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AUSCRIPT

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION

BURCHETT J, Chair

INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS TO THE QUEENSLAND PROPOSED RE-DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

BRISBANE

9.32 AM, WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2006

CHAIR: I think we will commence proceedings. I'm sorry that the space is not as ample as we would have desired, but it's the best we could arrange. And anyway, those who are here are all seated. That's almost full seats. And I'll now commence. I will commence with - as I've done at previous such
5 gatherings - I'll commence with a brief explanation, for those who are not experts on the details of electoral administration, of what has brought us here and what we're doing. Under the Commonwealth Electoral Law, there is an Electoral Commissioner, who is Mr Ian Campbell on my right, to administer the department dealing with elections.

10 There is also an Electoral Commission to determine electoral questions at an independent level. It consists of three members. Firstly, a chairperson, who must be a Federal Court judge or a former judge of that court, chosen from three persons nominated by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. I am the
15 chairperson, and my name is James Burchett. Secondly, the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Campbell; and thirdly, an additional member, who is the Australian Statistician, Mr Dennis Trewin. He, unfortunately, cannot be here in person because of illness, but he is listening on the telephone right now, I understand. Are you there, Dennis?

20 MR TREWIN: Yes, I am.

CHAIR: Thank you. When a distribution - a re-distribution is required in any State - as it is now in Queensland, because the population's statistics demand
25 that there be one more division in this State than before, while New South Wales has lost one - the legislation provides for a committee to work out a proposal. It is a proposal. The committee consists of the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Campbell, the Chief Electoral Officer for the State - that's the Chief Commonwealth Electoral Officer, Ms Anne Bright on my left - and
30 two Queensland officials, Mr Bob McCarthy, the Surveyor General, further to my left, and Mr Glenn Poole, the Auditor General, on the far right - my far right.

What has happened so far is the Committee has made a proposal, which
35 chooses to create a new division based on Gladstone. It does so for reasons the Committee explains in its report. The Committee then proposes a number of consequential changes to divisions in Queensland, and also a number of other changes, which it sees as required by population movements. The procedure allows people and organisations to object, and a number have. The legislation
40 then provides that the objections must be considered by a body called the Augmented Electoral Commission. The Augmented Commission consists of the three members of the Australian Electoral Commission, plus the other persons who are on the Committee.

45 We are empowered to hold an inquiry, and that has been done in Longreach and is happening today, here in Brisbane. There is limited time, not from our choice, but the Act lays down a strict timetable which must be observed. The Augmented Commission has been studying the written objections and the written comments, which we have received, but some 16 or 17 people have

accepted the opportunity to address us on the problems they have raised. Not all will, I expect, be covering every issue, and I mention the questions of time and the numbers speaking, so that everyone will be conscious of the right of others to a reasonable opportunity, as well as their own.

5

You may be assured we will consider what has been put to us in writing and what is said, and we will perform our duty to make a decision on these matters.

We have to consider the question in accordance with principles which are laid down in the Act. Before I call on the first speaker, I will add that we propose

10 to take a break at about 11 o'clock, I think, for a quarter of an hour; lunch, 12.40 to 1.40; and if necessary, a 15 minute break in the afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Now, I understand that Councillor Eddie Stone, Mayor of Kolan Shire, has a particular problem and I have acceded to a suggestion that I might call on him first if he is here. Is he here? Yes, good. Well, I call upon you, now, to speak

15 to us. The most convenient place is - it's normally a witness box. It's not a dock.

MR CAMPBELL: And he's not the hanging judge.

20 CHAIR: Thank you. Yes, very well.

EDDIE STONE, called

[9.38am]

25

CR STONE: Members of the Commission, I'm here to strenuously object to the proposed re-distribution on behalf of Kolan Shire, council, and community.

Just to add, for your benefit, I'm the mayor of Kolan Shire. Council has provided a written submission on 4 July '06. This submission raises various

30 issues relating to the proposed re-distribution, and the main focus included in the submission were as follows: community of interest, means of communication and travel, geographical features, and boundaries of the existing divisions.

35 My main concern with this re-distribution, or the proposed one, is the lack of community interest achieved. Now, we've had a history of objecting to the position where we've put in by - with our electoral boundaries. We've been, sort of, thrown around, as we feel, from pillar to post. We were in with Wide Bay and we had no community of interest with Maryborough. It's very
40 unfortunate. When anything comes to the electorate, it goes to the head place, and we were a leftover. Then we've got put into Hinkler. We're very happy with Hinkler because our community of interest is with Bundy. Ninety to 100 per cent of our people, if they can't be fulfilled for their requirements in Gin Gin go to Bundy. They don't go to Maryborough.

45

Before - when we went to Maryborough, we crossed through Hinkler to go to Maryborough. Now, I'm just drawing that conclusion because I'm just showing how we've been tossed around. Now we've been put in with Wright. Wright is centred on Gladstone. We've got absolutely no community of interest with

Gladstone, so we're going back into a similar situation. We'd like to be connected with Bundaberg and Burnett Shire, because that's our area; that's the area that every - all our people gravitate to; and really, that's our main objection. We've pointed out a few other things in our submission, but our
5 main objection is through community of interest, and also connection with one particular set of politicians from the area.

By being chopped around, I feel that it hasn't given us a fair go, and we're just here to draw your attention to the fact of us being thrown about and we would
10 very - be very happy if we were taken in with Bundaberg in an electorate based on Bundaberg. I won't keep any more of your time, so I think that's the main issues that I've got. So if there's any questions you want to ask me, or - - -

CHAIR: Thank you. Well, I will first of all ask Mr Trewin if he has any
15 questions.

MR TREWIN: No, no questions, Chairman.

CHAIR: Okay. Anyone else? Thank you. We have read what you put in
20 writing.

CR STONE: Yes, well, I won't go over that again.

CHAIR: Yes, quite.
25

THE WITNESS WITHDREW [9.42am]

30 CHAIR: Well, I will now call on Mr Ray Duffy for the same reason - Councillor Duffy, Mayor of Burnett Shire.

RAY DUFFY, called [9.42am]
35

CR DUFFY: Well, thank you very much and - certainly, Mr Chairman, and certainly to the whole board, thank you very much for allowing us to come on - to do this and we can get back to Toowoomba to the conference, so appreciate
40 it.

Well, again, everybody is going to say similar things about the community of interest. From my perspective, I am here representing 27 and a half thousand people because there's not enough room in the room here, and certainly you
45 guys would be sitting here for a long time. It's a very, very strong and loud voice I bring to you today on behalf of the community and on behalf of the council.

This suggestion is to take approximately half of the area of Burnett Shire - a bit over half the area, but a small number of people, around 3000 people, out of our shire, which was an amalgamated council. So we've been working very, very hard to marry our communities together so that they have their
5 communities of interest around the city of Bundaberg, in Bundaberg, he's a phone call away, and it's very easy to access him. It's been great for the community, and the community of the whole shire.

And, again, I see that the community of interest between the people of Moore
10 Park and the people of - the community of interest of Winton are very, very small. We elect people to represent our communities. I represent the 27 and a half thousand people in my community. I don't care what political persuasion, what nationality they are, what colour they are. I am there to represent those people, and we can do that because of that community of interest and
15 availability.

To us it would be unfair on the elected Member to try equitably to serve the community of Moore Park, Yandarin, South Kaleen, etcetera, and the people of Winton and those areas. It wouldn't be fair. It wouldn't be equitable. They
20 wouldn't have an equitable voice in Parliament. I know it's not your decision about disproportionate representation, but that was a good benefit of disproportionate representation.

But certainly these are issues that my community have asked me in a very, very
25 loud voice to come down and put to your Commission, and, likewise, everybody is going to say a similar thing, but please take on board the voices of the community of Burnett. They feel very strongly about it, and we really do wish to remain in the electorate that we are tied together with the Kaleen and Bundaberg, etcetera, because it's a community that works very hard
30 together. We work regionally together. The State government have got an SSS on us at the moment to ensure that we work cooperatively together and make sure that we represent our communities the best possible way, and that's the bottom line. That's all we ask. Please ensure that we are able to be served equitably and have a fair and reasonable
35 voice in the Parliament. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No questions.
40

CHAIR: Anyone else? Thank you.

CR DUFFY: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.
45

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[9.45am]

CHAIR: Well, now I will go back to the order of objections and call on Mr John Cherry.

5 JOHN CHERRY, called

[9.45am]

MR CHERRY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My interest in this is as a former Democrat senator and also as a person who has done submissions to the two
10 previous re-distribution committees.

I think overall the committee has done a fairly good job. But, I think, as judged by the very large number of objections you've received, there are some real questions about the composition of the seat of Wright, and I think I have
15 put in, in my objection, an alternative proposal, which, I think, meets a lot of the objections in a way which also results in less disruption to electors across the State. And the fundamental question in looking at Wright is what you do with Maranoa, and to emasculate it or not to emasculate it is the fundamental question.

20 In my view, it makes much, much more sense to leave Maranoa as it is, to take that small transfer of Clifton Shire from Groome to Maranoa which brings it into quota, and then that means you need to make much, much fewer changes to both Hinkler and to Wide Bay leaving the seat of - the new seat should be
25 created in the high growth corridor based on Cooloola and Noosa Shires. To me, that makes a lot, lot more sense, because there is much more community of interests within those seats. They're more logical than the ones which the committee has suggested, and with strong community of interests.

30 The key objections you have received to the proposal you have put forward are fundamentally about the excision of the western shires from Maranoa, the inclusion of the North Burnett Shires in Wright, the separation of Maryborough and Hervey Bay for the first time since 1901 into separate seats, and also the inclusion of Noosa Shire into Wide Bay. All of those objections would be met
35 if Maranoa is left alone.

If Maranoa is left alone with the addition of Clifton Shire, then essentially what was left of your proposal of Wright, with the addition of the city of Bundaberg, then becomes the seat of Hinkler. The seat of Wide Bay becomes a much more
40 logical seat based in North Burnett Shires, and the Lower Burnett Shires, plus Maryborough and Hervey Bay, and the new seat would then be established on what was to have been your electorate of Wide Bay which would be based on the Cooloola Shires and Noosa Shires plus the South Burnett Shires.

45 One of the advantages of that, I might add, is for the first time the South Burnett Shires are all placed in the one division, so you actually have Kilkivan, Murgon, Wondai, Nanango, Kingaroy and Yarraman, all in the one division, which is something I don't think any Electoral Commission has achieved in

decades.

The question that arises, though, of course, is the question which I think the Commission actually addresses, I note in one of the committee's suggestions,
5 which is that Maranoa currently is too big. It's 780,000 square kilometres.
And I think it should be noted that Maranoa is the fourth largest seat in Australia, not the largest; it's the fourth largest seat. It actually has been larger in the past, and the original Maranoa of 1901 to 1913 was actually bigger than the current Maranoa.

10

And I was just going, for the committee's interest, to hand up to you just an extract from the Commission's referendum CD which just shows some of the sizes of seats over time, which actually highlights that from 1901 to 1913 Maranoa was bigger than it was now, included the shire of Belyando. From
15 1934 to '49 the seat of Kennedy - I notice the Member for Kennedy is here today - was actually bigger than the current seat of Maranoa, and from 1984 to 1993 Kennedy had an area of, I think, 745,000 square kilometres when it included Longreach, Belyando and Jericho.

20 So, in many respects, I think the seat isn't necessarily too big, and if there were complaints about it being too big you would have heard them from the western mayors. But the western shires were all placed in Maranoa for the first time in the last re-distribution, and you have got submissions from all of the western mayors saying they want to stay in Maranoa. So if they're saying the seat is
25 not too big, then surely the seat isn't too big.

The question then comes, looking at the National Party's submission, whether Emerald should stay in Maranoa or not. Emerald has been in Maranoa since 1984. There is a very strong transport and communication corridor along the
30 Capricorn Highway between Emerald and Longreach. It's good to link that together. They're in the same State seat, I think, from Gregory - Gregory between Emerald and Longreach.

And also, I notice the committee suggested that Emerald's community of
35 interests should go into Gladstone because of the economic links through the coal mining and the port there. Emerald's strongest links are into Rockhampton, obviously, as the regional centre, rather than Gladstone, and I think you will find that in talking to Emerald people - where do they go for their medical, their servicing issues, their economic issues. Their links are
40 actually to Rockhampton.

The largest industry in Emerald, and Mr McCarthy might take issue with me on this one, is actually cotton-growing, and it is a very large cotton growing area. True, it does service the local mines, but the biggest employer in the
45 town is almost certainly cotton growing. The largest cotton growing areas in Queensland are in Goondiwindi, St George and Emerald, and they're all in the current seat of Maranoa.

So, in actual fact, there are some very strong economic links which the committee might not be aware of between Emerald and the rest of the seat of Maranoa through the cotton industry, which actually has strong links between the various regions.

5

If Maranoa is left alone, then, as I said, what was to have been your seat of Wright would then become Hinkler, with the addition of Bundaberg being shifted into Hinkler, and some of the North Burnett Shires being shifted to Wide Bay. Wide Bay then looks much more logical. It's almost a perfect
10 rectangle, which I think is a lovely thing to aspire to in electoral geography, and then Wright goes into a high-growth corridor.

The other issue I wanted to address was the south-east corner, what happens to the shires of Esk and Boonah. I'm a former resident of Boonah shire, so I take
15 great interest in where Boonah has been. Boonah and Beaudesert have been in the same Federal division in every re-distribution since 1901 except for the 1984 re-distribution.

They have been in the same State division in every re-distribution since, at
20 least, 1950 except for, I think, between 1992 and 1999. There are actually strong economic, social, cultural, transport, geographic links between Boonah and Beaudesert. There are also strong links between Boonah and Ipswich. But the question becomes what should Blair be. Should Blair be a seat based fundamentally on Ipswich with a bit of hinterland or should it be a city/country
25 seat.

I would submit that the committee on this occasion has done a very good job of actually establishing Blair as an Ipswich seat. Over the last two re-distributions the boundary between Blair and Oxley has been unsatisfactory. I
30 think at one stage when it was first proposed it went right up the main street of Ipswich which caused quite a few objections and has been progressively shifting across the suburbs of Ipswich.

It's quite clear that the next re-distribution in Blair is going to become almost
35 entirely based in Ipswich. I mean, that is the logical direction. I would suggest that Blair should be an Ipswich-based seat and that rather than including Boonah into Blair, then Blair should push further into Ipswich and actually move the whole suburbs of Redbank Plains and - I think it's Bellbird Park - directly into Blair and leave Boonah in Forde.

