the Liberals want to put into Kingsford Smith had been there before, some of the areas which the Commissioners put in Wentworth have been there before, but I want to explain the historic context of that.

PN369

Now I come to the Liberal Party proposal in regard to Wentworth and Kingsford Smith. A number of Jewish organisations have also put in appeals concerning a section of North Randwick. I ask the Commissioners to note that the four major Jewish institutions in that North Randwick area are on the border of Kingsford Smith and Wentworth. Were the Commissioners to regard their inclusion in Wentworth as being important, you could make a boundary embraced by the north of Cowper Street and east of Avoca Street, 2 500 electors and you could make a corresponding change at Clovelly end, but we support the Commissioners' boundary.

PN370

We don't support those Jewish organisations' appeal. We further ask the Commission to note that under the Liberal Party objection, whilst those placed in North Randwick would be returned to Wentworth, the Liberals leave out Darlinghurst Road which the Commissioners put in to Wentworth and if you look at 140 to 146 Darlinghurst Road, you'll find the Sydney Jewish Museum, the New South Wales Board of Deputies, the State Zionist Council, the Zionist Federation of Australia, the United Israel Appeal, the Australia, Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial, Jewish Care, New South Wales Jewish Communal Appeal and Youth Alia New South Wales, so you've got quite a number of Jewish institutions which under the Commissioners' proposal would be in Wentworth, but which under the Liberals' objection they would leave out. Now, the Liberals in the case of Paterson, which I'll deal with next made an argument about the seat of local government - - -

PN371

MR CAMPBELL: I'd like to go back to the issue you're just talking about in the area of Randwick, North Randwick. You say you support the redistribution

committee's proposal in the North Randwick area and not the Liberal Party, but you don't say why.

PN372

MR EASSON: Well, I will go into why.

PN373

MR CAMPBELL: I'd like to know, because it's one thing to say - - -

PN374

MR EASSON: Which is precisely where I was about to - - -

PN375

MR CAMPBELL: I thought you'd gone on to Paterson. Sorry.

PN376

MR EASSON: No, no. Okay, you asked me that why question. I just said in regard to - or about to say in regard to Paterson, you've got a Liberal Party appeal re Port Stephens where they made great play of the fact that the seat of local government for Port Stephens at Raymond Terrace is supposed to be in Newcastle. In the case of Randwick Council, currently the seat of Randwick Council is in Frances Street, Randwick, but under the Commissioners' proposal, it's going to be placed in Kingsford Smith. Under the Liberal proposal, that seat of government would be taken out and placed in Randwick.

PN377

Now, Randwick Council contains around 74 000 electors. In 1991, 76 per cent of Randwick Council's population was placed in Kingsford Smith. In the 1999/2000 redistribution, that percentage became nearly 85 per cent, and under these proposals of the Commissioners, 92.8 per cent of Randwick Council area including Randwick Council chambers will be in the division of Kingsford Smith. Under the Liberal proposal, I've mentioned that they will split Randwick proper and the CBD of Randwick. There are bits and pieces on the other side of Alison Road. I've mentioned the council chambers in particular and there are other places as well.

PN378

I ask the Commissioners to note that Kingsford Smith itself needed six and a bit thousand electoral votes to make its numbers. It gained them all from Randwick itself, where the bulk of that council is in Kingsford Smith. Under the Liberal Party proposal, notwithstanding the fact that Kingsford Smith needs to gain these electors, they actually shed electors from Kingsford Smith into Wentworth and then made the wholly unnecessary change between the boundaries of Kingsford Smith and Sydney.

PN379

MR BURCHETT: Sydney, of course, has to lose electors, doesn't it?

PN380

MR EASSON: Pardon?

PN381

MR BURCHETT: Sydney does have to lose electors, of course.



PN382

MR EASSON: Does have?

PN383

MR CAMPBELL: To lose electors.

PN384

MR BURCHETT: It needs badly to lose electors. It's heavily overpopulated.

PN385

MR EASSON: True, and what the Commissioners do is-

PN386

MR BURCHETT: So there's nothing extraordinary in that kind of swap.

PN387

MR EASSON: Well, I would say there is, your Honour, with the greatest respect. If you've got a council area, 85 per cent in one seat and it's short of numbers, it would make sense to try and creep up that percentage exactly as you've done. Moreover, what the Commissioners in the case of Sydney, which does need to shed electors as you say, they make the split in one area, being the whole of the Kings Cross, Woolloomooloo area.

PN388

Under the Liberal Party proposal, you make the split of the City of Sydney in two areas; part Kings Cross and part of this whole Rosebery type area. The Commissioners' proposal in that sense is superior to what the Liberals propose. Now, the Liberals say jump over Gardeners Road and take in these areas from the City of Sydney and place them in Kingsford Smith. Now, they under their proposal would have Sydney Park in the division of Kingsford Smith.

PN389

You're talking about an area which is most used by the people of St Peters, Erskineville and Newtown. You're talking about a Liberal Party objection which is incorrect when it says that Wentworth traditionally has been a beach suburb, but it is actually more true to say that Kingsford Smith has traditionally been a beach division and I remind you what I said. Wentworth had no surf beaches from 1949 until the abolition of Phillip in 1993.

PN390

Now, let's look at the Liberal proposal in regard to the Kings Cross area. Before I proceed, the Libs in support of their proposal to jump over Gardeners Road make great play of the catchment area of a couple of schools in that area. They then propose this Alison Road boundary. Well, my son goes to school at Marcellin College, which is on Alison Road, which under the Liberal proposal would be in Kingsford Smith. He actually lives in Wentworth.

PN391

It's normal for these schools to have a great catchment area straddling various divisions. If you look at the who's who of Marcellin, you'll find Lionel Bowen, the Mayor of Randwick, the current state Member for Maroubra, et cetera. That school happens to straddle a huge area incidentally as do those Jewish institutions. I am now trying to focus and my last point about Wentworth is about the particular division which the Liberals seek to make in the case of the Kings Cross area.

PN392

Kings Cross itself does extend both sides of William Street. The Liberals in support of their Victoria Road boundary made great play of the fact that that's a ridge, that has separated the better quality housing on the eastern side and the lesser quality housing in the past on the western side, but if you know that area and I live there, tell that to the people in the Horizon or tell the people who live in Woolloomooloo's Finger Wharf, that their housing is typical of the area or the people in the - you're dealing with an area which just like Paddington, has been gentrified in recent years, you're dealing with similar areas to Paddington, contrary to what the Liberal Party is arguing.

PN393

Moreover, the Liberal Party proposed boundary in that area is less clear than that of the Commission. You have under the Commissioners' proposal the western boundary at the harbour end for Wentworth being the Domain and Hyde Park. The Liberal Party have a much messier boundary than proposed by the Commissioners. At the beginning of what I said, I went through the historical arrangements for these eastern suburbs seats. It's not unusual for Kings Cross to be in Wentworth. It was there from 1955 to 1993 and given that Wentworth is the third smallest seat in New South Wales, its enrolment literally dropped by 3000 in the period between redistributions.

PN394

You're dealing with an area, which will always have a chronic shortage of enrolments. The Waverley Council area is too built up. Woollahra doesn't seem to allow many developments. It's an electorate, which will as far as the eye can see, will continue to need more numbers. It's going to be natural that it will extend west. That deals with Wentworth. The next matter is Paterson. The Liberal Party case here is about keeping Port Stephens shire together in the division of Paterson, but in attempting to achieve that objective, we think that they've caused more problems to Newcastle.

PN395

In particular, under the Liberal Party objection re Paterson, instead of as the Commissioners do, they split Maitland with the river and the railway line and that, by the way, has been a previous long-standing boundary for the division of Paterson in times gone by. Maitland has been exactly as the Commissioners do. Under the Liberal Party proposal, they in fact bring the division of Newcastle to the very edge of Maitland CBD. Under the Commissioners' proposal, none of Maitland is in Newcastle. It's split between the division of Paterson and Hunter.

PN396

Under the Liberals, it's a three way split. Bob Baldwin, the Member for Paterson, earlier in his evidence mentioned the importance of the airport and so on and so forth. Well, the airport is jointly owned by Newcastle and Port Stephens Council. It's had a 350 per cent growth in traffic in the last two years. Furthermore, if you look at the Raymond Terrace area, you'll find that the Tomago-Williamstown area, RAAF and manufacturing, draw for employment significant numbers from Newcastle.

PN397

Moreover, you may have noted that there was housing now being developed between Fern Bay and Williamstown. It's an example of the creeping urbanisation

of Newcastle extending into Port Stephens, so what we have here is the Commissioners trying to balance different interests, different competing objectives. I mentioned in our comments on objections that the ALP also looked at an array of options with Hunter, Newcastle and Paterson. We would have preferred, for example, that the Commissioners put Dungog and Gloucester into Hunter where they have a connection with Singleton, where there's a state division of Upper Hunter incorporating all those areas, but, honestly, we tried and we couldn't do better than what the Commissioners have proposed in this particular instance.

PN398

Finally on this matter, I ask the Commissioners to note that the state electoral district of Port Stephens runs from Port Stephens into Mayfield in Newcastle. The connection between that lower part of Port Stephens and Newcastle have been accepted by past Commissioners at both the state and federal level. The last few things - - -

PN399

MR BURCHETT: We started early with you because we were fortunate in the way we got through this morning and you're now encroaching into other people's time.

PN400

MR EASSON: I have tried to be - - -

PN401

MR BURCHETT: I understand that. I've acceded to your request. Go on.

PN402

MR EASSON: I just wish to deal with a few points raised re Macquarie and Calare earlier today. In regard to Peter Andren, contrary to what he said, his original submission to the Commission abolished a rural seat or at least the component, the rural component in the existing division of Hume. For the life of me, I cannot see a major difference between the Commissioners' proposed Macquarie and the existing and proposed division of Hume.