40

That means fewer transfers from Forde back into Rankin and then allows for a more logical border in some respects. Well, it allows for - the border between Oxley and Rankin to follow the Mount Lindsay Highway down to see the suburb of Hillcrest transferred from Rankin back into Oxley. The other
45 question is, of course, what happens with Esk Shire. And I think here the Commission has made - the Committee has made an absolute blooper by suggesting that Esk Shire be added in with Dickson.

There is no need to change Dickson. Dickson is within enrolment boundaries. It's wholly contained within Pine Rivers Shire. There is no good reason to change Dickson in this re-distribution and absolutely no good reason to actually amalgamate it with Esk. If Dickson is left alone that means there
5 would be fewer changes to Longman and the built up area of Caboolture Shire could be entirely contained within Longman with only the loss of its real hinterland to the west and the north, which would then go into Fisher.

It makes a much, much more logical seat for both Dickson and Longman and
10 also a more logical seat for Fisher, because you actually would unite Esk and Kilcoy, where I was born as a matter of interest, and Woodford, which were all along the Dagular Highway into the one seat. I might note - - -

CHAIR: Which seat?

15

MR CHERRY: In Fisher.

CHAIR: In Fisher?

20 MR CHERRY: Yes. So - - -

CHAIR: So that's where you say Esk should be?

MR CHERRY: Esk should be in Fisher, yes. I notice in the Committee's
25 comments they say that part of Esk Shire was included in Longman - was included with Pine Rivers Shire in the 1992 re-distribution. I note that wasn't one of the better proposals from Commissions. I think, Longman, that was established and that particular re-distribution was very messy. It also put half of Esk Shire into Fisher in that re-distribution.

30

So the argument that they were united in 1992 actually goes both ways. In fact, the northern half of Esk Shire was in Fisher from, I think, '84 through to, I think, '98, I think from memory. So it does make some logic to put those seats together in that way. In summary, I think the proposals I've put forward in my
35 objection actually meet a lot of the concerns of the objectors. It meets the concerns of the western mayors who want to stay in Maranoa.

It meets the concerns of the mayors of the South Burnett - of the North Burnett who don't want to be in a seat that extends out to Winton. It meets the
40 concerns of the Maryborough and Hervey Bay City Councils and Chamber of Commerce, who want to stay in the same seat and it also ensures the new seat is based in a high growth area in the - based on Cooloola, Gympie and finally putting all the South Burnett shires together in the one seat. There are some minor issues raised by other people, but I let them talk to their own
45 submissions.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin.

MR TREWIN: No questions.

MR CAMPBELL: I just have one observation. You made great play in talking about size and, of course, I'm sure you're aware of Section 66 of the Act
5 which says area as well. I don't think it's quite fair just to leave on the table that Maranoa has been bigger. Of course, when Maranoa has been bigger Queensland has had far fewer divisions.

And so I draw your attention to what happened in 1906 and the number of
10 divisions Queensland had as compared to going to 29 now is quite substantially different. And we do have under the Act proposed - or geographic area is one of the criteria that the committees have to take into account.

MR CHERRY: I do know that that criteria says physical features and area.
15 Jumping over the Bunya Mountains is a very important physical feature and in jumping over the Bunya Mountains to find quota for Maranoa you jump a statistical division from the east to the west of the range and you break up the South Burnett into two divisions. So I think the physical features in area division does recognise that area and physical features need to be taken into
20 account.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MR CHERRY: Thank you.
25

THE WITNESS WITHDREW [9.57am]

30 CHAIR: Councillor Barb Hovard, Mayor of Maryborough.

BARBARA HOVARD, called [9.58am]

35 CR HOVARD: Mr Chairman, Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning. We really appreciate you taking the time to listen to our concerns. And you can see by the plethora of mayors here today that we truly are concerned. We're speaking on behalf of our people. Now,
40 Maryborough per se, you would wonder why are we objecting because we're quite happy to be in Wide Bay.

However, Maryborough and Hervey Bay for all time have been inextricably linked and, in fact, once upon a time Hervey Bay was the holiday home village
45 of Maryborough and now, of course, it's the reverse. However, from that history has grown - businesses have offices in both cities, Hervey Bay and Maryborough. Now, it's been really, I suppose, good that we've had that one Federal Member that we could go to whenever we wanted an issue - if we

wanted to progress something on a Federal level we had one Minister or one Member.

5 It doesn't make sense that businesses have to go to two Members when we're just so close. We are constantly being asked by both levels of government, State and Federal, to work as a region and to build our capacity for regional development and economic development and we've been doing that. We've probably spent hundreds of thousands in building the Fraser coast as an entity working together.

10

Just currently the Hervey Bay and Maryborough City Councils are working together on sporting complexes, waste facilities, tourism initiatives, economic initiatives and that brings me to - I've spoken about businesses, but that also brings me to our welfare groups. They have all got offices in both towns.

15 Now, they are always lobbying government for support and assistance and the way forward.

That means another layer of red tape for them and waiting around talking to this Member and that Member, it just doesn't make sense. I think local -

20 maintaining faith in our electoral system is important and it's critical and the announcement of the new boundary changes in Maryborough has our local residents shaking their heads. They are an apathetic lot in the main and yet this boundary change has really stirred them.

25 And if we don't - if they are not - if they are thinking, "Well, what's the point? the boundary - you know, the electoral boundary changes don't make sense" then it throws the entire system and the integrity of that into doubt, it seems to me as I move around our city. I wanted also to point out that Woocoo, the shire of Woocoo, many of their residents are only 10 minutes from the city of
30 Maryborough and that's always been their community of interest.

Maryborough was set up as a port and, I suppose, the farming communities of Woocoo have been settled as a result of that. Now, they have absolutely no community of interest with Bundaberg at all and yet it is being moved into

35 Hinkler. The Mayor of Woocoo would undoubtedly be here today but he's very ill, so I guess in one respect I'm speaking on his behalf.

I will allow the Mayor of Hervey Bay - he will have much more to say on this, because, I guess, it affects his council and his residents much more than

40 Maryborough. But I did want to add our fervent support on behalf of our residents, on behalf of our businesses and especially on behalf of our welfare organisations and our two governments. I just ask you to reconsider.

I do understand the huge problem that you have trying to fit in - and no one is
45 going to be happy - so as a mayor we will tell you that we're used to that too. But we just ask you to restore the confidence of the people and I'm sure that you've probably got some answers to that. And thank you again for your time.

CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Trewin.

MR TREWIN: No questions.

5 CHAIR: Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

10 CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Fred Rich.

FRED RICH, called

[10.02am]

15 CHAIR: Yes, Mr Rich?

MR RICH: Thank you, Members of the Commission. I'm not here to represent anybody, however, being in Brisbane at this time I decided I would come along to support the submission that my wife and I put in to the
20 Commission. I would just like to reinforce some of the things that we've put in our submission, and, mainly, that we have no economic ties or community ties with Gladstone or very few, in fact, with the Capricorn Coast.

So far as transport is concerned and communications we have three air services
25 a week from Blackall and three from Barcaldine to Brisbane and back. We have a daily bus service from Brisbane and very important living on the land and at times you require equipment very urgently and if I require something for, say, a machine or a water pump, if I can ring a supplier in either Dolby or Roma or Toowoomba by 5 o'clock in the afternoon, that will be in Blackall on
30 the bus the next morning.

As I understand it, there's no direct bus service to Gladstone, but, as I understand it, there are about three bus services from Rockhampton to Barcaldine, so, so far as communications are concerned, there's a great
35 difference. So far as the roads, we have the Capricorn - the Landsborough Highway, Warrego Highway connecting us to the South and these are mainly used for stock transport.

We have no rail access now from Blackall for stock transport, the rail closed
40 last November. Some stock do go to Rockhampton as most of the slaughter stock go to the South around the Toowoomba/Brisbane valley, Beenleigh area for slaughter. Most of the stock that go into feed lots also go down that route and nothing - or very little stock, in fact, goes to the East. One of the main reasons, of course, is the tick line, cattle going over the tick line have to be
45 inoculated.

Cattle coming - if they come from the ticky country to us they have to be dipped twice before they can come in, so, virtually, we have no commonality

of interest with the Gladstone area whatsoever. I won't hold you up any longer, Mr Chairman. You have our submission there which details fairly thoroughly, I think, the points I've made.

5 CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No questions.

CHAIR: Thank you.

10

MS BRIGHT: Mr Chairman, I have one question of Mr Rich.

CHAIR: One. Just a moment.

15 MS BRIGHT: Mr Rich, sorry. How - what was your view and how did you feel? I know you've expressed - - -

MR RICH: I beg your pardon?

20 MS BRIGHT: Sorry, I will speak up. I know you have expressed in your objection to the Commission the issues about social and work.

MR RICH: I'm sorry, I'm hard of hearing.

25 MS BRIGHT: Okay, I will try and speak up louder. Can you hear me now?

MR RICH: Yes.

MS BRIGHT: In terms of your objection, we've noted that and you've - - -

30

MR RICH: In terms of?

MS BRIGHT: Your objection. We have noted that, the content of it. We've heard your views this morning. One thing I'd like to get a better understanding
35 from you is your area of Blackall was actually in the division of Kennedy.

MR RICH: I'm sorry, I have great difficulty in - - -

CHAIR: Just tell me and I will put it to him.

40

MS BRIGHT: Okay. Mr Rich's electorate was the division of Kennedy prior to 1994.

CHAIR: Yes.

45

MS BRIGHT: Does he still feel that those issues that he's raised with us were relevant when they were intending versus what is proposed?

CHAIR: What you're being asked - do you hear me any more easily?

MR RICH: Yes.

5 CHAIR: Yes, I thought the tone of my voice might be different from the lady's. You were, she's asking, in Kennedy up till, I think, 1992, did you say?

MS BRIGHT: '94.

10 CHAIR: 1994.

MR RICH: Yes, that's correct, yes.

CHAIR: Did the same problems arise for you with Kennedy that you feel in
15 connection with the proposed new division?

MR RICH: Not to the extent, because, as you see, the majority of the electors in Kennedy were in a similar situation to us. Most of them were pastoralists, as we are, and we felt that we had the commonality of interest with them,
20 although our communications didn't go Kennedy way, they went to the South as they do today, but most of them were involved in the same industries as we are and we felt we had a commonality of interest with them.

MS BRIGHT: Thank you.
25

CHAIR: Thank you.

MR RICH: Thank you.

30 **THE WITNESS WITHDREW** [10.08am]

CHAIR: Now, Councillor Roger Nunn; is that right?
35

ROGER NUNN, called [10.08am]

40 CHAIR: And you have a second speaker with you, Mr John Kersnovski, do you?

CR NUNN: Yes.

45 CHAIR: You want to present together, do you, or not?

CR NUNN: I will present.

CHAIR: You will present.

CR NUNN: And John will answer any questions that may be - - -

5 CHAIR: All right. Well, he can stand with you.

CR NUNN: Thank you.

CHAIR: All right. Yes?

10

CR NUNN: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: And you're from?

15 CR NUNN: The Kingaroy Shire.

CHAIR: Kingaroy Shire. Yes?

CR NUNN: Members of the Augmented Electoral Commission, thank you for
20 this opportunity. I don't want to cover the issues in our submission, but I'd like
to highlight some matters of very real importance to us. We're part of the
South Burnett region that's been mentioned this morning. There are six shires,
really, in our area which are part of another shire. We are a divided
community now in terms of electoral divisions. We have been divided a
25 number of times in the past and we seem to be in that area where we do get
shifted quite regularly.

We would really like to be able to keep our community of some 72,000 people
more closely together as we grow and we are growing rapidly, and especially
30 in terms of the new issues of size, shape and sustainability which may or may
not see amalgamations but will definitely see councils working much more
closely together. One of the real issues with us being in the Maranoa electorate
is the Great Dividing Range, which is a natural barrier.

35 We have no social, economic or statistical ties across that barrier to the west of
our shire. Our trading routes, of course, are mainly to Brisbane, but we also
have close relationships with Maryborough and Harvey Bay, especially in
terms of tourism. The last division saw the north of the South Burnett go to
Wide Bay and the south of the South Burnett go to our trading area, Ipswich,
40 which, of course, is close to Brisbane.

We have unique and intensive services and industries in our area and I'd like to
give some examples; council owned and operated private hospital, which
augments a public system and for the benefit of the people of the South Burnett
45 we have an aircraft manufacturing and aviation research cluster that is closely
aligned, of course, with Brisbane and Ipswich, and we also have government
departments aligning themselves to the Wide Bay area.

So these areas are very difficult to represent - well, these sorts of industries are very difficult to represent in conjunction with the largely primary industry stretching across 1400 kilometres to the Northern Territory border, and, of course, that's going across the Great Dividing Range. Our industries have been
5 very well represented, and, adequately, through Blair, but we would be comfortable with Wide Bay.

Some suggested options, which are contained in our submission and I won't go through them all, but our request is, hopefully, not to keep changing, not to be
10 divided, to keep together in the future. We have made those suggestions and provided the figures, I hope, to back them up, but, most importantly, we don't see ourselves, as I've said, as going across the Great Divide, nor do we see ourselves as being part of the Gladstone area and the seat of Wright, which is really outside our sphere of influence and their sphere of influence.

15 Now, that was all I wanted to say, Mr Chairman. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I will answer questions.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

20 MR TREWIN: Just to make sure we've got it clear, could you tell me what the six shires are, please?

CR NUNN: Yes the shires are Kilkivan, Murgon, Wondai, Cherbourg,
25 Kingaroy, Nanango; and Yarraman actually sits in the Rosalie Shire. So it's a little tongue of land that comes into the South Burnett.

MR TREWIN: Right. Thank you.

30 CHAIR: Anything else?

MS BRIGHT: No, thanks.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.
35

THE WITNESS WITHDREW **[10.13am]**

40 CHAIR: Councillor Ted Sorensen, the Mayor of Hervey Bay city.

TED SORENSEN, called **[10.13am]**

45 CR SORENSEN: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman. On behalf of the Hervey Bay City Council, I would like to thank the whole group here today for the time that they have had. I will just read out a few things sort of extra. Just that

Hervey Bay City Council is opposed to the proposed re-distribution of the Federal electoral boundaries in Queensland. The proposed re-distribution split of Hervey Bay from the existing seat of Wide Bay to move it into a seat of Hinkler based on the city of Bundaberg.