PN403

The previous Commission broadly stated that Hume was a rural division. That's not true. It's part rural, it's part outer suburban. The same under the Liberal proposal, the same under the Commissioners' proposal, Liberal objection and it's a similar arrangement as the Commissioners propose with Macquarie. Bathurst and Lithgow have been together in the same seat since Federation. Under the Liberal Party objections and also as far as I could see, there's a possibility or certainly in the case of Lithgow under the Liberal objection, it would be separated from Bathurst.

PN404

Under the Liberal Party objection, Hawkesbury LGA would also be split, so what have we got here? The Commissioners have united Blue Mountains Local Government Area, currently split between Macquarie and ..... into Macquarie. The Commissioners have kept Hawkesbury LGA whole, kept it together in the division of Greenway and the Commissioners have kept Lithgow and Bathurst

together. The Liberal Party objections are whilst uniting Blue Mountains, split Hawkesbury and separate Lithgow from Bathurst.

PN405

Moreover, with the Liberal proposal, by splitting Bathurst and Lithgow, they leave Oberon in Macquarie and the connection with Oberon is not via Lithgow, it is through Bathurst. Where Bathurst goes, so should Oberon follow. There was one instance in my recollection where Oberon was placed in a different electorate. That happened at a state level and it was quickly reversed four years later by the next set of Commissioners. Otherwise, as far as I am aware, it's always been in the same division as Bathurst.

PN406

Finally in regard to what Mr Andren said, Calare until 1977 did not contain the Blue Mountains - did not contain - the current Macquarie electorate - sorry, Calare electorate incorporating Bathurst and Lithgow was only established in 1977. From federation until 1977 they were in the division of Macquarie and Calare covered until that change in 1977, Calare covered places like - - -

PN407

MR BURCHETT: Of course if you're going back that far the parts on the western side of the Blue Mountains were pretty countrified in those days, weren't they?

PN408

MR EASSON: Pretty?

PN409

MR BURCHETT: Countrified, so that they fitted in with Bathurst more readily, according to the arguments that we've been listening to.

PN410

MR EASSON: That's true.

PN411

MR BURCHETT: I'm not indicating an ultimate view in the least but merely pointing out that to go back to ancient history with some of these things doesn't help very much because the State has changed character.

PN412

MR EASSON: Yes, but what I'm also saying is that you have a much longer association of Bathurst with the mountains than not.

PN413

MR BURCHETT: Yes.

PN414

MR EASSON: The last and final thing which I wish to say quickly is this thing about Gwydir. I ask the Commissioners to note two important facts. Firstly, if you take the existing division of Gwydir and you take the three most westerly shires, they are Brewarrina, Bourke and Walgett collectively they were - if I can find my note, 10.4 per cent of New South Wales. They cover 7 900 odd electors. If you look at the three most westerly parts of the current division of Paterson, they are Cobar, Central Darling and Unincorporated far west New South Wales. Collectively - - -

PN415

MR CAMPBELL: Excuse me, you said Paterson and you meant Parkes.

PN416

MR EASSON: Pardon?

PN417

MR CAMPBELL: You said Paterson and I think you meant Parkes.

PN418

MR EASSON: Parkes, yes. Collectively they represent 24 per cent of New South Wales and they cover 4 811 electors. So what we have got here is say 11 500 electors are in 35 per cent of New South Wales and I have to say that I am quite amazed by the various objections to the Commissioner's proposed division of Parkes, because I expected some commentator to point out the fact that the most important planning decision taken since white settlement in this country occurred as a result of a Royal Commission established in 1902 and that Royal Commission established the western division of New South Wales.

PN419

The western division incorporates 40 per cent of New South Wales. The western division has strict planning controls, you've got leasehold arrangements and so forth. It makes sense to these arguments about an electorate nearly the half the size of New South Wales, it actually makes sense to as far as possible contain the like interests of those places in the western division together and I ask the Commission to take comfort in the fact that at least we're supporting you in this instance and I ask others to take note of the fact that more than a third of New South Wales, covering fewer than 12 000 electors, all within the western division, is proposed to be placed in the division of Parkes.

PN420

I found very interesting Mr John Anderson's objection to you where he actually gave a very compelling case as to why Dubbo should be a major centre in Gwydir. He had a different objective perhaps than what the Commissioners have done, but what we have now in the case of the country division we have far more major centres in each division, Orange in Calare, Tamworth, Armidale in New England, Dubbo in your proposed Parkes and you've got Wagga in Riverina and Albury in Farrer. This whole argument about the abolition of the country is entirely based on ignoring why the western division was created and why it's got so few people.

PN421

And the final, final thing I wish to say is that in 1984 New South Wales got 51 Members, we're now down to 49. In 1991 when New South Wales lost a Member, it went from 51 to 50, two suburban electorates were abolished, they being Phillip and Dundas, a new country division was created, Paterson. So with this change going down an extra seat the net change of the reduction since 1984 from 51 to 49 was minus two in New South Wales, the country net effect zero, the city net effect minus two. Thank you.

PN422

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes, Mr Jaeschke.

PN423

MR JAESCHKE: I would just like to say that Mr Mark Speakman will be ..... Liberal Party.

PN424

MR BURCHETT: It will not be you who will speak for the Liberal Party but Mr?

PN425

MR JAESCHKE: Mark Speakman.

PN426

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN427

MR JAESCHKE: Thank you.

PN428

MR BURCHETT: Yes. Just for the record that's being kept by recording could you spell your name, please?

PN429

MR SPEAKMAN: Yes, S-p-e-a-k-m-a-n.

PN430

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Yes, Mr Speakman.

PN431

MR SPEAKMAN: Mr Chairman and members of the augmented Commission, before I start my oral address on behalf of the Liberal Party could I hand up some supplementary material which I'll come to shortly.

PN432

MR BURCHETT: Yes.

PN433

MR SPEAKMAN: I first wanted to address the question of Wentworth, Kingsford Smith and Sydney. If ever there were a case, members of the Commission, for boundaries to be drawn to accommodate communities of interest it is the boundary between Wentworth and Kingsford Smith. I don't propose to go through all the detail in our written submission about the importance of two Jewish institutions or two in particular, a total four, that are in Randwick North which are on the redistribution committee's proposals would end up in Kingsford Smith. But could I make these initial observations, firstly, Mr Easson mentioned a number of Jewish institutions in Darlinghurst Road to support a submission that therefore the boundaries that the Liberal Party was proposing would leave out important Jewish institutions from Wentworth and place them in Sydney.

PN434

However I think I can say that there has been not a single adverse comment from any member of the Jewish community to the Electoral Commission on the boundaries that the Liberal Party proposes for Wentworth, Kingsford Smith and Sydney. Instead we have the leaders of the Jewish community comprehensively and in effect unanimously supporting what the Liberal Party proposes by way of boundaries. The Labor Party submissions rather dismissively say that there are several Jewish representatives who support what the Liberal Party is proposing.



Well, in our submission these just aren't several members of the Jewish community.

PN435

We have the President of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies who has supported the Liberal Party's position, not from a personal viewpoint but he speaks on behalf of the Board of Deputies, which is the main elected peak body of the Jewish community of New South Wales. We have the President of the Jewish Communal Appeal, which is the Jewish community's major fund raising planning and facilitating organisation and he speaks on behalf of that organisation. We have honorary life president of the Rabbinical Council speaking on our behalf or rather, speaking in support of our proposal, in our submission the best judges of the interests of representing the Jewish community themselves and not one, not one complains about the sort of matters that Mr Easson mentions along Darlinghurst Road.

PN436

So in our submission there is an overwhelming case for moving what the redistribution committee proposes by way of boundaries between the three electorates of Wentworth, Kingsford Smith and Sydney clockwise in each case. Mr Turnbull will be making a presentation later today about the difficulties that an MP faces in effect representing constituents in relation to their major institutions when their institutions are outside the electorate. So our primary argument in support of our boundaries is the importance of keeping key Jewish institutions in the same electorate as their constituents and their consumers.

PN437

And nothing that Mr Easson says gainsays the proposition that Wentworth is the most Jewish seat in New South Wales, nor is there anything seriously put against the proposition that those institutions that are in Randwick North would be best represented on behalf of the Jewish community if they were in the same electorate as the vast bulk of the Jewish community. Now, of course as late as written submissions but it was not in Mr Easson's address today, there are Jewish communities in Maroubra and Coogee but that doesn't gainsay that the vast majority of the Jewish population in the eastern suburbs is in the current division of Wentworth and in any event, while one can always find pockets of any communities spread throughout the State, the Jewish in our submission has expressed a comprehensive view in favour of our proposal without any dissent expressed to the Commission.

PN438

Now, it's then said by the Labor Party, well, all because of this Jewish community interest question there are unnecessary changes around between Kingsford Smith and Wentworth and then between Wentworth and Sydney, but in my submission nothing is seriously put against the boundary changes that we propose between Kingsford Smith and Sydney. It is said against us, well, we have said that Gardeners Road has school catchment areas that straddle both sides and Marcellin College at Randwick have catchment areas that straddle both sides. What that demonstrates though is that there is nothing magical about Gardeners Road. We have said that Gardeners Road is a major thoroughfare that other things being equal could be used as a significant boundary, but there is nothing magical in that.

PN439

Indeed to the contrary as our written submissions have shown, the community to the north of Gardeners Road, essentially the bulk of Rosebery, has more in common with what is south of Gardeners Road in terms of shopping centres, school catchment areas, style of residential accommodation than with the City of Sydney and indeed if members of the augmented Commission you look at the Google earth photograph that we attach to our submissions you will see that in effect there's a kind of natural industrial area buffer zone if you like between Rosebery on the one hand and what lies more for the City of Sydney on the other hand.

PN440

Then it's said, well, the Liberal Party proposal is bad because it splits the City of Sydney three ways. In our submission you would put no weight on that consideration. The redistribution committee has properly observed in its report that local government boundaries are less significant in urban areas than in regional centres and in any event, it's well known that the boundary to the City of Sydney have chopped and changed over the last century with whoever is in power in Macquarie Street and the view that might be taken of what boundaries may or may not produce certain outcomes. So there is no magic in our submission in the boundaries of the City of Sydney.

PN441

Then it's said that what we do creates a problem in the Kings Cross, Darlinghurst area. Well, on any view on the Commissioner's proposals there is going to be a split in the Darlinghurst area along Oxford Street so there will be a split on any view and leaving aside for one moment where exactly somebody should draw the line, it's perfectly clear in our submission that Wentworth is an eastern suburbs seat. Almost every second seat as Mr Easson referred to the history of the eastern suburbs and Wentworth as an eastern suburbs seat and wherever you draw the line, in our submission it is clear that areas like Woolloomooloo, East Sydney and Darlinghurst have more in common looking to the city than they do looking to Bondi Beach and Bronte and Clovelly and so on.

PN442

While the history lesson that Mr Easson presented was very interesting and might explain how we've evolved to get where we are now, what the members of the augmented Commission must look at are the community of interests today, not as they evolved on an interesting historical basis over the last 50 years but the community of interests today. In our submission wherever one draws the line it is clear that somewhere the eastern suburbs ceases and the CBD and the immediately surrounding suburbs begin. Now, as to drawing the line we propose the escarpment along Victoria Street as a clearly recognisable boundary. It's said against us that our boundaries are messy. We'd say that they are very clear boundaries. We use for example Boundary Street, which is the suburban locality boundary between Darlinghurst and Paddington and also the Local Government Area boundary between Sydney and Woollahra.

PN443

We move along Bayswater Road and up to Victoria Street and then along the escarpment down to Potts Point. We'd say that no one can be confused about the boundaries that we've proposed and that in many respects they are natural physical

boundaries. The Commission might decide that it would draw other boundaries, you might go up, for example, Darlinghurst Road through Darlinghurst and then continue along Darlinghurst Road through Kings Cross, that's one possibility, but what's more important in our submission is recognising that areas like Woolloomooloo, East Sydney and Darlinghurst have a greater community of interest with the CBD and areas around it than they do looking east, so one can argue about where to draw the line.

PN444

We say our line is natural and physically attractive and not messy and clear, but the important consideration is that areas we can see slightly out the window have more in common with the CBD than they do with the eastern suburbs, and indeed the areas that we're talking about are probably easier to get from to the CBD than suburbs like Pyrmont and Ultimo. So that's what I wanted to say about - one other point. Mr Easson said that the effect of our proposal would be that the Randwick Council seat would end up in Wentworth. It's very different to talk about a suburban council seat like that on the one hand and compare it with somewhere like Raymond Terrace on the other hand in a regional area where that connection is far more important.

PN445

There's no suggestion or no reason to think that Randwick Council's ability to deliver services to its ratepayers will be compromised in any way, depending upon whether the council chambers are in Wentworth or Kingsford Smith and on any proposal Randwick Council Local Government Area will be split between Wentworth and Kingsford Smith on any proposal. So unless, members, you had any questions on Kingsford Smith, Wentworth and Sydney I was next going to move to Paterson and Newcastle?

PN446

MR BURCHETT: Anything from you, Mr Trewin?

PN447

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN448

MR BURCHETT: Yes, carry on.

PN449

MR SPEAKMAN: Thank you. Mr Baldwin addressed the augmented Commission this morning about the strong community of interest arguments and connections between Raymond Terrace on the one hand as the seat of the Port Stephens LGA and the rest of the Port Stephens LGA on the other hand. I don't want to go over those again except to note them and to note these things, that while Mr Easson put some arguments as to why there were some communities of interest between the southern end of Port Stephens on the one hand and Newcastle on the other hand, for example, employment at Tomago, no-one has seriously suggested or suggested at all to the augmented Commission that there aren't very strong communities of interest between Raymond Terrace on the one hand and the Port Stephens LGA on the other hand.

PN450

There just isn't any submission that has been put to gainsay the sorts of things that the Mayor of Port Stephens said and that the Member for Paterson have said. So what is the problem with what the Liberal Party is proposing as the boundary between Paterson and Newcastle? As Labor would put it, the problem is that to solve one problem, the Raymond Terrace problem where you create a worse problem, where you split and make them three ways. Well, our response to that is this, firstly, whatever happens, whether it's our proposal or the redistribution committee's proposal, Maitland, the City of Maitland or the centre of Maitland will be split from much of the Maitland LGA. That will happen in any event.

PN451

Now, it may be that one can construct arguments as to why that area of the Maitland LGA that will not be in Hunter with the centre of Maitland one could think of arguments why that area would have greater communities of interest with the part of Maitland that is in Hunter than it would with Paterson or Newcastle. But that's not the question here because whatever happens there's going to be that split. The question is, is this three way split of the Maitland LGA such a bad thing and the question really comes down to this, should the suburbs or the towns, Metford, Thornton and Woodbury in particular, areas that are not going to be in the same division as the Maitland CBD in any event, do they look to Newcastle or do they look to what will be in Paterson in any event?

PN452

In our submission, given the public transport link, the railway line, the main northern railway line, the New England Highway, those suburbs have a natural affinity more with Newcastle than they do with areas that are going to be in Paterson in any event. So while when one looks at the Newcastle we propose it is, we accept, a bit of an odd shape at its north western end, it is an odd shape even on the Commission's proposed boundaries. It reflects the radial nature of transport along the New England Highway and the main northern railway line and reflects that the bulk of the Port Stephens LGA has such a community of interest with Raymond Terrace as far as outweighs any unidentified, we say, community of interest between Metford, Thornton and Woodbury on the one hand and the rest of Paterson on the other hand, no community of interest has been identified between those three towns on the one hand and the rest of Paterson on the other hand in any of the submissions.

PN453

They more naturally go to Newcastle and they don't represent in our submission any obstacle for keeping the Paterson LGA wholly united with its seat of administration and its service centre. And it's not just keeping Paterson LGA united, it's also keeping Raymond Terrace as a major service centre for towns and residents in the Dungog and Great Lakes LGAs, that's another important reason for - - -

PN454

MR BURCHETT: You said the Paterson LGA, do you mean the Port Stephens one?

PN455

MR SPEAKMAN: Did I say Paterson? It's not - well, I'm not sure what I said but I'll say it again.

PN456

MR BURCHETT: Yes, say it again because I might have got you wrong.

PN457

MR SPEAKMAN: This argument is not just about keeping Port Stephens LGA wholly within one electorate, i.e. Paterson, it is also about keeping Raymond Terrace as the major service centre for communities to the north and north-west in the same division as those communities in circumstances where the bit of, if I could call it your Paterson that we propose to put in Newcastle, has not been shown to have any particular community of interest with the rest of Paterson but naturally has a community of interest with Newcastle. And might I say in relation to the three way split, so far as we're aware no-one has made a submission - no-one has, apart from the Labor Party, no-one has made any adverse comment on the three way split of the Maitland LGA that we're proposing.

PN458

You haven't heard from community groups that this is an outrage and the Liberal Party has overlooked this, that or the other. Silence, so you, the augmented Commission, can infer that there are no reasons to keep Metford, Thornton and Woodbury area in the same division or in the division of Paterson. Unless there's nothing that you wish to raise with me on Paterson and Newcastle I was next going to move onto Macquarie and country New South Wales.

PN459

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin?

PN460

MR TREWIN: No, I have no questions, thanks.

PN461

MR BURCHETT: Right. Carry on.

PN462

MR SPEAKMAN: Now, moving on to Macquarie and country New South Wales, both Mr Bartlett as the Member for Macquarie and several community representatives or members of the community this morning have identified the problems with the existing boundaries for Macquarie and I don't want to go over that in any detail. It's in our written submission and it's also been presented orally this morning. But I could then deal though with, well, what are the implications of what the Liberal Party proposes to deal with that. We've identified two problems in country New South Wales. We've identified the proposed boundaries of Calare and Macquarie and we've identified the enormous size of Parkes as two, we say, fundamental problems with what the redistribution committee is proposing in country New South Wales and western Sydney.

PN463

Now, there are and presumably will be tomorrow many arguments that will be put to the augmented Commission about against the abolition of Gwydir at all and against the removal of any country electorate at all. By accepting that one seat has to go in New South Wales we submit that there is a better way of dealing with that and dealing with the implications for country New South Wales than what is proposed by the augmented Commission. Now, in the material that I've handed up - - -

PN464

MR BURCHETT: What is proposed by the committee.

PN465

MR SPEAKMAN: I'm sorry, by the committee, I apologise. In the material that I handed up there's a section on Eden-Monaro which I'll come to and at page 3 is a table and in that table we compare for Farrer, Gwydir, Parkes and Riverina, the areas of the existing divisions, what the areas are if you take away the unincorporated area, what the redistribution committee is proposing with and without unincorporated area and what the Liberal Party proposes with or without the unincorporated area and these will be, Farrer, Parkes and Riverina, will be the three largest country divisions I think on the redistribution committee's proposal and on our proposal.

PN466

You can see from these data that the Liberal Party proposal spreads the burden if you like of large country areas between three electorates, Farrer, Parkes and Riverina, and in our submission that is a fairer and more practical way of dealing with a problem of large country electorates than what the redistribution committee proposes which is to have something in the vicinity of 47 per cent of the area of New South Wales in the electorate of Parkes. Now, the National Party and the Member for Riverina, Ms Hull, have lodged comments on our proposal and in particular fairly strenuous objection is made to our proposed boundaries for Riverina and it is said against us that areas like Cobar don't have much in common with Wagga Wagga.

PN467

Now, the answer to that is this, given in relative terms the decline of population in western New South Wales, whatever boundaries you come up with are going to lump together some towns that don't have a lot in common and in our submission what is more important is to make sure that those communities that do have things in common are in the same divisions than, although less important, but concentrating excessively on the question of combinations of towns that don't have much in common. For example, on the redistribution committee's boundaries Broken Hill and Albury will be in the same division and one could plausibly argue that they don't have a lot in common.