5

This has a detrimental effect to our city, because Hervey Bay does not have any affinity of community of interest with Bundaberg. In fact, Bundaberg is a direct rival in tourism and business. In fact, all marketing of the region externally is undertaken as the Fraser Coast, which is an officially recognised tourism region by the Queensland Tourism and Tourism Australia. In the past year alone more than \$800,000 has been spent in establishing the Fraser Coast brand or region - funds generated from industry and matched by the governments.

15 The Fraser Coast equals Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Woocoo and Tiaro. Bundaberg, on the other hand, is recognised as a separate entity, the coral coast, which is a competitor. The two cities are trying to develop the same services in business, tourism and education and it would be impossible for one Member, one Federal Member, to support the development of these services without running into the claims of duplication within the electorate, unfair distribution of funds, or political bias. One city would have to lose, to be cast into the political wilderness.

Our opposition to the proposed boundary changes is based around section 66 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 1 to 5, which states the electorate should be based on a community of interests, including economic, social and regional interests. Hervey Bay and Bundaberg do not share the community of interests. Hervey Bay shares a common bond, socially, economically and regionally with Maryborough and large sections of the South Burnett or Wide Bay electorate. The proposed changes would split Hervey Bay with its sister city, Maryborough, which is 30 minutes by car to the south, and counteract years of hard work to develop the Fraser Coast as a viable region, economically, socially and politically.

35 Under the proposal, Hervey Bay would be split from Fraser Island, the main tourist and economic driver for our city. While this may not seem much, the island is crucial to Hervey Bay's future, because Fraser Island visitor numbers would then be linked to Maryborough and the Wide Bay electorate. The statistics would show a drop in people visiting Hervey Bay which continues a tourism boom in the Wide Bay electorate. So when it's time for the regular State and Federal government funding grants to be made, Hervey Bay would not have the statistical information to be able to back its funding claims.

The statistics would benefit developments in Noosa and Tin Can Bay, yet Hervey Bay would be left with the bill to maintain its services on the island. Hervey Bay relies on government grants to provide valuable infrastructure, and while it is growing at a rapid rate, it cannot afford to miss out on anything because of a new line on a map. Those statistics are also used by development

industries to forecast the future. The Fraser Coast has embraced Federal and State government policies that have asked centres to work cooperatively to create regions and regional voices to secure services.

5 That work and momentum would be undone by the split of the two cities across two Federal electorates. Hervey Bay and Maryborough are 20 minutes apart and each linked together, with many residents living in one city and working in the other. The link between the cities has strengthened over time, and both are now linked economically, culturally and on the sporting fields. Up to one-third
10 of Maryborough work force lives in Hervey Bay and commutes to Maryborough daily. Hervey Bay, with its jet airport, whale watching, fishing, and as the gateway to the World Heritage Listed Fraser Island, is the major access point through which tourism reaches the area and then filters out through Maryborough and the surrounding areas.

15 The four Fraser Coast councils share facilities and have embarked on a number of projects to provide the living standards of our residents. Maryborough and Hervey Bay are jointly developing and marketing the Fraser Coast enterprise zone to promote the Fraser Coast as a place to establish a business to create
20 jobs. The two cities have funded, along with the State government, the Fraser Coast Sport, Recreational and Open Space Strategy, a plan - the growth of recreation and sporting facilities across the region and stop duplicating facilities.

25 This strategy aims to ensure that top-standard facilities are developed on the Fraser Coast, facilities are not duplicated, and they are built where they are most needed. They are embarking on a joint land-fill facility. The two cities share many things in common. Businesses have outlets in both cities; the cities share a newspaper; the television stations, civic leaders, sports stars, cultural
30 identities, family members, as well as a health service, private and public, and the campus of the University of Southern Queensland, police and emergency services.

These operations are run as one, as if there was no city boundaries. The two
35 cities share a local-area multicultural partner officer funded by the State government, and a central part of his role is to encourage skilled migrants to come to the Fraser Coast and stay. The State government is also driving change in local government and asking councils to work more cooperatively together, if not merge, under the Size, Shapes and Sustainability discussion
40 paper. The four Fraser Coast councils, because of their regional proximity and the common interest, have agreed to strengthen already close relationships, and examine closer working relationships.

The future of those talks and the economic benefits would be hindered by
45 having Hervey Bay and parts of Woocoo in the different Federal electorate to Maryborough. The State's seat should be aligned along definable regions, such as the Fraser Coast, which includes the four councils of Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Tiaro and Woocoo, so that the representation is based on

community of interests and shared economic futures. And, as you've heard before, under the new seat of Hinkler, we will have two different universities and two different tourist destinations on the Coral Coast and the Fraser Coast; and to be able to split Hervey Bay and Maryborough, which have been together
5 since Federation, I think is unacceptable, personally.

CHAIR: I think you can be assured the Commission understands the problem about splitting Hervey Bay and Maryborough, but I was a little bit interested in your comments about the tourism from Bundaberg and the tourism from
10 Hervey Bay; and you were suggesting that a Member representing both would be in some way pulled in different directions. I just looked at the population statistics; they're pretty similar-sized places. One is not going to dominate the other, is it? Indeed, if anything, Hervey Bay, with Maryborough right alongside it, might have more weight than Bundaberg in that respect. Why
15 shouldn't one Member represent the tourist activities in both places?

CR SORENSEN: I think it would be very hard because we've got a whole different tourist destination. We've got the whales, Fraser Island, eco-tourism, and I know Bundaberg's got something similar, but I think you've got to be a
20 little bit realistic. It's like having two universities. When he goes to represent the area with two different universities in it, which one is he going to favour over the other for different places.

CHAIR: Why shouldn't he promote both?
25

CR SORENSEN: I think it would be hard personally.

MR CAMPBELL: Well, probably the observation I would make, following up Mr Burchett's, is part of the issue that you're facing, and we recognise the
30 problems that you're putting forward, is that's where part of the growth is occurring in Queensland.

CR SORENSEN: It certainly is, and Hervey Bay has got a rapid growth. We're up to over 52,000 people now and we're growing at around 4 or 5 per
35 cent a year, and you know, the Fraser Coast in the future will have an electorate of its own, I believe, and why don't we do it now?

CHAIR: Well, that's very likely in the future.

40 CR SORENSEN: Like, we're twice the size - Hervey Bay now is twice the size of Gladstone, isn't it?

MR CAMPBELL: And that's reflecting, in effect, what's actually happening in Queensland, that the growth is no longer solely down in the south-east
45 corner.

CR SORENSEN: That's right.

MR CAMPBELL: It's happening up the coast.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

5 MR TREWIN: No questions.

CHAIR: Anyone else? Thank you.

CR SORENSEN: Thank you very much for your time.
10

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[10.24am]

15 CHAIR: Now, Councillor Jenny Hill from Townsville City Council, is she here - no, all right. Eddie Westcott from Mackay Sugar Co-operative Association.

20 **EDDIE WESTCOTT, called**

[10.24am]

MR WESTCOTT: Yes, thanks, Mr Chairman.

25 CHAIR: Yes, carry on, I'm sorry.

MR WESTCOTT: In our submission we asked for the boundary of Dawson to be moved slightly south. Now, we could have expressed it better than what is expressed in that submission. What we're really asking for is that the southern
30 boundary include the whole of Mackay City Council and the whole of Moroney shires. Mackay Sugar is a co-operative owned by a thousand cane farmers. We have four sugar mills. The proposal that has come forward means that we will now - and all of that is contained in the electorate of Dawson.

35 The proposal now means that we will have 60 per cent of our production and one sugar mill in an electorate based on Rockhampton, 300 kilometres to the south of us, with the remaining three mills and production in Dawson. And again, this is based on, I guess, community of interest argument of everyone else, but the point for us is that we are moving in the sugar industry from a
40 very regulated industry that was controlled by State regulation, to an industry that now must have a commercial focus.

The commercial focus has shifted away from us, from I guess just the changes to regulation in the State sphere, to trade and the Federal government's policy
45 on energy. Now, we believe that for us to be able to effectively talk to people in Canberra, we should be able to do it through one representative rather than through two. We do believe that we don't have much community interest with a politician, whatever party, based in Rockhampton, who has had very little

exposure to sugar. Whereas we have always been an electorate that has had a politician who has had exposure to sugar.

The industry, as you may or may not know, does have to be a lot more
5 commercial in its activity and we have to focus on trade and it's future
probably is going to be energy rather than food, and those are decisions that are
made in Canberra, and we do believe we need to - we can effectively talk to
government through one representative rather than through two. And I guess
that's the crux of our argument.

10

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: Really a comment rather than a question. I don't think this
proposal has been done for any other reason except to take account of the
15 number of proposed electorates, but does Mr Westcott have any suggestions on
what we should do if we put Mirani back in Dawson, what does the co-
operative gain? Has he got any views on that?

MR WESTCOTT: Well, I don't think that the numbers are that great that it
20 will affect the percentages over and above your allowances that you can have.

MR TREWIN: All right, okay. Well, we can look at that.

CHAIR: We will look at that.

25

MR WESTCOTT: Okay.

CHAIR: If that's the proposition but you will appreciate we may not find it so.

30 MR POOLE: Mr Chairman, one question. You talk about the sugar industry
being represented by the Member for Dawson, but that's not the only Member
from Queensland who represents the sugar industry. I wondered if you would
comment on just how you see the extra difficulties and another Member also
having some responsibility for sugar?

35

MR WESTCOTT: Well, I'm not talking about the responsibility. I'm really
talking about our ability as an organisation, as a company, to effectively get the
best economic outcome for our shareholders and our community. Now, even
though Mackay has suddenly become an industrial mining town, probably 40
40 per cent of its income still comes from sugar, and it does rely on - does need
for us to be effective and it does need for us to plan ahead and take advantages
of the changes that are happening, that we're becoming an energy company
rather than a food company, and those are decisions that are made in Canberra.

45

Now, we're only going to - by having to continually brief two politicians for us
to get effective representation in Canberra is just a duplication that I don't think
that the numbers represent or the changes in those numbers do that justice.

CHAIR: Very well, thank you.

MR WESTCOTT: Thanks.

5

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[10.30am]

10 CHAIR: Mr Bob Katter, MP for Kennedy.

MR KATTER: I'm sorry, Mr Chairman, just some faxes are late which should have been here but they're coming through now on the fax machine.

15 CHAIR: You'd rather stand down for a moment and get your faxes.

MR KATTER: That would be preferable. If the next person went before me, that would be good.

20 CHAIR: All right, very well. Is Mr Brad Henderson - - -

MR LOCKLEY: I'm deputising for Mr Henderson. Unfortunately, having this hearing in the midst of an election campaign has compromised us somewhat.

25

CHAIR: Yes.

MR LOCKLEY: I have advised him that his number is likely to be up very soon and he should be on his way. I'm expecting - - -

30

CHAIR: So you're not in fact ready to step in to the breach.

MR LOCKLEY: Not at the moment. I'm not originally from Queensland, so I couldn't contribute very much.

35

CHAIR: We were going to break at 11.00, weren't we? I think we'll take our morning break now. Those who are here - if people who are out of the room return, would you tell them that that means we'll resume earlier than was scheduled, say at 10 to, all right.

40

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

[10.31am]

45 **RESUMED**

[10.55am]

CHAIR: Very well. We'll now resume, and I've been told that there's

someone else with a special problem, and as we did have a break, I will bring him forward. Mr Glenn Winney from Wide Bay United.

5 GLEN WINNEY, called

[10.55am]

MR WINNEY: Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to speak today on this extremely important issue. My name is Glenn Winney. I'm a local
10 resident in Hervey Bay for the last 25 years, and I own and operate several small businesses in the area, so - I'm speaking on behalf of a group that we formed once this boundary has come out in the public light. The group included Hervey Bay and Maryborough City Councils and the Hervey Bay and Maryborough Chamber of Commerce - we've got representation from
15 Maryborough Chamber of Commerce as well - and some local business people in both communities and have interests in Hervey Bay and Maryborough, I believe. I've been there for a long time. I speak on behalf of several committees I'm involved in, which is the Chamber of Commerce. I'm also the vice president of the Urban Development Industry of Australia for the region.
20 I'm also a Member of the ministerial forum for the State government in the area for Wide Bay.

I stand before you today to re-plead our case, our submission that we put forward. We went out to the public, and we only had about five days between
25 putting our submission together from the objection period, and we asked the local public how they felt about this, because we were extremely worried about Maryborough and Hervey Bay being split into two regions. We had 1240 go on-line and file a petition. We had another 300 people sign a petition against it. We had 60 letters of support from organisations in the area, which include
30 places like the boat club, which has over 19,000 members. And we had about a dozen newspaper articles in the area, objecting to it. And asking several people around, you know, the area, from business people to consumers to politicians in the area, what they thought of it, and no one was in favour of splitting the two cities up.

35 I did our usual course, and went through our local politicians - the State and Federal - asking, you know, what is all this about, and if they could help us and that, and basically, all sides of politics were telling me I was just wasting my time here and nothing was going to be changed; it's just a rubber stamp thing.
40 Looking at the calibre of people here, I don't believe that. I think that, you know, that if the people stand up and actually say something about it, the people will listen and actually come to some common sense and try and see what really helps the regional areas.

45 I've been dealing with - sorry. My - our main submission was based on that the two cities are basically like sister cities, and we believe that the re-distribution is fundamentally flawed under section 66(3)(b), basically, which was discussed before by the mayors of the two cities, with the communications and travels,

and divisions, the physical features, the boundaries. Fraser Coast and Maryborough have got a very low socioeconomic base, and is one of the lowest in the - the Wide Bay is one of the lowest socioeconomic bases in Australia, and we don't want to be further disjointed as a region. So we need to
5 stick together very strongly and promote ourselves as a solid reason, as a group.

Synergies between the two cities are very strong. We brand ourselves "the Fraser Coast". We've got a Fraser Coast enterprise zone, which is federally-
10 sponsored through the Area Consultative Committee. We've been sister cities since the 1840s and the two electorates have never been parted on a Federal basis. We can't see any real justification for the change, other than trying to adjust the numbers and make them work on a State-wide basis. A lot of people work and live in Hervey Bay and Maryborough and vice-versa, and travel
15 between the two roads. We believe we're a single tourism destination, because about 86 per cent of our tourism comes via road, and all that comes through Maryborough. We've got absolutely no synergy to Bundaberg, and the tourism doesn't come from that. Most of it comes from the three, three and a half hour drive from the south-east of Queensland, and they have to come through
20 Maryborough to get to Hervey Bay. So we have been putting out tourism packages together through the Heritage City in Maryborough and Hervey Bay as a lifestyle destination with Fraser Island, as well.