PN468

On the redistribution committee's boundaries Wilcannia and Narrabri will be in the same division. On the redistribution committee's boundaries the central business district of Sutherland will be in the same division as Hughes with most of the central business district of Liverpool, notwithstanding that they are two distinct ..... and probably 25 minutes driving time from each in off peak. So whether it's our boundaries or the redistribution committee's boundaries there are going to be combinations of towns that may not have a lot in common. But what's more important in our submission and what the augmented Commission should do in fulfilling the statutory criterion of paying due regard to communities of interest is to make sure that demonstrated communities of interest fall within the same division so as the Jewish community argument put in Wentworth, in the case of country of New South Wales it's keeping Bathurst and Orange in the same division for the reasons that Mr Bartlett and others and Mr Andren have addressed you on this morning.



PN469

It's keeping Hawkesbury, the Hawkesbury hinterland in the same division as the Blue Mountains. It's the keeping those communities of interest together because whatever you try to do, in focusing too much on unusual combinations of towns there are going to be some combinations that aren't a perfect match. So we accept that our Riverina is not by any means a perfect Riverina, but in our submission it doesn't divide unnecessarily or at all communities of interest. Indeed, to the extent that it's said that Riverina, as identified in the National Party comment on our objection, our Riverina is in fact superior to the redistribution committee's because we keep the Local Government Area at Murrumbidgee in Riverina.

PN470

We're told in the National Party's submissions that the Riverina is an electorate that concentrates on the Murrumbidgee. Well, our outcome produces a better concentration on the Murrumbidgee for the Riverina than does the redistribution committee's. The Nationals complain about Hay being left out. Well, Hay will be left out on the redistribution committee's proposals or our proposal from Riverina so it makes no difference. So in some respects the Riverina we propose has a better community of interest among or within that geographical area that might be commonly known as the Riverina and to the extent that there are other towns like Cobar that one might ordinarily not think have a very close connection with the rest of the Riverina, that is no different from what the redistribution committee is proposing in relation to Parkes and in relation to Farrer.

PN471

The Nationals say that - they comment on our proposal adversely and say that it will result Albury and Broken Hill people in the same electorate and difficulties of flying, one has to fly by Dubbo or Adelaide, well, that will be the same on the redistribution committee's boundaries as well. So while any outcome for the country won't be perfect, in our submission our outcome produces a superior result by keeping communities of interest intact. There are other communities of interest that our proposal will keep intact. We'll keep Wilcannia with Broken Hill, we heard a speaker this morning talk about that. We will use the Wollondilly, Wingecarribee local government boundary between Hume and Macarthur which produces a superior boundary there and which has been the topic of a number of submissions this morning and this afternoon.

PN472

We will as a result and the flow on effects that we've described in detail in the submission, we will end up reuniting Parramatta CBD with the division named Parramatta and there seems to be some community or unanimity in all the propositions that have been put to you that that's a good thing. But let's have a look at what Labor would do, what is Labor's price, and in the material that I handed up the back page is our map of Labor's proposed boundaries and what Labor does, we would say, is create an electorate that looks like perhaps an inverted atomic explosion. It's an extraordinary shape and you the augmented Commission should infer that it has nothing to do with identifying communities of interest and everything to do with ensuring that Labor voting pockets are retained or put into the marginal seat of Parramatta and Liberal voting pockets are kept out.

PN473

There was nothing put to you in my submission demonstrating any community of interest between the bottom of the inverted nuclear explosion or mushroom, Telopea, Dundas, Rydalmere, et cetera, any community of interest with Reid and you the augmented Commission should infer that that in fact has more in common with Mitchell and Parramatta than anything in Reid and this bizarre shape of Reid is a compelling reason not to adopt what the Labor Party proposes in Parramatta. Now, as I say, we can solve the Parramatta problem by producing a superior result in country New South Wales and western Sydney. If you the augmented Commission are against us on that, then rather than follow Labor's bizarre proposal you should do something more modest as was suggested by Costello this morning which was to keep those historic parts of Parramatta in the electorate of Parramatta because few or any people live in there, it won't require any significant or any re-jigging of the rest of Parramatta.

PN474

So our primary submission on Parramatta is to put the CBD back in the seat as a consequence of the - as an advantageous flow on from our country and western Sydney scheme and if that's too ambitious then the more modest proposal of Mr Costello but not the bizarre mushroom shape that Labor proposes. It was said against our proposal that it would split the Hawkesbury LGA. Well, we've had the General Manager of the Hawkesbury Council here this morning and as I understand it supports what was said. No-one has said, no-one has commented to our knowledge on the Liberal Party's proposals beyond the self serving submissions of the Labor Party to say that what we're proposing in Hawkesbury by splitting the LGA along the river, a natural obvious physical boundary, splits a community of interest, rather we've got people from the Hawkesbury telling you that the better is to keep Hawkesbury north of the river with the Blue Mountains for the reasons that those speakers have identified and I don't intend to repeat.

PN475

Unless there was anything on country New South Wales and western Sydney I was then going to move onto Eden-Monaro.

PN476

MR CAMPBELL: Yes, I have got one observation and one question. The question is just a clarification. The observation I make it because I think it needs to be made and the fact is that you talk about the size of the proposed Parkes.

PN477

MR SPEAKMAN: Yes.

PN478

MR CAMPBELL: And this is not to read anything into it, and a number of other speakers comments this morning of course. There are six divisions in Australia at the moment who are significantly larger than the proposed seat of Parkes and that doesn't mean that it means it's right to have a division of that size but I don't want any people to actually think that the 370 000 square miles of proposed Parkes is by far the largest in the country. There are six that are bigger including one that is six to seven times larger.

PN479

MR SPEAKMAN: We accept that.

PN480

MR CAMPBELL: And I'm clarifying, I know you know that.

PN481

MR SPEAKMAN: But to our knowledge this is a record for New South Wales and it's a record in our submission that can be easily avoided by spreading the load between several electorates.

PN482

MR CAMPBELL: I'm understanding what you're saying. I just wanted to put that on the record because there's actually been - I think there's been a bit of confusion in some of the media comments as well. Before you leave country New South Wales can you just clarify for me Oberon?

PN483

MR SPEAKMAN: Oberon.

PN484

MR CAMPBELL: Oberon.

PN485

MR SPEAKMAN: Well, we propose that Oberon LGA go with Macquarie. One could argue that it could stay with Calare. One could argue that it should go to Macquarie. We say that there are communities of interest between Oberon and the Blue Mountains tourism. Jenolan Caves for example is in the Oberon LGA. There are good reasons to keep Oberon with the Blue Mountains, just as the same that there are with Lithgow with the Blue Mountains, just the same that there are with Lithgow with the Blue Mountains, but it perhaps just raises a related issue and that's in our submission it is a fallacy to argue that because one can establish links between the Blue Mountains and Lithgow and then Lithgow and Bathurst that therefore is a community of interest between those on each side of Lithgow but that doesn't work in our submission.

PN486

In the same way one could say, well, Oberon could fit in with the Blue Mountains or it could fit in with Bathurst, you don't logically reason from that that there is a community of interest between Bathurst and the Blue Mountains that means that they should be in the same electorate. So we could say Oberon could go either way but we propose that so the numbers all work that it goes with the Blue Mountains in Macquarie and we say there are logical reasons for that. I will then move onto Eden-Monaro. Now, I've handed some supplementary material which I don't intend to take you through a lot of the detail but it's corroboration with a lot of the propositions that were in our public comments about the significance of the Snowy Mountains scheme, tourism and so on and this is largely publicly available information.

PN487

So far as it was said by the Member for Monaro, Mr Whan, that he spoke about the Snowy Mountains Highway which in Labor's written submission was described a rarely used track. It's now conceded that it's a sealed bitumen highway but it is said that sometimes in winter the road is closed or you have to carry chains. Well, I don't carry the statistics in my head but from general knowledge you the members of the Commission could infer that it is more likely that the Hume Highway or the Great Western Highway will be closed because of

accidents than the Snowy Mountains Highway will be closed a couple of times in winter or somebody has to carry chains. That occasional incident of inclement weather or the need to carry chains is not something that should dissuade the augmented Commission from adopting what is proposed by the redistribution committee.

PN488

Indeed most winters one has the Great Western Highway is closed one day or two days a year because of snow on the Blue Mountains. Nobody makes any suggestion that therefore that has any significance for communities of interest up there. So far as tourism is concerned we attach some material that shows that Eden-Monaro, the existing division, this is referred to in 1.6 of the hand up, Eden-Monaro has of all the existing divisions in Australia, has the greatest concentration of tourism businesses, so tourism is more important in Eden-Monaro than anywhere else in Australia. You can also see the importance of tourism to Tumut and Tumbarumba from the very nature of the Local Government Area, the councils' web sites.

PN489

The home page that we refer to for Tumut Shire talks about Tumut as a holiday for all seasons. The home page of Tumut Shire Council stresses Tumut as a holiday destination and similarly with Tumbarumba, their home page a major link is for tourism. So it is clear, we say, that tourism is important around the Snowy Mountains, both the east and the west. The Kosciuszko National Park, an important tourist destination, straddles the existing Eden-Monaro and Tumbarumba. It was I think put by Mr Whan that the plantation forest industry in Tumut Tumbarumba have more in common with areas to the west than they do with Bombala and areas like that. Well, in paragraph 1.8 we refer to appendix EM8. If you look at these documents later each of these is labelled and an alpha code for the electorate and then a number.

PN490

If you look at EM8, which is an extract from an Australian Government publication about plantation forestry in the south-west slopes, you will see in the map I have extracted the red areas and the green areas for hardwood and softwood and you'll notice that most of it is in the Tumbarumba and Tumut LGAs rather than areas to the west like Holbrook or Albury. So we say that the plantation forestry industry is an important community of interest and that between Tumbarumba, Tumut on the one hand and the rest of existing Eden-Monaro on the other hand and that Mr Whan's suggestion that there is not such a community of interest is just wrong in our submission.

PN491

The goat track, the Snowy Mountains Highway, that's photographed at EM12. Now, we don't have photographs of the Snowy Mountains Highway with one exception, west of Cooma there's a few photographs of it east of Cooma, but the first photograph on EM12 shows it looks like west of Cooma and it's described as bitumen, occasional overtaking lanes, good quality, 100 kilometres an hour speed limit. There's no suggestion in this commentary that there's some frequent closure of the Highway. The NRMA at EM13 notes that there have been improvements. Again there's no suggestion of bad weather problems with the Snowy Mountains Highway.

PN492

So we submit that nothing that has been put to you today would be any reason to depart from what the redistribution committee has recommended for Eden-Monaro and indeed there's a further reason not to depart and that's this, the flow on effect of Labor's proposals for Eden-Monaro is that the current split of Wingecarribee Shire would remain. We submit that that is an inferior outcome to what the redistribution committee proposes which is to recognise the community of interest within Wingecarribee Shire in the Local Government Area, keep it wholly within one division and not split in the way that Labor would that splits towns like Bundanoon and Robertson on the one hand from Southern Highlands towns like Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong on the other hand.

PN493

So not only are Tumut and Tumbarumba a natural fit for Eden-Monaro, but the price that would have to be paid to adopt Labor's proposal would be an unnecessary split of community of interest in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area. I was then going to move onto Bennelong unless there are any comments or comments on Eden-Monaro and surrounds.

PN494

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. You're doing well.

PN495

MR SPEAKMAN: Thank you. Bennelong - - -

PN496

MR BURCHETT: I was talking about the time.

PN497

MR SPEAKMAN: That's what I thought you meant.

PN498

MR BURCHETT: And I saw you glance at the clock.

PN499

MR EASSON: I'm grateful to you explaining - - -

PN500

MR BURCHETT: Pardon?

PN501

MR EASSON: I'm grateful .....

PN502

MR BURCHETT: I didn't think you misunderstood.

PN503

MR SPEAKMAN: Bennelong and Berowra, we say the M2 is a natural, it's a strong easily identifiable physical boundary, better than that that Labor proposes. We have put in our written submissions and I won't rehash those, why there's a community of interest between that part of Beecroft that the redistribution committee proposes goes into Bennelong and the rest of Bennelong and there is no particular reason in our submission to keep that pocket of Beecroft in Berowra. We have identified some community of interest reasons why that area looks south and we've made the point that there is no particular reason so far as, for example, Local Government Area why it should look to the north.

PN504

It's important to note that there will be a new train line between Chatswood and Epping that expects to be completed in 2008 and that's another reason why transport moves between this area of Beecroft will be quite strong with other parts of Bennelong down the train line to Macquarie Park and the North Ryde area. It was suggested that people wouldn't pay a toll to go onto the M2 to get to these areas. Well, there's no evidence of that but it's beside the point because whether they pay the toll on the M2 or go down Epping Road for free, there's plenty of good transport links by road and by bus and soon by train to large pockets of employment around Macquarie Park, a major regional shopping centre at Macquarie Centre.

PN505

We have annexed a press release from Minister ..... and the state government emphasising Macquarie Park is recognised as Australia's leading business park, a hot spot of the national economy, et cetera, et cetera. So there are plenty of reasons to think that people who live in that Beecroft area will be shopping and working within the electorate of Bennelong. Unless there's anything else I can assist the augmented Commission with those are our submissions.

PN506

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Anything from you, Mr Trewin?

PN507

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN508

MR BURCHETT: Thank you very much.

PN509

MR SPEAKMAN: Thank you.

PN510

MR BURCHETT: Mr Malcolm Turnbull.

PN511

MR TURNBULL: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name is Malcolm Turnbull. I am the federal Member for Wentworth and I wish to discuss the electorate of Wentworth, which I have the honour to represent. I adopt all of the submissions made by the Liberal Party and elaborated on by Mr Speakman a few moments ago. In respect of the community of interest argument that we have raised, the specific one relating to the Jewish community and their institutions in North Randwick I would simply say this, if the community of interest consideration is to mean anything, surely it must mean that ideally institutions should be in the same electorate as the communities they serve and we have unanimous evidence from the Jewish community that these important institutions in the North Randwick area and that north ward of Randwick council area overwhelmingly service a Jewish community that lives in the existing electorate at Randwick - at Wentworth I should say, that lives in the existing electorate of Wentworth and would on any view continue to be in the electorate of Wentworth.

PN512

Now, as a federal MP as every federal MP deals with the same issues, we deal with issues relating to schools, particularly non government schools who receive a



very large percentage of their funding from the federal government, we deal with matters relating to aged care where aged care institutions and aged care services generally of course receive a very large percentage of their funding from the commonwealth government. Now, inevitably regularly I am receiving representations from people interested in the Emanuel School or in Jewish aged care institutions, as indeed I received submissions relating to other schools.

PN513

Plainly it is ideal both for that community and for the federal Member and for the effectiveness of my representation if the constituency come to me with concerns about their institutions, have those institutions in the electorate that I represent. It makes it easier to make representations to government and makes it easier to do my job, which is to represent the people, the communities that are within my electorate. Now, Mr Easson mentioned that he lived in the electorate of Wentworth and if I may say so, he's chosen a very good electorate in which to reside and I commend him on that and he said his son goes to Marcellin College which is a very fine school, a Marist school, just on the other side of Alison Road and I'm very familiar with that school.

PN514

Now, I have always lived in this area, in fact I've lived in Woolloomooloo, I've lived in Darlinghurst, I've lived on two separate occasions in the area of North Randwick that is the subject of our discussion and I'll come back to my comments about this end of the electorate after I've dealt with North Randwick. But what Mr Easson has made is made a very good case for in effect an alternative argument on our part which is that if Wentworth is to be enlarged it should be turned clockwise, more in line with the original Liberal Party's submission going further south into the Randwick and indeed into Coogee where of course it has been at different times in the past and the point that he makes about Marcellin College is it really defends that, supports that, and it reminds me that not so long ago the girls from Brigidine College, which is Catholic girls school in Coogee, Coogee/Randwick, came down to Canberra and I got a call to come down, the girls want you to come down and see them.

PN515

Of course when schools come to Parliament their local MPs, you know, go to meet them and give them a talk about the history of Parliament and so forth and as I rushed down and I thought to myself but this school is not in my electorate, but when I got there they all thought that I was their local Member. Now, I don't know whether they thought that the boundaries of Wentworth extended down to Coogee Bay Road or whether it was because many of them came from homes that were in the electorate of Wentworth. But it underlines sort of the porousness and the community of interest that continues up and down those beach suburbs in the eastern suburbs.

PN516

But compare that on the other hand to Sydney Grammar School, now Sydney Grammar School which on the proposed boundaries as with ..... Darlinghurst would be in the electorate of Wentworth, Sydney Grammar School is and has been since the big school was built in I believe 1837, a city school. It attracts as do all the city schools, as does the Cathedral School, St Mary's and St Andrew's over at the Anglican Cathedral, it attracts children from all over Sydney. Why is

that? Because all of the railways and public transport links come into the city. So the point is that the schools and the communities in the eastern suburbs have a sense of being in the eastern suburbs.

PN517

This part of Sydney, which I said I know well, is part of the city. Indeed Woolloomooloo and Darlinghurst in East Sydney are much closer and better connected to the CBD than almost all of the rest of the electorate of Sydney and consider Glebe, consider Balmain, are they more or less connected to the city than Woolloomooloo or Darlinghurst? Well, now it's obvious, these areas are part of Sydney. This address, the invitation that we were kindly extended to come to this hearing, asked us to come to level 10, 80 William Street, Sydney. Not 80 William Street, Woolloomooloo, not 80 William Street, East Sydney, 80 William Street, Sydney.

PN518

We are in the city here and the traditional dividing line has always been that escarp and again if you look out the window I can see the house I used to live in with Lucy 26 years ago in Woolloomooloo. There it is at the bottom of the escarp and that was the difference. That's the difference between Woolloomooloo and Potts Point, between the city and if you like the beginning of the eastern suburbs, although many people would make that beginning further east. Let me deal now with the question of transport, a vital issue. All of the bus routes, and I'm a notorious catcher of public transport so I speak from experience, the bus routes are from those southern areas, from Randwick and indeed from Coogee all lead, as indeed the trams originally did, all led up to Bondi Junction.

PN519

If you want to go to Bondi Junction from Clovelly or from Coogee or from Randwick, to get on a bus you actually get off almost outside my electorate office. When I go down to the University of New South Wales or I go down to Randwick Council and walk across the road and get the bus from outside my office. There is a direct connection. Now, as with these areas, Woolloomooloo and Darlinghurst, their connection is with the city. How do people in Woolloomooloo and Darlinghurst get to the city, they walk. There is plenty of facility now which has been greatly improved by the bridge across the expressway.

PN520

So Commissioners, the arguments that we have put are not designed to do anything other than ensure that the community of interest in Wentworth is as contained and as consistent as it can be and I think if we all - if we ask ourselves this fundamental question does Coogee or Randwick have a closer connection with Bronte or Clovelly and Bondi than Woolloomooloo or Darlinghurst does, we know what the answer is. It is plain that there is a community of interest and of course the Jewish community of interest is a very powerful one and I don't need to elaborate on that, but the general community of interest leads you to adjust that electorate in a clockwise fashion.

PN521

I just want to deal with in conclusion with a couple of points that Mr Easson made. He ran off a list of Jewish institutions that have an address of I think 146 Darlinghurst Road, which I'm sure many of you would know is the premises of

the Jewish War Memorial building, it's where the Jewish Museum is. These are all in effect, I wouldn't even call them shop fronts. They are just offices, name plates, you know, perhaps somebody answering the phone, a whole series of organisations there. One of them that he mentions, the Central Security Group, is that which is another particular concern of the Jewish community but I would rather not go into particular detail with but a very major concern of which I deal all the time, as you can imagine, if you've ever driven past a synagogue or a Jewish school you'd know what I mean. The Central Security Group is moving its premises into Bondi Junction as an example of being closer to the community that it serves.