Fraser Island, as you know, is a heritage listed island, which has about 400,000
25 tourists a year. This is going out of the Hervey Bay region, getting put back into the Wide Bay region, which - the mayor mentioned before - which will dramatically affect our tourism statistics. If people come through Maryborough and go to Fraser Island, we need upgrades of roads and things like that. Those 400,000 people aren't going to be logged as a Hervey Bay
30 statistic any more. Tourism is our number one employer in the area - in the Hervey Bay area, that is, and the bay itself is a major part of our socioeconomic livelihood, with both commercial fishermen and recreational fishing and the access to Fraser Island.

35 We do not believe that we have any common interests with Bundaberg, and we do not believe Maryborough has any real common interest with Noosa, either. The two cities are less than 30 minutes apart, and the local governments work very closely together to try and grow the cities as one. Our communications are radio, television, newspaper. Those medias are based between the two
40 cities, so if we're trying to find out things, we don't get the Bundaberg newspaper or the Bundaberg radio station or anything down in our area; we get either Maryborough or Hervey Bay.

Our access, like we said, is mainly by road, which comes through
45 Maryborough, which comes through to the electorate of Wide Bay and the Bruce Highway, which is a federally-funded highway. The tilt train that we get is based in Maryborough and services Hervey Bay, and Hervey Bay has got a jet aircraft airport now, which has got direct flights to Sydney every day, and

we're about to increase Qantas link to Brisbane as well. So the two cities rely on all forms of travel between the two. We have one university that promotes itself into the two cities strongly, and strives to capture the young students from the schools in both and encourage them to stay in the area.

5

We have a large tourism organisation, Fraser Coast Tourism Board, which promotes it as a dual destination for the two cities. They've just been down in Sydney to an expo, trying to get people to come up to the area and actually work and live in the area. Our agriculture is between the two cities. We grow

10 cane down at Hervey Bay and we produce it through the Maryborough sawmill, so, you know, there's a lot of links in there, too. The Mary River runs between the two cities. Both our cities are very reliant on the economic side of it and the eco side of the Mary River, and so both cities work together to preserve it. Our health system - we have one health board between the two
15 cities and we share a lot of resources between Hervey Bay and Maryborough. We have a police station - our police station that is - we have one police phone number, which goes through Maryborough, then comes back to the Hervey Bay. So we're in one police district as well.

20 So everything we do is related between the two cities, and we just find it very strange that these two cities want to be pulled apart and represented by different people. So in closing, I'd just like to thank you for your time and ask you not to take the easy path here, but take the right path and keep the two cities together. Thank you.

25

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: Oh, just to comment that we're most definitely not a rubber stamp, and our job is to listen to the objections, consider them very carefully,

30 and if we think it's necessary, to make adjustments to the draft distribution.

CHAIR: Yes. You do understand that, don't you?

MR WINNEY: Yes, I do. That's why I've come to - you know, I'm a private

35 business person. I've come down on my own free will and, you know, my own cost to try and promote this.

CHAIR: Doesn't - of course, the comment doesn't mean that - - -

40 MR WINNEY: I know.

CHAIR: - - - that we're disposed to change any particular thing.

MR WINNEY: We can only ask.

45

CHAIR: You understand that?

MR WINNEY: Yes.

CHAIR: And I confess, I don't, myself, see why two universities in one division is a disadvantage. I'd have thought it's an advantage. The Member should surely understand twice as well the problems of students. At least, the
5 students in his division ought to be better represented, shouldn't they?

MR WINNEY: Yes, in a way. But the universities have a lot of synergy to the community. Like, the University of Southern Queensland, which is based in Hervey Bay, is trying to do courses that reflect the Hervey Bay economy, so
10 they're trying to do hospitality courses, they're trying to do nursing courses, and they actually work in and they actually focus their courses around the Hervey Bay and Maryborough employment future.

CHAIR: Well, I do understand that.
15

MR WINNEY: Yes.

CHAIR: Anyone else?

20 MR POOLE: In relation to - just on that point, what difference will a line on the map and two different Federal Members make to what the universities are doing? I guess you've given us a lot of information about the synergies between the cities, and I don't think there would be too many that would argue with that. The query that I would have is you haven't told us very much, I don't
25 believe, about, well, what real difference will having two Members make to all of that? The universities are still going to be there, still going to be doing their work. The police are still going to be cooperating, the health is still going to be cooperating; or do you believe that there's something fundamental that's going to cause the disruption that you seem to be afraid of?

30 MR WINNEY: I believe that we've got a, you know - a local Member that represents the Hervey Bay/Maryborough community, understands it, lives within the community on a constant basis. Bundaberg is an hour and a half away. We don't know, you know - it's irrelevant which side of politics who's
35 up there, but they've got no synergies with our community. Our tourism, everything like that, is based around the two working together.

So, I feel that if we were trying to get some Federal funding to actually help, you know, a drive destination coming through Maryborough into Hervey Bay,
40 a Member for Bundaberg is not going to help, or going to get funds for us because we've got to - or if we need an upgrade to the road coming off the Bruce Highway through Maryborough into Hervey Bay, we have to go up to Hinkler to get him to ask the Member for Wide Bay if we can get some funding for the road to help our tourism.

45 MR POOLE: But an electorate of 80 to 90 thousand, half of them living in Hervey Bay is it that are you really expecting that you will have a Member that won't have any regard for what happens in Hervey Bay?

MR WINNEY: Well, we think we'll have a Member that will have some conflict of interests being in Bundaberg, because we're two major centres in the region. So you've got the two biggest centres competing for basically the same
5 things a lot of the time in deciding which one is going to get them. Sometimes, you know, he's going to have to make a decision because sometimes the funding - we can't back both lots of funding at one time.

CHAIR: Yes, very well. Thank you. Yes, you're actually the bigger centre, I
10 think, from the numbers. Yes, very well.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[11.07am]

15
CHAIR: Is the Honourable Bob Katter ready now?

MR KATTER: Yes.

20
BOB KATTER, called

[11.08am]

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Katter.

25
MR KATTER: If I could just hand this, Mr Chairman - is that the correct title?

CHAIR: Yes. Please do.

30
MR KATTER: And I cannot resist the temptation to take you to my presentation about the names of the electorates.

Theodore built the silos which started the grains industry in Queensland. His
35 government built the silos so that we could grow grain, so he was the founder of the grains industry. He built the sugar mills that enabled us to have a sugar industry in this State. I mean, there were some mills there, but he introduced statutory marketing which gave us a decent price for our product instead of being screwed through the floor by CSR - excuse my pejorative remarks there.
40 He started "use it or lose it" legislation in mining, so that the big mining companies had to let Australians in onto the field to start mining.

The living areas, there were I think five people that owned something like all of north-west Queensland, and they were all living in England. He started the
45 living areas that devolved the land down to most of the landholders that are there today. The arbitration system was introduced by him, and one in 32 of us that went down the mine shaft before the Theodore government effectively - it was the Theodore government in 1915, one in 32 of us never came up again, or

died a terrible death from miner's phthisis.

This was truly a great man. He was the leader - he was the president of the anti-conscription campaign in the first world war and won both of those. He
5 was the first premier of Queensland to introduce irrigation. He had two projects. One was the Theodore area; I can't remember what the other one was. Paul Keating, when asked who were the two most famous people - who were his two heroes in Australian history, he said J.T. Lang and Ted Theodore. Malcolm Fraser, when asked, his two heroes were Franklin Delano Roosevelt
10 and Ted Theodore. Bob Katter, when he was asked, said McEwan and Ted Theodore. You couldn't get three more unlike people in Australian history than those three people, but all of them agree on that.

And it just seems to me to be terrible that this man that eventually sacrificed
15 his political life fighting the banks in the Depression, we all know now, of course, he was dead right, and Australia had the worst depression of anywhere on Earth. He knew that was going to happen and he sacrificed his political life for the people of Australia, and I think that's probably the reason why he enjoys such great hero status today.

20 He ran the Australian economy during the war, and the Packer press, the Consolidated Press, was, of course, the Theodore/Packer Press. His family later on sold out to Packer, so when he got out of politics he was very successful in business.

25 Now, why I have taken up that time: I think that the proposals by the Labor Party, and I know that a lot of people in the Labor Party are very embarrassed by these proposals - I mean, a proposal that will put Mount Isa in an electorate based on Dalby, I mean, really, there are no - you know, there's a lot of people
30 here from local government. There are no local government people from my area because no-one has taken the proposal seriously.

There is not a single person that has regarded either the National Party proposal that Charters Towers moves into Rockhampton, or the proposal that
35 Mount Isa and the little mid-west towns back to Townsville, move into an electorate that is in fact south of Brisbane - in fact south of Brisbane, and this area is within a couple of hundred kilometres of the Gulf of Carpentaria, 900,000 kilometres away.

40 So, that's the reason - and I just quote here:

*...so ridiculous as to be demonstrably and patently self-serving party
politic decisions which in the past these decisions have not been made
on that basis.*

45 And if people say, "Well, you're here doing the same thing," there is no proposal that I accept Yarrabah into the Kennedy electorate, and that will be very damaging for me politically if you look at the figures there, but the reason

for that is clearly its community of interest is with Gordonvale and Edmonton - clearly. And I think the AEC has done a very good job.

And I know that it's been very difficult. Some of the people that have come
5 here today, you know, with the Hervey Bay, Maryborough, and those issues, but if you have only got a 3½ per cent margin, the work of the AEC is nigh on impossible at that tight a margin. If they were given a 7 per cent variation, you know, as was advocated by a lot of people - they themselves advocated a 5 per cent variation, but the government only gave them a 3 per cent variation.

10

So, you know, I would strongly urge you to take that up with your Federal Members of Parliament, not with the AEC. Their job is nigh on impossible if they have got that small margin. In other countries in the world - almost every country I have ever researched - there is 70 per cent margin between the
15 biggest electorates in population and the smallest. In Australia it's 3 per cent by law, which is just ridiculous.

MR CAMPBELL: Excuse me, Mr Katter, it's 3.5 percent.

20 MR KATTER: 3.5 it is now. Right? The AEC requested, I think it was 5½ per cent variation. You know, many people fought tenaciously for a 7 per cent variation. But, you know, if I could quote you the figures from England or Canada or the United States, or Russia, or Europe, you know, you will see that there is consistently a 50 and 70 per cent variation.

25

So I will move off from there. The reason why, I mean, we've got to go into the cities is clearly that there's no population in country Queensland, and all electorates have to go into the environs of the cities. But the question we're here today to answer, is to what city those country areas are pushed into. I
30 mean, if you are pushing Mount Isa into, effectively, an electorate based on the city of Toowoomba, because that's where the centre for all of that area is, Toowoomba, then that is patently ridiculous. And I think that the ALP has lost enthusiasm to some degree for that proposal. It's for them to comment.

35 But the other proposal by the National Party that Charters Towers moves into Rockhampton - and I just want to say something about central Queensland. I have lived in Cloncurry/Mount Isa area all of my life, and my latter years in Parliament in Charters Towers. So I've lived in the north Queensland line. Except for political meetings - where I had to go to a political meeting held in
40 Longreach - I have never been to Longreach or Winton in my life, except when I was travelling to Brisbane on two or three occasions.

So, I mean, there is just no lines of communication whatsoever. The central west looks to Rockhampton and to Brisbane. Most of the kids go to school in
45 Brisbane. Those that don't go to school of Rockhampton. All of the northern kids go to school in Charters Towers, to a lesser extent Townsville and Cairns. The big boarding schools in Charters Towers have traditionally educated all of those people. So there's just no communality of interest whatsoever between

Charters Towers and Rockhampton.

And I will just quickly go through. The rugby league: Charters Towers plays in the Townsville competition; the mid-western gulf centres, they play with -
5 sorry, the mid-west plays with the gulf centres. So, I mean, that football region incorporates Normanton and Doomadgee up in the gulf, and the four mid-west towns between Mount Isa and Charters Towers.

Schooling is done with an eye to community of interest, and to a lesser extent
10 transportation. Charters Towers has only three industries: schools, cattle, and retirement. Almost all of the towns in inland north Queensland are too small to have an 11th and 12th grade. The vast majority of them don't have any secondary school at all. Their children have to go away to boarding school, and these children have traditionally gone to Charters Towers schools. I,
15 myself - we had no senior in Cloncurry and I went to Charters Towers to boarding school, as did every other kid in my class in Cloncurry.

There are three boarding schools for girls and three boarding schools for boys in Charters Towers. In 1900 Charters Towers was a bigger city than Brisbane
20 and was labelled the education capital of Queensland, a model which still is referred to by the locals today. There are 300 jobs in the education sector in Charters Towers. So to cut Charters Towers off from its lifeblood with the schools and put it in with Rockhampton would be a crazy decision.

25 Retirement - Charters Towers has 200 people. We had some mines there for about 10 years. Before that we had a meatworks. The meatworks is closed and gone and not likely to be resurrected anywhere in the future, and similarly with the mines, the last mine closes down next year, so Charters Towers is not a mining area. At the end of next year there will be no mining in Charters
30 Towers whatsoever, and it will be what it has always been, that is, the educational centre, and the retirement centre. It has one of the three Eventides, the big retirement villages that the government provides. The one for North Queensland is based in Charters Towers and it employs some two or three hundred people. The education system employs two or three hundred people.
35 So, you know, that's the basis of - and both of them are based upon that area.

As far as Mount Isa goes, and coalmining, you know, there's just no relationship between hard rock mining and coalmining. One is a quarrying operation when you use big low loaders and grabbing machinery and the other
40 one you go down in the bowels of the earth and use jumbo drills and explosives - entirely different operations.

The tourism - all of Charters Towers tourists, I mean, 90 per cent of them, come from Townsville. So Charters Towers is in every single way closely
45 related to Townsville. For shopping, the people of Charters Towers look to Townsville for their shopping needs, and to a lesser extent, so do the mid-west towns. While everybody's shopping can be conducted in their home town, people will make the pilgrimage along the Flinders Highway to Townsville.

Specialist medical services - well, they're all provided in Townsville. No one is going to go down.

And really, in the National Party's submission it says "move Mirani into - leave
5 it in Dawson and move Charters Towers." So it's a choice of whether Mirani goes in with Sarina. It's part of the Rockhampton electorate. You know, what I mean, Mirani is Sarina and they're side by side. Both of them have their centres and their council chambers in Mackay and to split Mirani away from Sarina is just - and the choice is either Mirani joins Sarina in the Rockhampton
10 electorate, or Charters Towers goes into the Rockhampton electorate. And obviously when you've got a choice of that, the AEC, as I say, no one has bothered from our councils to come along because they would laugh the thing to ridicule.

15 So having said that, I'll just move quickly through some other observations that I would like to make here. I'm just looking at the ones that I've covered. Yes, it says agriculture, we're both agriculture. Yes, well, that's a bit like, you know, where you've got cow and calf operations versus the agricultural operations in the Rockhampton area is a bit like saying sumo wrestling is the
20 same as synchronised swimming. They're totally different operations.

A cow and calf man goes out two or three times a year on horseback and tries to get all his cattle in and she's pretty rough work with helicopters and working in yards and everything. The boys down there, they have winter rain, so
25 instead of having like I have - and I was a small operator in the Gulf. I had 200,000 acres. They don't have 200,000 acres, they have 2000 acres to 20,000 acres because they have winter rain. They have much more grass than we can ever hope for. We only have two or three months of rain during our monsoonal wet season, and there's no rain for the rest of the year and we have a terrible
30 battle keeping them alive.

They can fatten. They can lot feed because they have grain in that area, and there's a big irrigation area. The Rockhampton area, if you fly into it, you'll see all the irrigation farms from the air. So they have grain. We can't grow grain
35 because we have no winter rain with which to grow grain. There's no grain growing in North Queensland at all except of course in the little patch of the Atherton Tableland. So entirely different industries. Yes, they're both agriculture, but as I say, that would be like saying, "Yes, well, sumo wrestling and synchronised swimming are sports too."

40 The other reflection I want to make here - yes, Kirsten Livermore, she's the Member for Rockhampton and she said for me to read this letter out she wrote me on the re-distribution:

45 *Thank you for your letter -*

because I wrote to her asking what her position was -

Whilst part of the job of an MP is working the boundaries established by the AEC, I am nonetheless concerned on this occasion by a number of the suggestions put forward by some parties with respect to the electorate of Capricornia. I agree with you that the idea of Charters Towers should be part of the electorate of Capricornia is simply
5 ludicrous. There are absolutely no community of interest links between Charters Towers and the electorate of Capricornia. In addition, there are no direct road, rail or air links between Charters Towers and
10 Rockhampton.

10 There is. It's 950 kilometres if you want to drive it.

15 Historically the people of Charters Towers have looked to Townsville and the major regional centre they would turn to if a service was not available locally and to suggest that they should have to travel to Rockhampton for this particular service of Federal representation would be strongly resented by the people of Charters Towers. You also explained to me that just as the people of Charters Towers look to
20 Townsville as a service centre, residents in north-west Queensland past the Gulf look to Charters Towers as their service centre. It would therefore make no sense to separate Charters Towers in an electoral sense from those other communities it has traditionally served. I agree that it would not be in the interests of the people of Charters Towers to have the town included.

25 I might also add that from Rockhampton to Mackay by air is about 30 minutes, right. It's about an hour the other way, but then you've got to get from Townsville to Charters Towers, which is a two-hour drive, so she's looking at five hours every time she wants to get to Charters Towers, and five hours back
30 and then she's looking at overnight accommodation as well. So there is a huge hole in her week if Charters Towers - even though it says only 10,000. There are actually 7000 electors, including the Dalrymple Shire in that area, so it's quite a big area that she would have to service, and it would be quite ridiculous to ask someone from Rockhampton to do that.

35 All right, those are the observations I want to make, and I think I should just finally say that the electorate of Kennedy has been only represented by three families in its history, the McDonalds, the Riordans and Katters. All three families came from Charters Towers. It has been the traditional centre of
40 North Queensland. Now, there was an exception, my father died, and an ALP Member was elected for two years and except for that exception, it has always been represented from Charters Towers. That has been the centre of Kennedy and it still is today. All of those people that - for those who watch football, Nathan Fein, the five-eighth for New Zealand, these days, New Zealand
45 Warriors, but he's from Mount Isa. He went to school in Charters Towers. Sam Backer, from the Hinterland there, went to school in Charters Towers. Lilliman, who played for the State of Origin this year, is from Richmond. He went to school in Charters Towers.

So what I'm saying to you is when the people in Charters Towers, if they were to be moved into Rockhampton, they would just be so cynical and hateful about government. What in hell's name does democracy mean if you are taken
5 out of that area? And even more stupid still is the proposal originally by the ALP, although I think they have sort of back off on it a bit, that Mount Isa was to go into an electorate that is effectively based around Toowoomba in the south-east corner of the State, when they are north-west corner of the State. So we thank you for the work you've done. I don't like some of it. It's going to
10 damage me badly electorally, but if I was the Commissioners, there is no other way you could travel except the way that you've travelled, and I think that you've done a pretty good job and you've had to make some very hard calls. With the variation that the government has given you, you have little alternative but to make some very, very hard calls, and I feel very sorry for
15 some of the people here that have to be the victims of those hard calls, but don't take it up with the AEC. Take it up with the government that only allowed a 3 per cent variation margin. Thank you very much, ladies, gentlemen.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

20

MR TREWIN: Mr Katter, whereabouts are your electoral offices at present?

MR KATTER: My electoral offices - I have three. I have one at my house, which is not an official electoral office but it most certainly is an office. I have
25 one at Mount Isa, and I have one at Innisfail.

MR TREWIN: Right. Thank you.

MR KATTER: They are the three demographic centres of the electorate.
30

MR CAMPBELL: And your house is in Charters Towers, is it?

MR KATTER: My house is in Charters Towers.

35 CHAIR: Any other - - -

MR KATTER: As has the houses of all the previous families.

MR CAMPBELL: That's not really a family dynasty scene, though, is it?
40

MR KATTER: No, I don't think it works that way.

CHAIR: Three families seem to be telling us - - -

45 MR KATTER: Some people might think of that, but, no, the Reardons were very active in the ALP. They were the heart and soul of the ALP organisation in Queensland, and they were - all the family were involved in it, and I suppose we were much the same way in the Labour Party originally and then later in the

Country Party.

CHAIR: Thank you.

5

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[11.27am]

CHAIR: Is Mr Brad Henderson here? Yes, Mr Henderson.
10

BRAD HENDERSON, called

[11.28am]

15 MR HENDERSON: Thank you, and thank you, ladies and gentleman, and I
appreciate the opportunity to appear here before you. Listening to Mr Katter,
he makes some very strong arguments, I guess, for some of those regions and
centres that have been displaced in this process, and I suppose it's fair to say
that the same arguments can be mounted equally as strongly for other areas;
20 and we've also heard the situation in the Wide Bay with Maryborough and
Hervey Bay.

And I guess the Nationals have quite some sympathy for those arguments, and,
indeed, when we approached this process with our initial submission, we
25 sought to use that principle of communities of interests as our guiding light, if
you like, working within the parameters, obviously, of the quota. But we
sought, wherever possible, to use that principle of communities of interests as
our guiding light. And the reason for that is that, yes, we accept that there's
enormous pressure on the Commission and others to handle this population
30 change and the lumpiness of the population change in some of these coastal
centres.

But there are a whole range of centres around Queensland and some of these
regional centres that have very particular interests and very particular issues
35 facing them. And whereas in the south-east and metropolitan Brisbane, for
instance, where I live, you know, you're well served by many services and
things; you're not so reliant on your Federal Member of Parliament and that
level of service, just because of the sheer range of services available and so on.
It's a very different story once you start moving out of the south-east corner
40 and into some of these regions.

And so for that reason we approached our initial submission in such a manner
as to try and, wherever possible, preserve the established communities of
interests that exist now and that - in many cases, communities where they're
45 working together to try and address some of the specific issues that are facing
them. And the Wide Bay, I guess, is a very good example, and we've heard it
put very eloquently how those two cities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay
have particular socio-economic needs, particular development needs, and are

addressing those together, employing economies of scale and employing cooperation.

And I think that's very important if we're to look at the development of the
5 State more generally, outside the south-east Queensland. So for that reason our
initial submission sought to identify, okay, where are the numbers going, and
where are these established communities of interests that we must try and
protect. We worked from the top down and we worked from the south north,
and we identified that the most logical area for the new division to fall was in
10 that Sunshine Coast hinterland South Burnett, Brisbane Valley area.

We stand by our initial submission. We believe that it was a well-constructed
submission; that it did achieve the objectives of the Act; but, most importantly,
it did so with minimal disruption to surrounding divisions. Effectively, the
15 new division that we had proposed - and we had proposed calling it Adderman
after the Adderman family who also enjoyed a very strong record in
Queensland political history - basically, represented or reflected an existing
State electorate in the seat of Nanango with, obviously, some capacity to take
in extra population from the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

20 That seat was well served, and is well served, by the existing transport
corridors, being the Brisbane Valley Highway and the Daguiar Highway, and
those communities are working together very closely in the South Burnett and
the Brisbane Valley as a common economic zone. So I guess I just preface my
25 remarks by saying that, to that extent, we stand by our initial submission.
Now, that said, we're pragmatic as well. We didn't agree with the proposal that
came out from the Electoral Commission. We felt that it was a much more
significant disruption to a whole range of communities; we've heard some
examples today in terms of the Wide Bay.

30 There's also others in the Burnett, Bundaberg and Burnett Shire; there's a
whole range of them. But we've sat down in our submission and we have tried
to work with what has been presented, and tried to make it a much more
acceptable proposal to those various communities. We don't argue that it's
35 necessarily a perfect outcome - what we've proposed - but we do believe that it
is a far superior outcome, because it does seek to restore some of those very
strong communities of interests in the Burnett - in the South Burnett, in the
Wide Bay, and Bundaberg area.

40 One of the big things that we're concerned about is the dislocation of these
communities, and some of these communities are in their third division in some
three re-distributions, and there's every likelihood they could go into yet
another division in the next re-distribution. So what we've proposed in our
submission is to seek to minimise that disruption, to build on the relationships
45 that have developed there between Federal Members of Parliament and those
communities, and within the communities themselves so that they continue
developing themselves collectively.

That said, I guess most people have read it. Mr Katter has given a run down on our proposal with regard to Charters Towers. In responding to that, I would simply say that there is a community of interests up through that Dalrymple area in terms of the concentration on the beef industry. Rockhampton is the
5 beef industry capital of Queensland. Gracemere Saleyards together with Roma are two of the biggest selling centres in the State. And for that reason we would argue that there is a strong community of interests up through the industry in those regions with Capricornia.

10 We accept that some of these divisions are moving well away from - you know, Capricornia is well away from the Capricornia Highway now, and I guess that's one of the problems the Commission is grappling with. But, again, we've got to try and work with the numbers we've got. So, essentially, we've sought to maintain those western shires which have been through three seats
15 and three re-distributions in the seat of Maranoa, so that they can enjoy some continuity of representation there and their community of interests with the southern centres, such as Roma and so on.

We've also tried to rebuild in that Wide Bay area the very strong community of
20 interest between Bundaberg and Burnett. It's effectively one and the same, a doughnut shire around Bundaberg and as Bundaberg city itself increases it's encroaching into the Burnett area, so we don't see that it makes any sense to just lift that area up. We grappled with Maryborough and Hervey Bay. We looked at it every which way but loose, but could not come up with a mix that
25 would make the numbers work. That is regrettable in our view. We have a lot of sympathy for the shires and those two centres and those communities, and if there was a way to accommodate some maintenance of the commonality there and the development of those twin cities, then we would be very open to considering that.

30 We've also sought to address some of the imbalances in some of the smaller shires, particularly the likes of Biggenden and Woocoo which do not enjoy any relationship with those centres that they're proposed to be combined with in the new division. And so we've sought to try and take them back to their natural
35 population centres. For instance, in Woocoo's case back to Maryborough where they enjoy a strong relationship. We've already identified in that submission that we do have some very strong objections to the proposed name, and I'm not going to dwell on the reasons why. They're well chronicled.

40 We would strongly support a new name for the seat, and I think Addermain we felt was a strong link for the new seat that we have proposed in our initial submission based on the South Burnett. However, we have also got some sympathy - I think it was Senator Brandis who put in a proposal for Thiess to be the name, given the strong relationship with Sir Leslie Thiess in that Central
45 Queensland area. So I will leave it at that and thank you very much for your time, unless there's any questions.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin.

MR TREWIN: No, no questions.

MR POOLE: Mr Henderson, we've heard this morning and last week some
5 objections from the people in those western shires around Winton and
Longreach about being included in the proposed seat of Wright. We've also
heard this morning some objections from the mayor of Kingaroy about that
shire being included in that division. You've come down on balance to change
the proposal to have those western shires in Maranoa and Kingaroy and
10 Wondai in Wright. I wonder whether you could just comment on what were
the reasons that led to that conclusion, given the comment you've made about
community of interest.

MR HENDERSON: Absolutely. Essentially in that case we've tried to at
15 least keep as much of the Burnett region together as possible, and that reflects,
broadly reflects the State electorate of Callide, which extends from the Callide
Valley, Dawson Valley, down into the North Burnett and getting very, very
close now to the South Burnett shire. So what we've sought to do is to at least
maintain that community of interest within the Burnett region, the South and
20 North Burnett, as best we possibly could within the constraints or within the
parameters that were imposed here. Does that answer your question?

MR POOLE: Well, that's part of it, but you're then including it in a proposed
seat that does go from Gladstone and loops down around to Kingaroy and that
25 area. Do you see an appropriate community of interest in that sort of a
grouping, and a stronger community of interest than with the proposal that the
Committee put out?

MR HENDERSON: Well, we would argue that the Burnett generally is an
30 entity. It's an economic zone. While, yes, it is lumped in with Gladstone and
would have little in common with Gladstone itself, at least maintaining the
Burnett community rather than splitting it up into two or three areas would
present some greater sense of commonality as an economic zone, if you like.

35 MR POOLE: Thank you.

MR CAMPBELL: The eight shires out in the west that we spoke to all of
them in Longreach last week, you made a point early on about how - well, you
didn't say this, but all but one or two of them were in Kennedy for many years,
40 and then there was a mix of Capricornia and Maranoa, then Maranoa, and now
proposed to be in Wright. I suppose the question I put to you and asking the
National Party's view, I think the point was put to us in Longreach that they
almost said they wanted to stay together, although I think one of them was
hedging their bets with regard to Maranoa, Wright and Kennedy, but that's
45 another matter.