PN522

Finally just in summary if I may say, the boundaries that we've talked about on this side of the electorate are very workable ones. The boundary between Potts Point and Woolloomooloo is well understood and there is a very visible geographic feature. If you look out the window you can actually see it. You can see the escarp that runs down there and indeed that has been a boundary of Wentworth on many occasions in the past. In terms of using the boundary at Boundary Street and Mr Easson asked one of Darlinghurst Road, well, there are at least two reasons for that. Firstly, Boundary Street is a well-known boundary. It's the division between Paddington and Darlinghurst, as Mr Speakman said. So if you live in Paddington you're in Wentworth on our submission, if you live in Darlinghurst you would be in Sydney on our submission, so that's very clear.

PN523

Secondly, a practical point, is that if you accept our submission about retaining at least the north ward of Randwick, the area that's been proposed to be removed, then we could not possibly accommodate any more electors on the western side and if you go to page 4 of our submission you'd see that on the basis of our proposal we would be 9.15 per cent above the quota as at December 2005 and 3.21 per cent above the quota as at 31 May 2010, so there isn't really scope if you accept our arguments on the southern side of the electorate, on the Randwick side of the electorate, then there isn't a capacity to go any further west than we had proposed and you could arguably, for example, you could argue that we should go not so far west.

PN524

One other line that you could consider, perhaps not as clear but still a clear one, is Macquarie Street, which of course runs down into Wild Street which is the boundary between Elizabeth Bay and Potts Point, it's another suburb boundary and that runs right along the very top of the ridge as opposed to Victoria Street which runs along the top of the escarpment. So those are my additional submissions. Does the Commissioners have any questions?

PN525

MR CAMPBELL: I have one, just the point that you've made that flowed through with the last point, why then didn't Liberal Party, given what you've just said about the western issues for your proposal, why didn't you simply propose to move further south into Kingsford Smith?

PN526

MR TURNBULL: Well, we did in our original submission.

PN527

MR CAMPBELL: But I mean at this point in time?

PN528

MR TURNBULL: Well, I was about to call you, your Honour. Commissioner, really the - and we put that in the alternative, as you saw in the last paragraph of the Wentworth submission. That to me seems to me the logical way to move but we in deference to the draft redistribution proposed, we did not wish to sort of reject what you had proposed entirely. But the logic of moving south is very, very powerful and, you know, the boundary on the western side that we have at the moment, which is Boundary Street and in effect Rushcutters Bay Park, is what most people would regard as the difference between the eastern suburbs and the inner city.

PN529

Now, some people would say that Elizabeth Bay was in the inner city no-one would - sorry, Elizabeth Bay was in the eastern suburbs, not many people would say Potts Point was and nobody would say Woolloomooloo or Darlinghurst was. But the western boundary is a very - the current western boundary is a very good one and if you think about Randwick and moving south, there are a number of very good lines south of Alison Road. There's Dalton Street, there's Rainbow Street, any of which depending on the numbers, could be used as a southern boundary and if you wanted to think of - you know, as I speak, I'm apologise, I'm sort of advocate and witness wrapped into one in these proceedings but I speak as someone who has lived in this area all my life. The biggest gap, the biggest difference as you run down the coast is really between Coogee and Maroubra because you get these communities that are very close to the beaches and the surf clubs and the sporting clubs are very close and then when you get to Coogee and then that's the last beach for a very long time. You've got little Lurline Bay, which is just a rocky inlet and you've got streets that just run along the cliff and there's no sort of community focus.

PN530

I mean you don't go down those streets unless you happen to live. So if you were moving Wentworth south, and this of course was the direction of the moving in before, this was where it appeared to be heading at the redistribution before last, you would head down the coast and try and find a line either at Dalton Street or perhaps if you wanted to come right down, to Rainbow Street, and then you would pick up in that case probably half of Randwick municipality.

PN531

MR CAMPBELL: Like you, I've actually lived down that area for quite a while, not now but I have in the past. I make a couple of observations. One is whatever you're doing the Randwick suburb is being split but that's where - - -

PN532

MR TURNBULL: It's going to split - - -

PN533

MR CAMPBELL: But the other observation I would make is that it would appear with the numbers, and I think this came out of partly what Mr Easson was saying, but I think you're both saying it in different ways, is we're facing a situation where what is traditionally called the eastern suburbs, or what you're

calling the eastern suburbs, and the beachfront suburbs, there aren't enough people there for two divisions. That is the issue that I think the augmented Committee is facing and everybody is facing. Because you're bounded by Botany Bay, with the airport as well. So there isn't enough there so either divisions have to go - a division has to go west towards the city or the one that's below it has to go west into the areas down Gardeners Road. That I think is what both submissions have actually come to.

PN534

MR TURNBULL: Well, I don't dissent from that, but again, if you look at the balance, you know, you've got these three electorates and you can either move them that way or you can move them anticlockwise or you can move them clockwise. If you move them clockwise, which is the way we proposed in our original submission and the way we've been discussing now as almost an alternative submission, if you move them clockwise, you move Wentworth into - Wentworth takes in a bit more Randwick, maybe a little bit of Coogee, where the - again, if you know - having lived there yourself, you know the communities are essentially the same. And Mr Easson, I thought, eloquently underlined that with his point about his .....

PN535

On the other hand, that means that you've got to move Kingsford-Smith north. You're taking Kingsford Smith from instead of having half of Rosebery, it has all of Rosebery and those suburbs up through in effect South Sydney, again there is a great deal of continuity and consistency in those communities. Whereas if you go the other way, Kingsford Smith is getting a bit more of the same, that's true, but Wentworth is getting very different communities which are really linked to the city. Now, I would respectfully submit to you that, ideally, if you could readjust the three electorates so that the two that have to gain, ie. Wentworth and Kingsford Smith, each got a bit more of the same, then that reflects and respects the community of interest criterion in the Act better than the proposed or the draft redistribution that's been published.

PN536

MR CAMPBELL: Well, the only observation I'd make about that, the numbers of communities of interest in the area we're talking. I think it's a very difficult decision - - -

PN537

MR TURNBULL: The number?

PN538

MR CAMPBELL: The number of communities of interest. It's not a sole community of interest.

PN539

MR TURNBULL: No, but there is a - I mean, if you've lived there, I mean, there is a bigger difference between, for example, one side of Alison Road and the other, between - sorry, there is less of a difference between one side of Alison Road and another than there is between Darling Point or even Paddington and Woolloomooloo, and you are talking about moving Wentworth into very, very different areas. Now, our submission is, as you know, that pulling Wentworth out of North Randwick fails to take into account very powerful community of interest

arguments. The argument, the Jewish community, seems to me to be a very - I'd submit is a very powerful one. It's difficult to imagine a more powerful community of interest argument.

PN540

It's a community that has three of its biggest institutions serving a community based in Wentworth and the proposal is to take those institutions out of Wentworth so that they're no longer in the electorate wherein resides the vast majority of the community they serve. If you accept that, then of course there aren't the numbers to move any further west really than Victoria Street and Boundary Street.

PN541

MR CAMPBELL: The only observation I'd make, and one must be careful about time, is of course up until 1994, those institutions were in the seat of Phillip.

PN542

MR TURNBULL: Yes, but the seat of Phillip was - I mean, this was a long time ago and - - -

PN543

MR CAMPBELL: I lived in the seat.

PN544

MR TURNBULL: No, but again, this is reflected in our submissions, but I can just say the Jewish community in Wentworth is growing very rapidly. When I was a boy growing up in that part of the world, it was - you know, the biggest influx of Jewish migration had occurred after the war, but what has happened in more recent years, we've seen a massive growth in the Jewish community with immigration from South Africa. That's why we now have these enormous Jewish day schools. That's why you have this - most of those synagogues that are listed here did not exist when I was a boy living in the eastern suburbs. So there's been this big growth and that's reflected in the evidence and that changes the dynamic considerably.

PN545

MR BURCHETT: Anything from you, Mr Trewin?

PN546

MR TREWIN: No, thanks.

PN547

MR BURCHETT: Thank you.

PN548

MR TURNBULL: Thank the Commission.

PN549

MR EASSON: Your Honour, have we just got the National Party left or - - -

PN550

MR BURCHETT: At the moment, yes. I'm calling on Jenny - - -

PN551

MR EASSON: You don't intend to have a short break?



PN552

MR BURCHETT: Well, we'd be having it early, but yes, all right. We can take it at this moment, for five minutes only. Then I'll hear from Ms Jenny Gardiner.

<SHORT ADJOURNMENT

[3.42P.M.]

<RESUMED

[3.57P.M.]

PN553

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin on the phone? Good. Ms Jenny Gardiner?

PN554

MS GARDINER: Thank you, gentlemen. My name is Jenny Gardiner, I'm representing the National Party of Australia, New South Wales, and I'll be mainly focusing on the non-metropolitan map, in particular - - -

PN555

MR BURCHETT: On the?

PN556

MS GARDINER: The non-metropolitan map, particularly Parkes and Gwydir, making some brief reference to a couple of north coast matters and Riverina. Gentlemen, the National Party along with the Liberal Party, suggested in the first place that this redistribution, which by dint of the Australian constitution under required relativity of representation between the states, must see one division abolished, but we maintain that that abolition should occur in metropolitan Sydney. The National Party specialises in representing country and coastal New South Wales and we maintain our vehement opposition to the abolition of Gwydir and the creation of a mega seat called Parkes.

PN557

I have attended, I think, all of the public hearings under the amended Commonwealth Electoral Act of Federal Redistributions, and I don't think there has ever been a public inquiry held such as that one here in Sydney today. Much of the discussion here, notwithstanding the fact that we're in Sydney, has focused on the disillusionment and the anger across the state in relation to the proposed abolition of Gwydir and the enlargement, drastic enlargement, of Parkes. Some of those who have been impassioned in making their presentations here today are not known to the National Party, were not summonsed here by the National Party, and yet have expressed their shock at the proposed abolition of Gwydir and the creation of the very large Parkes.

PN558

I suspect, gentlemen, that similar comments will be made tomorrow at Narrabri, although I have no doubt they'll be delivered in the polite, firm way that country people are famous for. May I take the opportunity to thank, on behalf of the National Party, the Augmented Committee for agreeing to hold a hearing in Narrabri in the heart of Gwydir. That is appreciated. A clear theme today obviously has been that it would have been less traumatic, if I can use that expression, for a seat to be proposed to be abolished in a capital city. If you use the redistribution committee's projected quota of 93 508, and the projected enrolments to May 2010, the 15 divisions clearly beyond the metropolitan area; Calare, Cowper, Eden-Monaro, Farrer, Gilmore, Gwydir, Hume, Hunter, Lyne,

New England, Page, Parkes, Paterson, Richmond and Riverina, they've got a projected enrolment of 1 392 062.

PN559

That's a quota, according to my little calculator, of 14.08708987, or well over 14 and a half quota. We would submit an entitlement to 15 divisions. On the other hand, if you divide the remaining projected enrolments for Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, there are 3 189 877 projected enrollees, and as there can only be 49 divisions represented in the next House of Representatives, that equates to 34.1134276 quota, according to my calculator. That's nowhere near 34 and a half quota, yet the redistribution committee has slated, on those projected figures, that a non-metropolitan electorate be axed instead of a metropolitan one.

PN560

The rounding down for the non-metropolitan divisions and the rounding up for the remainder is part of the reason, I believe, that there is so much anger that Gwydir is proposed to be abolished, a country seat, instead of a metropolitan one. There are a couple of matters that I'll refer to briefly tomorrow at Narrabri, and I won't go over them here, but one of them will be to do with population projections. Today we heard queries about population projections for the northwest sector of Sydney and the Hawkesbury area. The same could well apply to the north and north west of New South Wales. As we all know, the proposed map is based on the 2001 census for population and housing.

PN561

As everyone appreciates, the latest census was conducted this month, too late for this redistribution, but highlighting the fact that the statistical basis for the redistribution was laid down half a decade ago. May I say, half a decade is a long time in politics. With respect to population projections, they are of course just that; they are projections and only this week the Urban Development Institute of Australia has submitted to the state government's deliberations following on the publishing of its important metropolitan strategy a 25-year blueprint for Sydney. That population in that institute's assessment has been under-estimated by at least 10 per cent, meaning all sorts of consequences could flow from that, from a shortage of land to a shortage of schools and the like.

PN562

There will be a debate about that, but it is an example of the genuine debate that can surround population projections and the huge impact that they can have on our society if they are wrong. As the redistribution committee said in paragraph 40 of its report, the 28 greater Sydney electoral divisions are collectively expected to experience a slight decrease in their enrolment share, despite relatively high growth rates evident in some areas. Then, in paragraph 41 the committee says that the north and north west divisions are collectively Gwydir, New England and Parkes, are experiencing low enrolment growth. In paragraph 42, the committee said Calare, Hume, Riverina and Farrer are projected to maintain or grow their share of enrolments. In paragraph 43, the committee said that, broadly speaking, enrolment in the west of the state and in greater Sydney is slowly declining, while the north coast and the south coast show slight growth.

PN563

The Nationals submit that the elimination of a metropolitan division is justified by the committee's own analysis at least as much as the proposition that a non-metropolitan electorate be abolished. The criteria to which the committee had to give due regard apply of course to all of the 49 divisions. Now, we maintain though that criterion two, the means of communication and travel, and four, the area of the proposed electoral division, should have together weighed more heavily in the committee's deliberations in reaching its judgement, and it has been described in a number of submissions to the committee that it is a judgement call that the committee had to make, and they've made that judgement that Gwydir be abolished instead of the seat that the Nationals and the Liberals both propose to be abolished, the seat of Blaxland, for example.

PN564

As I've said, the uproar about Gwydir's proposed abolition cuts across party lines and even a Labor Party parliamentarian has spoken out against the proposal, despite the discipline that usually applies to that party during redistributions. I venture to submit, and others have said so today, that were the augmented Committee to reconsider and propose the abolition of a great geographically smaller metropolitan division, the outcry would be but a whisper compared to the roar of unrest that the committee's proposed map has generated. There's good reason for that, because people know it is obvious that the means of communication and travel and area to be traversed are dramatically less problematic in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong than in, say, the north and north west and the far west of New South Wales.

PN565

That is so for electors. It is also so for their elected parliamentarians with whom they have a right to engage. In fact, they have an expectation that they shall be able to do so. Clearly, the proposed abolition of Gwydir has generated what is probably an unprecedented pile of objections. Not one individual or organisation suggested to the committee that Gwydir be abolished. It came out of the blue. In relation to the area criterion, some organisations and individuals appearing at these public inquiries have been suggested by the committee, the redistribution secretariat that we shouldn't dwell on the area criterion. With the greatest respect to the augmented Committee, when one division is suddenly proposed to encompass nearly half the state, it's an elephant that is impossible, not only to ignore, but to shrink.

PN566

The redistribution committee's report in paragraph 68 makes the point that the committee had to look at the state as a whole and I think anyone who just glances at the map sees immediately that it's out of whack. The resultant proposed map has led to an unprecedented electoral map for New South Wales, which, if gazetted, is remarkable for one thing; that is that it does cover nearly half the state and if it is gazetted in that way, that would be the one thing that will be the most notable feature of this particular redistribution. As pointed out by a number of objectors, but one Mr M J Wicker of Broken Hill, objection 655:

PN567

*Sometimes size really does matter.*

PN568

And they helpfully put it in capital letters. The objector also makes the point that we live in an age where all manner of occupational health and safety laws and regulations applies to those in the workplace. There is a real fear for the safety of parliamentarians, as he or she attempts to diligently service such a vast area and I have no doubt that that will be referred to again tomorrow. In objection number 1755, the Mayor of Gunnedah, Gae Swain, set out the duties of a parliamentarian and she made the comment that, "Time is irretrievable". As Mr Spencer Ferrier pointed out today from an aviator's point of view, and I can confirm that he has transported many parliamentarians to the more remote parts of this state over the years, covering a large electorate by air in itself doesn't necessarily solve the problem. But a former - - -

PN569

MR BURCHETT: Can I just interrupt for a second? That point has been put and we understand that, but nevertheless, this would not be by any means the largest electorate in Australia. In fact, it would be much smaller than some others, wouldn't it? It'd be the largest in New South Wales, but then New South Wales is a more heavily populated state than some others.

PN570

MS GARDINER: Exactly, and that is certainly - - -

PN571

MR BURCHETT: But it wouldn't be the largest by any means in Australia. So an argument that you can't manage it has to have some limits, doesn't it?

PN572

MS GARDINER: Well, I'm happy to go into that now if you like? I was going to mention it tomorrow?

PN573

MR BURCHETT: Well, that's why I raised the comment, because - - -

PN574

MS GARDINER: Okay. Right.

PN575

MR BURCHETT: - - - you're putting the submission.

PN576

MS GARDINER: Okay. Well, one of the former Members for this vast part of the state, a large electorate in the first place, was Mr Noel Hicks, a more diligent local Member you couldn't find. Mr Noel Hicks firstly represented the seat of Riverina and then it became the largest seat of Riverina-Darling, taking in Broken Hill. He lived in Griffith and he drove a lot of the time, but sometimes he would fly because of course the commitments of his diary and the demands of his constituents - and as I said, he was extremely responsive to his electors, so he would think nothing of driving from Griffith to Broken Hill and back again, just for one appointment. However, in his submission to the redistribution committee, Noel Hicks makes the point that when he turned up as the local Member by air, which he was entitled to do, he was given some charter allowance to help him, what did his constituents think of that?

PN577

Well, they would have liked him to have driven the same roads that they drove, in the same conditions that they drove them in, and that is part of the point. That's why people in the far west of the state want parliamentarians to feel a part of their community, to experience the same sorts of conditions that they experience. I can refer you also, Mr Chairman, to the immediate past Member for Parkes, Mr Tony Lawler. Mr Lawler has gone on the public record. He was elected and then he decided not to contest the next federal election. You say, what are the limits to this argument? Well, Tony Lawler is the classic example, and again, he has made an objection to the redistribution committee. Tony Lawler, like all Members of Parliament, of course are expected - his seat represented Parkes, which included Dubbo and the City of Broken Hill.

PN578

The Parliament is arranged; its sitting arrangements are such that there are often blocks of sitting weeks. He has young children, so he would go to Canberra to attend his parliamentary duties and party meetings, and parliamentary committee meetings, and of course on occasion he would have to go to Broken Hill straight from Canberra. His family lived in Dubbo and for weeks he would not have the time in his diary to get home. So there is that famous case of Tony Lawler saying on radio, he was in Cobar one day and he was listening to his little boy playing on the flute or a recorder on the telephone because his father couldn't get home to Dubbo for that weekend, in between sitting weeks. It simply could not be done. There was no transport available.

PN579

Now, there are limits, with the greatest respect, to what you can do in a diverse and more densely populated electorate like Parkes and Gwydir than is the case in some other parts of Australia. I know, I've heard this argument twice today, that somebody has suggested that the new Parkes would be the biggest. Well, no one in the National Party has made any such suggestion and I can assure you that tomorrow we will provide some information that shows to you the difference between the mega-Parkes and what would apply in seats like Grey and Kalgoorlie elsewhere in Australia. So I would strongly submit that there are limits because in the end, people want good quality parliamentary representatives and your map, with the greatest respect, the committee's map, is a massive disincentive to people, good people like Tony Lawler, representing people in Parliament, in the House of Representatives.

PN580

There is no doubt about it, and many people throughout country New South Wales actually understand that point. That's why they're so angry. So that's why they feel that there is a sense of injustice about it. There were some - another couple of objectors from Gunnedah who summed up the sentiment of many of the people I'm talking about when they said Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813, it seems that many people in metropolitan New South Wales still have not crossed the Great Dividing Range, and for them, all worthwhile living only goes on in the narrow coastal areas of the state from Newcastle to Wollongong. I would not suggest for one second that the augmented Committee is of that opinion.