But by keeping them together and putting them back into Maranoa, we actually
then have a seat that is well over three-quarters of a million square kilometres.

Now, in other States when this issue has come up, there has been very strong arguments about, you know - manageability, I think is the word that's been used about seats that size. Now, while I have no question that the current Member for Maranoa does a great job in getting around there, in the end, in
5 New South Wales there was very strong arguments put to us about the pressure it puts on local Members, their health and everything else, to actually traverse an electorate, a large electorate.

Sometimes the transport routes are easier in some divisions than others, and
10 there might be fewer centres and bigger centres say in Grey. But I mean, I'm interested in your view from the National Party as to why it is that it's preferable to have a division that is 780,000 square kilometres when there are proposals on the table, indeed the re-distribution and other proposals, that actually can take 200,000 square kilometres out of that. Why is it so important,
15 given all the other things that have been said to us, about managing such a division?

MR HENDERSON: Well, I haven't argued the case on the size of the electorate, but yes, I would agree that that is certainly an issue and that's going
20 to be a challenge, you know, in all areas of Western Queensland. Kennedy is another example. We've got State electorates that are similarly large. Look, that is just one of the challenges of those areas, representation in those areas. I think, you know, there's a very strong case for the additional resourcing of those electorates through the additional electorate offices and so on.

25 We've heard from Mr Katter this morning, who has got, you know, some three electorate offices there. Maranoa is a similar case. I think you've got to look at those sorts of solutions, but where those communities identify themselves as having a collective interest and see themselves as having a sense of
30 commonality, I think it is more damaging perhaps to try and pull that apart on the basis of trying to meet numbers and so on, than at least trying to get some economic synergies happening in those regions and a greater sense of co-operation.

35 The tyranny of distance is a difficult one, there is no doubt about that, and we do have some sympathy for the arguments about making seats a more serviceable size, but I think we would be more broadly swayed by the argument in those communities that where there is a level of co-operation, where there is a sense of identity and commonality, then we should respect
40 that.

MR CAMPBELL: But in the sense - you mentioned Kennedy. The proposal for Kennedy is 200,000 square kilometres less than what you're proposing for Maranoa. I suppose I would like your view on - those eight shires have in the
45 main been together, but not in Maranoa. They have been Kennedy, then they were split a little bit between Maranoa and Capricornia and now in Maranoa. I mean, is the strongest argument there that the eight should stay together?

MR HENDERSON: I think you've got to take some advice from those shires. That's what we've done. They don't look to Gladstone for their service delivery. They look south to Roma and then to Toowoomba and Brisbane and beyond. We've simply accepted the argument that's been put forward by those
5 shires, that they have a sense of commonality, that they don't look to Gladstone for those services, and therefore we think they should be respected.

MR CAMPBELL: Just one last question: don't they also look to Emerald?

10 MR HENDERSON: Some of them.

MR CAMPBELL: And your proposal has Emerald in the new division, or you're accepting Emerald in the new division, aren't you, if the division remains there?

15 MR HENDERSON: Well, I prefaced my remarks by saying that, you know, we didn't believe this was a superior outcome.

MR CAMPBELL: No, no, I understand that.

20 MR HENDERSON: So I'm not going to set out to defend what you have proposed.

MR CAMPBELL: No.

25 MR HENDERSON: What we've sought to do in our submission is to effectively make it work as best we can with the parameters that you've imposed.

30 MR CAMPBELL: No, I see.

MR HENDERSON: We maintain that the original proposal that we made caused as minimal disruption as possible. We've sought to address the anomalies of the Commission's proposal as best we possibly can. We don't
35 argue that it's a perfect outcome, but we have at least tried to address some of those anomalies.

MR CAMPBELL: No, sorry, I - - -

40 MR HENDERSON: So I - yes.

MR CAMPBELL: I accept that point. I chose my words not very well. But the point I was making is that the proposal put to us by the eight shires was that they would stay in Maranoa, but the argument was not put that Emerald be put
45 back into Maranoa. That's probably a better way of expressing it. Yet those eight shires do have a relationship to Emerald, don't they, and Emerald is a growing area, isn't it?

MR HENDERSON: Absolutely. Yes, a growing population centre, yes.

MR CAMPBELL: Yes, okay, that's all.

5 MR POOLE: Mr Chairman, can I take you back to Kingaroy Wondai shire
area. Your proposal about this, you said earlier, your proposal was around
having the Burnett region together but doesn't your proposal rather decimate
the southern end of the Burnett region by having Kingaroy and Wondai in
Wright, having Nanango and part of the Rosalie Shire in Maranoa, and then
10 having Crows Nest in Groom. I'm just a bit curious as to how the argument
about community of interest can end up with that part of the further Burnett
being in three divisions.

MR HENDERSON: Well, just starting with Crows Nest, the obvious
15 community of interest there is with Toowoomba. You know, there is a
highway that links the two. I think you can make a very, very strong case for
maintaining those centres together. Rosalie is an interesting shire in that there
is some identity with the Darling Downs, obviously, but also with the Burnett,
and of course you've got the impact of the Great Dividing Range. I guess
20 we've used natural barriers as a guideline in that area as well. Again, you
know, it would be ideal to have the shire of Nanango maintained with
Kingaroy and Wondai and so on, but once again, we've got the challenge of the
numbers and trying to work within the constraints that have been imposed.

25 CHAIR: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[11.48am]

30

CHAIR: Mr Shane Easson.

SHANE EASSON, called

[11.48am]

35

MR EASSON: Your Honour and the Commissioner, we're in a State, as Mr
Campbell alluded to, where the National Party wishes to obtain a division
which in area covers 45 per cent of the State. Your Honour, on behalf of the
40 Australian Labour Party, I would like to quickly run through five matters
which we would like to discuss. The first will deal with our appeal concerning
Blair, Bowman, Forde, Oxley and Rankin, and on that matter, my only witness
I have with me on any of these matters will be Craig Emerson who will just
complete that discussion for a few minutes.

45

Then I will talk for a couple of minutes about Moreton, and then deal with the
ALP appeal concerning Leichhardt. Fourthly, just a few words in support of
the Commission is on the Sunshine Coast before completing with a discussion

on the north coast and the new division and the name of that division. Well, I now begin with the first matter which deals with the Blair, Bowman, Forde, Oxley and Rankin divisions. I suppose it's - I should explain, just to recap, what we're trying to do there. In the case of Bowman, the Commission has
5 transferred about 3000 electors from it to Rankin.

We say you don't need to do that. You should keep Bowman together. In other words, make no change to the boundary of Bowman. With regard to Rankin, the Commissioners made note in their report that their proposed
10 division of Rankin would be made up entirely of part of the Logan local government area, Logan city. We don't propose to change that arrangement. In fact, what we think the Commissioners should do with regard to Rankin, myself having already said that we say that you should not make a change to Bowman, that the only change you then need to make with Rankin is just to
15 transfer those parts of the city of Brisbane currently in that division.

So, in other words, we're suggesting to the augmented Commission that we shouldn't change the current boundaries between Forde and Rankin, and between Rankin and Oxley. With regard to Forde itself, what we're saying
20 - - -

CHAIR: You want to transfer parts of the city of Sydney - - -

MR EASSON: City of Brisbane.
25

CHAIR: - - - city of Brisbane, I meant, which are currently in - - -

MR EASSON: Currently in Rankin.

30 CHAIR: In Rankin.

MR EASSON: We say they should go just as the Commissioners have proposed, right, but what we're saying is that no further change is warranted with that division. With regard to Forde, the Commissioners have taken an
35 area out and placed them with Gold Coast division. Having done that, they don't need to make any further change to the division of Forde. We say that is the only change that you need to make. We're also saying that, in our view, the Commissioners came up with less - or the Committee came up with less satisfactory boundaries with regard to Blair by placing Boonah from Forde into
40 that seat.

So just to recap, no change to Bowman, only change with Rankin is take out the Brisbane - city of Brisbane part; no change to Forde except for that which you put into the Gold Coast, and no other change to Rankin. So that the bigger
45 change would occur between Oxley and Blair. Now, part of the key to whether you should accept our case or not is your consideration of the merits of whether the Committee should review the proposal of placing Boonah in Ipswich. Now, we're not here to say that there are no connections between

Boonah and Ipswich. There are very good strong connections.

However, we are here to say that Boonah fits better in a division with Beaudesert for reasons I shall explain in a couple of minutes, than being placed
5 in a division with Ipswich. Now, John Cherry, the former senator, explained this morning that Boonah and Beaudesert have been in the same division at every Federal re-distribution bar one since Federation. Secondly, Boonah and Beaudesert are currently within the State division of Beaudesert. Before that they were in Fassifern, and so on.

10 So at a State level you have this Boonah Beaudesert link, in State districts, and with Boonah and its relation with Ipswich and Beaudesert, that's the matter I now want to cover before I ask Craig Emerson to talk to you. I initially said that Boonah does have a relationship with Ipswich; we don't dispute that but
15 let's note the difference in the character of those two places. Ipswich, historically, has been a rail and mining town. Today, it's fair to say, increasingly, Ipswich has become a commuter suburb of Brisbane as well.

If we look at Boonah on the other hand, it's a predominantly rural local
20 government area. It's quite decentralised, quite a few towns, and 8000 electors. Dairying is one of the more important industries in Boonah. If we look at Boonah itself, you've got dairying, sorghum, feed crops. It's the biggest region in Queensland for the production of carrots and potatoes. You've got that sort of characteristic. With Beaudesert, admittedly a little drier, so there you've got
25 more feed crops than grazing, but you've also got dairying.

You've got two towns that are fairly close in character, Boonah and Beaudesert, and I would submit to you that that has been a major reason why the past State and Federal Commissioners have tried to place Boonah and
30 Beaudesert in the same seat or division. Also, Boonah town has never been in the same division as Ipswich. Now, when we're dealing with this area, I want to just quickly go through what's happened with Blair and the importance of Ipswich to that division. Prior to the 2003 re-distribution, Ipswich made up 35 per cent of Blair. After the 2003 re-distribution that proportion became 47 per
35 cent.

With the Commissioner's proposal, that now becomes 71 per cent and under the ALP proposal, Ipswich would be 74 per cent of the division of Blair. What we've found in the last few re-distributions is that as that part of Brisbane south
40 of the Brisbane River has grown in enrolment, the Commissioners tended to funnel the surplus through Oxley into Blair, such that Blair, as I've just outlined with those figures, has become increasingly an Ipswich-dominated division. Now, it's not - it's probably our main argument but it's not our only argument concerning these seats.

45 To recap, we're saying that Boonah fits better in the existing arrangement with Beaudesert in Forde than under the proposed arrangement to be placed with Ipswich in a division but we believe also that the Commissioners, by making

the changes that they have between, say, Bowman and Rankin and between Rankin and Forde, may have come up with less satisfactory boundaries than what are the current boundaries, and on those two points, I'd ask Craig Emerson to finish this aspect of the matter. Thank you.

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THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[11.58am]

10 CHAIR: Yes, Mr Emerson.

CRAIG EMERSON, called

[11.58am]

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MR EMERSON: Well, thank you, and just to reiterate, I support the Commission moving to make Rankin a seat based entirely in Logan city. In fact, in the previous re-distribution, that move was substantially made by excluding from Rankin, suburbs such as Calamvale, Parkinson, Algester and Stretton, Runcorn and others, and this proposed re-distribution finishes that process by removing from Rankin the remaining parts of Brisbane city and making Rankin a seat based entirely within Logan city, but if, as my colleague has suggested, Boonah were to remain in Forde, then there would be no need to transfer parts of the SLAs of Tanah Merah and Loganholme from Rankin into Forde.

So Boonah seems to be - the shift of Boonah seems to be driving the move from - of these statistical local areas from Rankin to Forde. The proposed boundary is or appears to be Murrays Road which, if I could point out, is not a major road, and does not define the boundary between Tanah Merah as one suburb and Loganholme as another. Indeed, Murrays Road cuts through the suburb of Tanah Merah. Not a major road and it therefore doesn't - it seemed to have a lot of integrity as a boundary.

35 I know your tasks are always difficult and you need to select boundaries that are not always ideal to meet the requirements but if I can suggest that the Commission might have a look at whether it is necessary to make a boundary adjustment there if, indeed, Boonah were to remain in Forde. It also would not be necessary to move electors from Bowman to Rankin. Effectively, what the Commission is proposing is that the suburb of Cornubia be shifted into Rankin. This is known as parts of SLAs - of the SLAs of Carbrook, Cornubia, and of Loganholme. Together, they comprise 3059 electors.

So I would argue that we don't - would not need to move Cornubia into Rankin. Indeed, even if the Commission decided to stay with its proposed boundaries, in relation to Boonah and in relation to Rankin and Forde, it still does not appear to be necessary to transfer the suburb of Cornubia into Rankin. In the last Parliament, Cornubia was in the Federal seat of Bowman. Oh,

sorry, the present Parliament is in the Federal seat of Bowman. In the last Parliament, it was in Fadden and in the coming Parliament it would be in Rankin. So it seems to be a fair bit of dislocation there. And if I could point out that the Commission itself says it's desirable to transfer 1787 electors from Bowman to Rankin to meet the projected average enrolment in Bowman, and yet it transfers 3059 electors, which is quite a bit more.

Since the proposal transfers more electors from Bowman to Rankin, I'm suggesting that even if, after considering all of this evidence, the Commission said, "We want to transfer part of Bowman to Rankin," it would not necessarily need to be all of the suburb of the Cornubia, and there's an alternative boundary, which is California Creek Road. What does that have going for it? To the east of California Creek Road are acreage properties and to the west of California Creek Road is really the remaining suburb of Cornubia, which is suburban properties. So if I could ask the Commission to have a look at that as well? And since I won't be reappearing again in this double act, your Honour, if I could just say, as the Member who previously had the suburbs of Algester/Parkinson within the seat of Rankin, I would support the proposal to move Algester/Parkinson into Oxley, which is what the Commission is proposing.

It makes sense, because Parkinson is a very high growth suburb and continues to grow strongly and if the Commission does retain the Brisbane River as the boundary then, over time, Griffith will need to shed electors in Moreton and as Griffith continues to grow, Moreton consequently will need to lose electors and it won't be able to retain the suburbs of Algester and Parkinson, because they are high growth suburbs. So if you're going to make the move, it seems to make sense to make the move now.

CHAIR: From Moreton to - - -

MR EMERSON: From - to the areas of Algester and Parkinson from Moreton into Oxley.

CHAIR: Yes. Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No questions.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Emerson.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[12.04pm]

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Easson?