PN581

However, there is that undercurrent in our society that city-based decision-makers are not duly sympathetic to the conditions that face people living across the oft-mentioned Sandstone Curtain. The exacerbation with the proposal was - you could hear it in his voice - - -

PN582

MR BURCHETT: Well, you say that. Just a minute. Exacerbation is not the point. You are addressing us on some sort of basis within the parameters that the statute lays down, on which the augmented Commission should say that what the committee have put to it either should not be adopted or should be modified. I've heard you now use words like exacerbation repeatedly and I really must interrupt at some point. Let's get to what the reasons are. The fact that the committee points to, which I see in its report, is that in the central west, there has been a relative loss of population. That's not denied, is it, anywhere in the submission you're putting?

PN583

MS GARDINER: Well, the committee also says there's been a relative loss of population in Sydney. What we're saying is there's an argument - - -

PN584

MR BURCHETT: Could you deal with the point I asked you? It's not denied that there's been a relative loss of population in the central west, is it? And the far west?

PN585

MS GARDINER: Well, in the central west, if you go to the central west, I think you'll find there's a goldmine boom on in Orange, so it's the same - - -

PN586

MR BURCHETT: There are booms on in various places - - -

PN587

MS GARDINER: That's right. That's exactly right.

PN588

MR BURCHETT: - - - but are you disputing - have you disputed in your submissions - that if you go out into the western areas with which the seat of Parkes as proposed is concerned, there has been some relative loss of population in that part of the state. Is that really in dispute?

PN589

MS GARDINER: Yes. We agree with that, but not - but in the redistribution committee's report, it says so has there been a relative loss in Sydney, but you - but the committee has chosen to axe a country seat where the statistical basis is that it could have axed a city seat with far less dramatic reaction.

PN590

MR BURCHETT: Well, that's the argument. If that's the argument, it can be put in rational terms. Don't have to talk about injustice and exacerbation. The committee is simply applying, as it saw it, the parameters that the Parliament laid down and if you tell the augmented Commission that we should come to a different conclusion, we've still got to work within the same parameters, and it's a question of properly applying them and we're interested to hear from you and



we've heard from a number of other people today, but generally people have put it in terms of reasonable argument.

PN591

MS GARDINER: Well, I certainly - with the greatest respect, I don't apologise for the passion that there is - - -

PN592

MR BURCHETT: All right.

PN593

MS GARDINER: - - - on that part of the National Party - - -

PN594

MR BURCHETT: I didn't ask you to.

PN595

MS GARDINER: - - - on this matter, but I did - - -

PN596

MR BURCHETT: But I do ask you to put an argument.

PN597

MS GARDINER: I have done that, in that there is a statistical basis as both the Liberal Party and the National Party put at the beginning, for the abolition of a city seat. There is no particular reason why it has to be Gwydir or a country seat. That is our argument and that is I think a rational argument.

PN598

MR BURCHETT: Yes, I understand that one.

PN599

MS GARDINER: Okay. Well, it's a pretty important one because - - -

PN600

MR BURCHETT: Yes. Yes.

PN601

MS GARDINER: - - - that's the basis on which most - - -

PN602

MR BURCHETT: I understand.

PN603

MS GARDINER: - - - redistribution has actually happened.

PN604

MR BURCHETT: Yes. You proceed.

PN605

MS GARDINER: Okay. If I could just take this opportunity to mention - respond to the remarks made by Mr Easson on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, who virtually dismissed the abolition of Gwydir and the increase in the size of Parkes. He referred to the western lands division, the western division. It's interesting to note that the former Member for Gwydir who represented that seat in various configurations, Ralph Hunt, was the Member for 20 years. Mr Hunt was also, from 1989 to 2002, the Chairman of the Western Lands Advisory Board

in New South Wales. I don't think there's a person in Australia who would have a better feeling for whether that sort of Parkes electorate was manageable and he's got the perspective of the whole - an intimate knowledge of the western division.

PN606

It's interesting to note that Mr Hunt was the second objector, the second person to get his objection in, to the abolition of Gwydir and the enlargement of Parkes. So I think you have some expert evidence there opposing an electorate that runs - and we include - the Member would have to represent at least part of the constituents' problems in Broken Hill and almost running right up to near Inverell in New England. I'd also like to just touch on the comment made on behalf of the Liberal Party in relation to Riverina, and I passionately support the redistribution committee's Riverina. We believe the redistribution committee came up with a Riverina, if I can put it that way, and by and large, that is a sensible proposition and the National Party urges you to keep a stable Riverina in that part of the map.

PN607

I just quickly mention a couple of matters relating to the north coast. There's the anomaly relating to Lord Howe Island. Years ago, Lord Howe Island was put into the state seat of Macquarie, Port Macquarie, and we maintain that there should be some consistency and because Port Macquarie is literally the nearest town to Lord Howe Island and there are many communities of interest there that share the same STD code, the phone system, the secondary school students on the Island - -

PN608

MR BURCHETT: It's an extremely small number of electors. It's a question of what is the right thing to do.

PN609

MS GARDINER: It is. Yes.

PN610

MR BURCHETT: When did it come out of Port Macquarie?

PN611

MS GARDINER: I think it was about two state redistributions ago.

PN612

MR BURCHETT: And it went to Sydney?

PN613

MS GARDINER: It went from Sydney to Port Macquarie electorate. It's now in the state seat of Port Macquarie.

PN614

MR BURCHETT: In the state seat?

PN615

MS GARDINER: Yes.

PN616

MR BURCHETT: But what about for federal purposes?

PN617

MS GARDINER: It's still - - -

PN618

MR BURCHETT: Has it always been in - - -

PN619

MS GARDINER: Yes, yes.

PN620

MR BURCHETT: Always? I see.

PN621

MS GARDINER: Correct. But it's an anomaly, which we believe should be addressed. We also note that in relation to the far north coast and the boundary between Richmond and Page that was the redistribution committee reported that it had sought to keep electors in their existing divisions wherever it could be equitably achieved. There seems to have been a switch of some thousands of electors out and then the same number put in on that boundary. We think that that's really change for the sake of change in that Ballina and to the north there. Change for the sake of change, and we would urge some stability there. Just returning to the primary interest of my submission, the great - there's always a great debate at redistributions about the community of interest arguments.

PN622

I would suggest that that will continue. But I can bet that the sentiment expressed in objection number 1767, which was lodged by an organisation very well-known and respected throughout the state, but particularly in the more remote parts of New South Wales, the Isolated Children's and Parents' Association, which sums up many people's views about the proposed abolition of Gwydir and the creation of a mega-Parkes. The ICPA said:

PN623

*As for the concept of community of interest, the only similarities between Parkes and Moree are that they are outside Sydney.*

PN624

I think that this map, the scope of the map, has an unhealthy tendency. It feeds that sort of cynicism that already underlies much of country life and for that reason the National Party earnestly submits that the augmented Committee revisit the redistribution committee's judgement that a country division be abolished instead of a less-traumatic for electors and parliamentarians, abolition of a metropolitan division, to acknowledge that big is not necessarily better and to resurrect a federation division, Gwydir. Thank you very much.

PN625

MR BURCHETT: Mr Trewin?

PN626

MR TREWIN: No questions.

PN627

MR BURCHETT: Thank you. Well, our time has almost expired. I think what I might do is - I can see some people are eager - strictly limit those who wish to make a final comment to about two minutes. But anyone can do that. Two minutes. All right?

PN628

MR EASSON: Two minutes.

PN629

MR BURCHETT: I announced at the beginning that we would take replies if something really new emerged, and I don't think anything has emerged of which people didn't have adequate notice in the written objections and comments that were put in. But if you wish to make a quick closing comment, I will hear you, but I will give other people a chance to do the same, and therefore I've got to limit you to two minutes. All right?

PN630

MR EASSON: One minute for Wentworth and one minute for Jenny Gardiner. On the matter of Wentworth, I just want to talk about the Jewish community. The Liberal Party objection mentioned Gary Eckstein. If you look at page 27 of his report, page 99 of the Liberal Party's submission, you'll see that of the Jewish community in New South Wales, 51 per cent are in Wentworth, 12 per cent are in Kingsford Smith. The period, which he covered, was between '96 and 2001. There was a shift of 2 per cent of the population in Wentworth, basically to Kingsford Smith. What you're dealing with in New South Wales with that 50 per cent of the Jewish population lives in Wentworth, and 1 in 8 lives in Kingsford Smith. Kingsford Smith is the second biggest division in New South Wales in terms of Jewish people.

PN631

As we put in our comments and objections, the suburbs of Kingsford and Maroubra each contain more Jewish electors than does Randwick all right. Now, in regard to what was said by Jenny Gardiner, as I previously mentioned, the Labor Party view, and we'll put it here, it may be less great than to say in Narrabri, but in our view, that this whole campaign about the abolition of Gwydir has been a deliberately orchestrated effort on the part of the National Party in which they have attempted to dupe well-meaning people. If you look at the Liberal Party so-called solution for the country, you find that they put in Riverina places like Bogan and Cobar; they've put Central Darling into Farrer and all the rest. Putting communities that really have no connection with those two electorates. The commissioners should hold firm.

PN632

They should not do what the 1984 commission did, and that is run away from their original proposal and that was to try and place, as far as we can, the parts of the western division which have similar interests, which are leasehold land, which are sparsely-populated. They have a community of interest. They should be put together and in your proposed division, three-quarters of the size of Parkes is accounted for by the Western Division.

PN633

MR BURCHETT: Thank you - - -

PN634

MR EASSON: - - - it is in that western division - - -

PN635

MR BURCHETT: Does anyone else wish to make a two-minute comment?  
Very well. We'll close the proceedings. We'll be proceeding to Narrabri. Can I  
thank all those who have participated.

**<ADJOURNED UNTIL FRIDAY 25 AUGUST 2006**

**[4.28P.M.]**