SHANE EASSON, recalled

[12.04pm]

MR EASSON: Thank you. Just to finish the point about Moreton, which Mr Emerson just discussed, we note that in paragraph 131 of the committee report,
5 they made note of the fact that Chelmer, Sherwood, Graceville are currently in Moreton and that they upheld a suggestion not to transfer those areas out. If you look at the shape of Moreton, it's more likely that more in the area where the Commissioners have removed, it's likely to go for Moreton in the future, given the growth. Chelmer, Sherwood and Graceville, the Liberal Party is
10 saying that they should go into Oxley. We support the Commissioners here. Those three places have been in the division of Moreton now for a few re-distributions. Three, I think. So partly on that basis, we support the Commissioners' proposal.

15 The next matter, quickly, which I wish to go into is the ALP appeal concerning Leichhardt. Here, we are talking about moving a similar number of electors from Cairns currently in Leichhardt into Kennedy, as what the Commissioners do. So we're not challenging the fundamentals of what the Commissioners are saying, instead, what we're saying is that the Commissioners should remove all
20 of Edmonton, which is partly split, between Kennedy and Leichhardt, take out that section that's in Leichhardt, place it in Kennedy and then not do your proposed transfer of Yarrabah. The Commissioners or Committee in paragraph 68 of their report made reference, in the case of the division of Herbert, for the reasons why Palm Island, notwithstanding that it's in the Hinchinbrook local
25 government area, has been retained in the division of Herbert. And I think it's fair to say that the Commissioners noted the dependence of residents from Palm Island on services in Townsville.

What we are saying is that the Commissioners, were they to adopt our
30 objections with regard to Leichhardt/Kennedy, would then be consistent with how they've treated Palm Island with Herbert, and I want to explain why in a couple of minutes. Re: Yarrabah: many of the residents currently there were forcibly relocated from other parts of the Cape York peninsula. There are still strong family ties between Yarrabah and the peninsula. Within Yarrabah itself,
35 the community there is quite disadvantaged. It's dependent on government services to a much greater extent than the general community. And they're also dependent on government services based in Cairns.

So just to sum up: the Commissioners take out a little bit of Cairns and place it
40 in Kennedy, so does the ALP. We're only talking about which part of Cairns - it's a similar number of people under both propositions - which part should go from Leichhardt to Kennedy. Right? That completes Leichhardt. If there's any questions as I go or you want to ask, if you have, any at the end. The next matter concerns the Sunshine Coast. We have quite a few appeals in that area
45 and the ALP's position is that we support the Commissioners' boundaries in that area. Now, there has been - - -

CHAIR: That's the committee's - - -

MR EASSON: I beg your pardon?

CHAIR: Perhaps I might make a correction: it's the committee's boundary.

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MR EASSON: Committee's, yes. I keep trying to make that distinction myself, but - - -

CHAIR: It never becomes the Commission's, actually. It's the committee's
10 and ultimately it becomes the augmented Commission's.

MR EASSON: Yes. Well, we've had some criticism about the placement of
Esk into Dickson, and the placement of Kilcoy into Fisher, and there have been
some arguments. "Why not leave Dickson alone? Why not put Esk and Kilcoy
15 together into Fisher?" Right? Well, that has some merit, that argument, I have
to say. However, I think we should be a little realistic here, in that I don't think
anybody believes that Kilcoy or Esk will remain where they currently are,
where they are proposed to go, at a future re-distribution. The growth in the
Sunshine Coast is such that my expectation is we're going to have a rural-based
20 new division at the next distribution, and we've just go - this is an example of
places, which are part in fast growing areas, but because of their growth, will
eventually go and be placed into what will become, I imagine and predict, a
country-based division in the future.

25 If we look at the Commissioners' proposed division of Longman now, the ALP,
in its original suggestions, had proposed that we have a Caboolture only
division called Longman. So what the Commissioners have come up with is
different to what we proposed. But we can see, when we made our original
suggestion, that this was the first and only time ever that you could have had a
30 division of Caboolture only, because that shire is growing and it's going to be
split next time, anyway. The Commissioners won't have a choice about that.
But if we look at the Commissioners' proposed Longman and compare it to
other proposals that have been made - other objections, which have been made.
We find that the Commissioners' Longman is now much more a northern
35 Brisbane commuter type division than what the current Longman is.

If we look at the places which the Commission is proposing to take out of
Longman. Firstly, Caboolture to Brisbane is about one hour on the train. As
you get further north, the journey becomes a little bit time consuming for most.
40 An hour is about the max. At the moment, we're not up to Sydney, sort of,
commuting times in Brisbane yet. Secondly, if we look at the part of
Caboolture, which the Commission has placed in Fisher. Let's have a look at
Wamuran. Here, you're dealing with the biggest strawberry growing area in
Australia, a major pineapple growing area. You're talking about a rural
45 character of that particular area, which if more - which - and the division of
Longman being more a, sort of, commuter suburb - sorry, division of Brisbane,
much more so than what the previous or the current division of Longman is.
That's all I want to say there.

The last matter which I wish to cover, about which there have been a number of objections, is those north coast seats, the name of the new division, also. If - in the ALP comments on the other objections, we stated that we support the

5 Commissioner's boundaries in this area. We did so with quite heavy reservation, but let me say this about the new seat that was drawn by each of the parties in our suggestion to the Committee. I have a confession to make. I think that none of us came up with a very coherent suggestion to the Committee. We all had significant flaws in what we proposed. All of us did.

10 Now, I'm not saying that I - would the Labour Party propose - if we accept that what we called Theodore, being an Ipswich seat, that the Blair that we the new seat, and so you can compare us and the Nats and the Libs in that regard. I'm not saying that I went outside and threw up, but I left that to when I read

15 the Liberal and National parties' suggestion. But what I'm trying to say here is I - we all had a terribly difficult task trying to come up with respectable boundaries for new division, and if the Commission ends up feeling that they've been under the gun, sort of thing, you should take comfort in the fact that we all had great problem coming up with a coherent division in that area.

20 We also say that were the Commissioners wishing to make a change in that general area, the submission that we would like you to most study would be that of the former Democrat senator, John Cherry. And I note that his objection has been quoted by all of the political parties in that area. And if the

25 Commissioners are considering a change in that area, we ask you to accept that the Cherry submission is not proposing as major a change as what it might appear. We get mixed up with the name in these sort of things, particularly where we have a new seat.

30 Can I just mention the fact that in the Commissioners' Wide Bay division, what they did was they put together Cooloola and Noosa. Together, those two shires account for 64 per cent, or two thirds, of a division. You could do as the Commissioners have done, and take Gympie, Noosa, and Maryborough; or you could do, as has been suggested by the Member for Fairfax, by - some of the

35 comments by the Member for Maranoa - were you, instead of doing Gympie, Noosa, Maryborough, if you did Gympie, Noosa, and the Kingaroy and Gang parts of Blair, that you're proposing to remove from Blair, then you're looking at a core area which wouldn't change - those two thirds of Gympie and Noosa - and deciding whether you want to put Kingaroy and Gang, or you want to put

40 Maryborough in.

Now, the merit of Cherry's suggestion is effectively - he's saying to you, "Don't go for Maryborough; go for the Kingaroy area. And if you do that, then you can combine Maryborough and Hervey Bay, and you can combine Gladstone

45 and Rockhampton together in a division. And you basically make minimal change to Maranoa." So what we're saying to you, I guess, is that your proposed division of Wright represents a better effort than any of the political parties. I can't speak for the others, but I can certainly say that on behalf of the

ALP. Your proposal also does have major knock-on effects that can be avoided if the Commission, instead of combining Gympie, Noosa with Maryborough, you put it in with Kingaroy and so forth, and then many of the objections and their concerns about breaking up traditional arrangements, and
5 so on, most of those concerns - not all - most will be met.

Now, on the matter of Wright - and this is where I wish to finish - as we put in our comments and objections, we deliberately did not object to the Commissioners' proposed name of Wright, even though, you know, we wanted
10 the name of Theodore to get up, and to that extent, we put it in our original suggestion - and I agree with what Bob Katter has said earlier today. But in our view, the criticism made of the Commissioners has been quite harsh about Wright, and if you go to our written comments, we've taken special care to say that to the Committee, that we believe that Wright is a very acceptable name,
15 and in fact, it's a good choice of name for a division.

However, we also accept that given the confusion - and I'm sure, you know, in a quiet moment one day, I'm sure the Committee members will have been surprised by the reaction to the name and the association with a former
20 Member. That's quite unfortunate, and I can understand the Committee members being a bit taken aback by that, but we have to remember that their proposed division is - takes up parts of the former division of Capricornia, which Keith Wright represented. So what we're trying to say to you is that we don't have any problem with the name of Wright. We reluctantly accept that
25 the choice of the name, combined with the area where you propose that name to be attached, considering that the disgraced former Member did represent part of that area, is unfortunate. So I wanted to explain that because I think some of the criticism of the Committee has been a bit harsh, and I wanted to give you our honest opinion.

30 Now, in conclusion, I have to say that - some of you may be aware - that I helped the Labour Party, both in New South Wales and Queensland, put together their original re-distribution suggestion, and that was done in March. And in April, I really needed a break, so I decided to go to an area, about
35 which I thought there could not possibly be any arguments about boundaries and so on, and so I can rest. And so at Easter, I went to Hervey Bay, which, your Honour, just goes to tell you you can never be too careful in this world. And if there's one thing about Hervey Bay, apart - what you do there is you go to Fraser Island if you're a tourist, and you go to Maryborough. Maryborough
40 is where my stepmother was born. And the one time I thought about re-distribution, I have to admit, was getting my photograph next to the statue of Mary Poppins, so named after Pamela L. Travers, the author of Mary Poppins, born in Maryborough. And I did think of myself, "I wonder if they think of that name?" but that might be for another day. That's it.

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MR CAMPBELL: You weren't recommending Poppins, surely?

MR EASSON: It depends which party holds it, is my modest answer.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No questions.

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CHAIR: Anyone else?

MR POOLE: No, I'm all right, thank you.

10 MS BRIGHT: No, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Easson.

15 **THE WITNESS WITHDREW**

[12.24pm]

CHAIR: Is Councillor Jenny Hill here yet?

20 CR HILL: Yes, I am.

CHAIR: Perhaps, in view of the time, I might slot you in now.

25 **JENNY HILL, called**

[12.24pm]

CHAIR: Yes?

30 CR HILL: Thank you to the Commission for giving me the opportunity to speak on this. I'm not here to represent any political party, I'm here to represent the submission I made for myself and also that of the people through the city of Townsville through the City Council. We're all very concerned about the proposed changes to our electoral division from the seat of Herbert
35 with a fair proportion of our city being moved into the seat of Dawson.

The seat of Townsville has a unique history. It, basically, existed as a port in the 1860s to service the western district of Charters Towers for mining which led then to cattle and now also has quite strong economic ties to the Mount Isa
40 region and the mining industries through there. The area that we're very concerned with is the southern area that's to be portioned off into the seat of Dawson.

Apart from the residents in that area it also has a large State development area
45 for industrial growth, it has our meatworks and a number of refineries that are linked to the Mount Isa mineral province. We feel that the way the proposed boundaries are that literally begin to split the city or to split our community and with representation then being made for that area in Dawson, we feel isn't in

the interest of our community.

We require a local Member that will represent the southern areas of Townsville as well, because they are part of our economic growth. Without that, it would
5 be very difficult for them to compete in the hurly-gurley world of Canberra, where we need infrastructure money to be poured into that area to allow the continuing growth of our port and our city that services those areas, particularly towards Mount Isa and the mining communities there.

10 We haven't had much luck, in recent times, garnishing Federal money, and we feel that having a Member for Dawson, particularly representing the southern area, we would have even greater difficulty in attempting to garnish money for infrastructure development. The Member for Dawson, under the current
15 boundaries, would also take in areas of Mackay and Bowen, which have their own economic proposals and zones of development.

The other thing, too, that is of great concern, is the city is growing in quite a spectacular way in comparison to other areas in Australia, mainly based on the mining boom. The army - we have a very large defence population there, and
20 the Prime Minister has recently announced that he plans to send another battalion into the Townsville barracks, Lavarack Barracks. We feel that many of those people would be moving into those areas of Fairfield Waters and Adahlia, where we have a current very large-scale land development, and also into areas of Enoomba. We have an area known as Rocky Springs that we
25 wish to develop over the next five years, and we have already begun discussions with the developer who has, in turn, had discussions with Defence Housing to house those people in that area as time goes on.

It is very important that we maintain the city as a whole. No other community
30 - no other city on the eastern border has been split like this, the way Townsville has as part of the re-distribution. Cairns has basically remained whole. So has the city of Mackay and the city of Rockhampton. We are just asking for our community to be treated in the same way. We believe the boundaries for Dawson should be shifted west, where the communities of interest for the
35 people of Mackay lay, particularly out through their mining areas. And I ask the Commission to look at that with careful consideration. Thank you. I'll take any questions from the Commission.

MR CAMPBELL: I understand the extent, or the intent, of your submission,
40 but given the numbers and given the provisions of the Act, where - if those voters go back into the seat of Herbert, which is what you're proposing - - -

CR HILL: Yes.

45 MR CAMPBELL: - - - Herbert then becomes too large. So where do we make the compensating changes?

CR HILL: Well, we would suggest that Bushland Beach remain in the seat of

Kennedy. They have a community of interest, at least with the residents in the Derrigan area. And in the next five years, there is a development called Waterview Terraces, that's been planned by the Stockland Corporation, in that exact area on that side of the Bohle River.

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MR CAMPBELL: How many people in that beach? Remind me.

CR HILL: There's about 5500.

10 MR CAMPBELL: Okay. Well, that puts Kennedy well and truly over. So what do we then do to Kennedy?

CR HILL: Kennedy would then - portions of Kennedy could go into Dawson, particularly the Charters Towers area.

15

MR CAMPBELL: So ultimately - that's what I'm coming to. Ultimately, your proposal is that Charters Towers goes into Dawson, isn't it?

CR HILL: Yes.

20

MR CAMPBELL: Even though the submission doesn't say it.

CR HILL: Even though - I do have some maps here that I've asked the staff to do that I will submit.

25

MR CAMPBELL: No, I thought that's what it was. I couldn't see any other way of it working.

CR HILL: Yes. And I must admit, that's the only other way we could see it working as well to meet the requirements of the Act. But at least there are some communities of interest there, in terms of mining and things like that, I suppose. It's very important for the city of Townsville to remain as a whole because, as I said, we need that strong local voice in Canberra to compete for that funding out there. If the city is divided, the Member for Dawson's

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loyalties are then divided, and I'd really find it difficult for her to be loyal to 5000 electors in the north of her electorate, when she's got another 60,000 in the south of her electorate she really needs to deal with, especially in terms of business and community interest and economic interest. And that's our very real concern.

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MR CAMPBELL: The only observation I would make - and you should not read into this any conclusion of the augmented committee, because there's the six members of the committee - but given the growth that's occurring in the Townsville area, ultimately, at some point of time, there will have to be two

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Members representing the city, because it is growing so quickly.

CR HILL: And I realise that, and we understand that, and we think that that could be designed to the fact that you'd have, primarily, an urban seat and the

next seat would, literally, surround the city of Townsville with an urban and country mix.

MR CAMPBELL: Okay.

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CHAIR: Any comment, Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No.

10 CHAIR: Anyone else? Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[12.31pm]

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CHAIR: We're a few minutes early, but I think the next speaker, Mr Quirk, would take some time, so I think we might do that after lunch.

MR QUIRK: Perhaps not as much time as you might think.

20

CHAIR: Oh, really?

MR QUIRK: I'd say 10 or 15 minutes would probably pull us up. And I was going to get Mr Peter Baston to make some initial comments. But it's up to

25 you, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: What about Mr Manning? How long would you take?

MR MANNING: Me, you mean?

30

CHAIR: Is Mr Manning here?

MR MANNING: Yes.

35 CHAIR: How long would you take?

MR MANNING: Oh, I don't know. Not more than 10 minutes, I suppose.

CHAIR: And Mr Neville?

40

MR NEVILLE: About 15, Commissioner.

CHAIR: Mr Bruce Alexander, is he here?

45 MR B ALEXANDER: No longer than that - 10 or 15 minutes.

CHAIR: Well, I think we'll go to lunch and take you all in the afternoon. So we'll resume at - we might resume five minutes early, 1.35, all right? We'll

resume at 1.35.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[12.32pm]

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RESUMED

[1.36pm]

10 CHAIR: Very well. We will open the afternoon session and the first speaker is Mr Graham Quirk.

GRAHAM QUIRK, called

[1.36pm]

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MR QUIRK: Thank you very much, your Honour, and Committee Members. I'm here together with Chris Swan, representing the Liberal Party today, your Honour, and I do so, I suppose, as someone who's been involved in quite a
20 number of re-distributions over a number of years, not only Federal Liberal but also at other levels of government. I guess, if I could just say at the outset that I thank the Committee for its work and to say that over the years that I've been involved in these types of things, re-distribution committees are always on a hiding to nothing in that it can't please everybody in the process and in much
25 the same way as we in political life find that same outcome.

However, I do want today to probably take a little bit of a different tack to other submitters in that we put forward our submission and it is there for the consideration of the Committee in terms of the individual seats. I would
30 though foreshadow that there were a couple of errors that we did pick up in that, they were just seat name errors and be it wish of the Committee we would forward those errors through just as corrections through for clarity sake. It would not be an additional submission but just a clarity of errors in terms of those couple of things.

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I guess, in a broad sense, the minimalising of disturbance of voters within seats has always been, I suppose, a major thrust in the role we'd perform in lodging submissions. And while when there is a new seat created that is always difficult to achieve in a major sense in that it's obviously, by its very nature,
40 will create a disturbance of voters. I want to address today the issue of equality of electors which is an issue which appears to have emerged within the framing of this set of boundaries.

There's a number of issues, I suppose, associated with that which are of
45 concern to me going forward. So while I accept there's going to be argument over whether this bit of a territory ought to be in this seat or whatever in terms of the State, there is ongoing and future re-distributions the issue of the parameters of assessment in terms of how boundaries should lie. There's a

number of issues that I just want to raise as concerns on the general issue of, and principle of, equality of electors has emerged in this re-distribution.

And they relate to the fact that it's outside of the provisions of the Act itself,
5 the fact that it does set a precedent and it does provide a constraining factor for considering community of interest and also that it, in my view, in the view of the party, dislocates voters unnecessarily. And if I can maybe just point to some of those issues. In the Act itself it makes it very clear, as being discussed earlier today, that - if I can just read very quickly from the Act:

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In making the proposed re-distribution the Re-distribution Committee shall, as far as practicable, endeavour to ensure that if the State or Territory were re-distributed in accordance with the proposed re-distribution, the number of electors enrolled in each electoral division in the State or Territory would not, at the projection time, determined under Section 63(a) be less than 96.5 per cent or more than 103.5 per cent of the average divisional enrolment of that State or Territory at that time.

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20 Now, the reason I just sort of raised this issue of concern in terms of a precedent, there's a couple of aspects in the Committee's report which I want to raise. Paragraph 49, for example, it refers there:

25

To achieve the relative equality of numbers between electoral divisions previously noted as being of high importance -

and another section where it states:

30

The Committee notes that under its proposal four divisions are above the variation of plus 1.5 per cent, five divisions are below the variation of minus 1.5 per cent and 20 divisions are within the range of plus or minus 1.5 per cent.

I noticed a little earlier Mr Katter was referring to constraints on the
35 Commission imposed by the Act. I guess that my concern is that there almost seems to be a further, you know, aspect which is being self-imposed which is not contained within the Act, and, again, I just raise the concern going forward whether this issue of equality of electors through this particular proposal is going to set the tone and the terms, if you like, for future re-distribution.

40

MR CAMPBELL: I might - it might be helpful if I make a comment here.

MR QUIRK: Sure.

45 MR CAMPBELL: Because this is in your submission as well, so what - - -

MR QUIRK: Yes, it is.

MR CAMPBELL: - - - you're saying is not news to us. I think probably the best way to make the observation is that the Committee had full regard to Section 66 of the Act, which you read out part thereof, and it did acknowledge - and I didn't raise it with an earlier person this morning - is that the bit about
5 boundaries has to be subordinate to the earlier ones of community of interest of communication, transport and physical features, but you're not raising that point.

What I wanted to put on the record, because I can understand in hindsight why
10 you've raised this, that the descriptor that you just read out about the 1.5 plus or minus, I can assure you, and I'm sure my three colleagues on the Committee, would agree that that was a drafting technique used to show the range of where the proposed boundaries are going to be which are also set out on page 33 of the report. I can assure you, and I will go on the record, as saying the
15 Committee never discussed a 1.5 per cent margin one way or the other.

It was only a drafting technique, which, in hindsight, given your comments, might not have been the best drafting technique in the world to show where the
20 29 divisions would fall in the gap between plus 3.5 per cent and minus 3.5 per cent.

MR QUIRK: Thank you.

MR CAMPBELL: Okay? And thank you for - because in a sense it was done
25 more as a drafting point and to help people to show the range. If you have a look at the table 4 on page 33 the range does go, I think, from - well, there's a point 1 and it goes up as high as 2.56 or down as 2.56 and 2.69 and it's also on a graph on page 7. But let me assure you and other people interested here is the Committee did not impose a 1.5 per cent arbitrary or any sort of other limit.
30 It was purely and simply a drafting technique, which, in hindsight, as I said in the light of your comments, may not have been the best drafting technique of all. Okay.

CHAIR: And can I just add to that? If you've read the New South Wales
35 Committee report also you will have observed the two Committee reports are not totally consistent in the language they use. In relation to the very area that you're talking about and you can be sure that when the augmented Commissions in each place bring in their reports they will be consistent and we will take into account, which is standard, but, of course, what we will be
40 governed by is the Act.

MR QUIRK: Yes. Well, I accept that and I thank you to both your Honour and the gentleman for that contribution. I suppose - yes, I'm glad that that is clarified because the commentary certainly did point towards, as I say, what
45 appeared to be an emergence of a new parameter in terms of equality of electors. I guess that if I can go directly to the point of disturbance of voters. One of the key features was the fact that when you look at the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Labor Party's proposals they all resulted in a far less

disturbance of voters than what the Committee's report and proposed boundaries involve.

I guess from a community perspective there is already relatively high levels of
5 cynicism in the process of government and politics generally and the more
dislocation there is, I guess, in my view, also adds to that level of cynicism.
But having said that, whatever parameters the Committee has used the figures
that we came up with, in terms of the proposal, showed that the Liberal Party's
proposal would have disturbed voters to the tune of 10.3 per cent, the National
10 Party's proposal would have had a voter disturbance of 14.9 per cent, the
Australian Labor Party's proposal had a disturbance of 12.9 per cent. The
actual Committee's proposal has a disturbance factor of 16.7 per cent.

We thought that those variations were significant and in spite of trying to keep
15 like the numbers of voters fairly even and still work within the parameters of
the Act in each of the electoral divisions, in spite of it that still had a very large
movement of voters which we probably regarded as a negative element, I
suppose, in the overall outcome.

20 As I said at the outset, I don't particularly today want to get into the argy-bargy
of the individual movements of bits of territory here or there. There has been a
continual theme today in regards to Maryborough and Hervey Bay which we'd
concur with. We think that that is a clear community of interest within those
two parts of the State. And in respect, finally, to the new seat, we based the
25 new seat around the fact that a lot of the growth - significant growth - that was
occurring was centred around the Sunshine Coast, Wide Bay area, and, for that
reason, we, in our proposal, put forward that area as the location for the new
seat.

30 And, in essence, the submission that we put forward would have seen a
proposed new division that would have had a projected growth rate of 7.51 per
cent as opposed to - as proposed, rather - adjoining divisions would also have
had relatively high projected growth, including Fairfax at 6.37, Fisher at 7.68
and Long at 7.48 and Dickson being the other at 6.55. So we - in terms of the
35 fact that each three years Queensland seems to find itself in a position because
of its growth with a new seat in recent times and probably the same thing is
going to apply next time around, I guess, we thought that that area, probably at
this time, represented the area where you would have the least amount of
disturbance given that you've got to pull, basically, a few seats together to form
40 that extra division.

So I'm happy to leave my comments at that and thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

45

MR TREWIN: No questions.

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

MR QUIRK: Thank you.

5 **THE WITNESS WITHDREW**

[1.49pm]

CHAIR: That then brings us to Mr William Manning. Is he here?

10

WILLIAM MANNING, called

[1.49pm]

CHAIR: Yes, Mr Manning?

15

MR MANNING: Greetings, everybody. I'm a private person, an individual representing no parties. I'm a First World War baby boomer and I'm a proud Australian officially. On the point of being an Australian, I'd like to remind everybody that is listening to me that we all registered ourselves on one of these and Section 6 in that says we're Australians. Now, being Australians that will bring the book of rules into it. I think I put that in my submission.

I think, personally, the whole place is run on individual groups of rules. The Liberal Party have got theirs, the National Party have got their book of rules, the Labor Party have got theirs and the nation has got their book of rules which is call The Constitution. And the reason we're here today is because the constitution allows for this re-distribution and allows us to vote and one thing and another. Now, I object strongly to the intended re-distribution and the break-up of the communities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay being in different electorates.

But I'm not going to err on the reasons that have already been given. I support the Maryborough Council and the Hervey Bay Council point of view on that. And I think that if they do break up Hervey Bay and Maryborough and take them out and put them in separate ones, it could be classified as an electoral vandalism, which will produce nothing more than another seat for the private membership clubs, commonly known as political parties, to squabble over. That's all it will do, in my opinion.

As far as the constitution is concerned today, our constitution, by the other people's books of rules that go into the Parliament of Australia, they have broken it down as hard as they can go and there's plenty of incidents I can point to in that and prove. And I don't think many of our Parliamentarians are representatives any more. They don't represent the people as a whole, they represent their parties.

CHAIR: Well, we, of course, can't do much about your problems with them. What do you suggest we ought to do about Maryborough and Hervey Bay?

What change would you make? If you bring them together how would you compensate for the numbers in the divisions concerned?

MR MANNING: Well, I didn't work out how we concentrate on the numbers
5 and how we're going to move them around. There is a lot of - going to be a lot
of bad feelings no matter what you do, because people get dug in in their own
little terraces and they're going to have their own points of view. I'm just
expressing the point of view that I've got.

10 CHAIR: All right. Well, you don't want those two to be split. Is there any
other objection you have to the Committee's proposal?

MR MANNING: Well, I think the Committee's proposal is going through the
motions. That's what I think. I mean, I've been involved in some of these
15 submissions and so on before and that's all that's been done. For example - can
I give you an example? I was involved in one with the re-distribution of
boundaries in the Maryborough City Council. Now, they went ahead with that
and they did what they did, they took the divisions out.

20 Now, in the Australian Electoral Commission or the Electoral Act of the
Commission that runs it, if you put a new seat in you put a new division in or a
new electorate in, you put a new seat in, don't you? And if you take one out
you take the seat out. That's what happens, the way I see it. But when it came
to the Council they cut out all the divisions and left all - - -

25 CHAIR: We're not the Council. If you could just - - -

MR MANNING: No, but I'm just trying to give you the example.

30 CHAIR: - - - stick to what we're doing. Yes.

MR MANNING: You see, now, there's too many sets of different rules. I
talked about rules. Now, the whole place is run on rules but they're not
compatible with one another. But apart from that I haven't come along here
35 with a set of figures to say who goes where, I just would like to see the
Maryborough and Hervey Bay situation remain, because they have been trying
to weld themselves together ever since I've lived in the area. And if you want
to break it up that's the easiest way to do it.

40 But a lot of this goes to - you know, you're not talking about the constitution
but the constitution of Australia allows us to be here. Now, I hear many of the
discussions here today and I hear people talking about government - using the
word "government." Now, who are the government? According to this book,
it's the Governor-General. But still I don't know whether you want to believe
45 that but that's what is written here.

CHAIR: All right. Have you got any other objection apart from the Hervey
Bay/Maryborough one?

MR MANNING: Well, I haven't got any objections other than that the constitution or the rules of Australia are being - this thing today, this constitution today is practically worthless and it's worthless because of the
5 party situation.

CHAIR: Well, we have to operate under it, I'm afraid.

MR MANNING: Yes, I understand that, but can I draw your attention to
10 Section 42?

CHAIR: Yes, you can.

MR MANNING: Have you got a copy of the constitution? What's in it?
15

CHAIR: Not in front of me. You can tell me what it says.

MR MANNING: Well, you're here operating on the constitution. Well, Section 42 of the constitution says it's about oath of allegiance.
20

CHAIR: I don't think we're concerned with that at the moment.

MR MANNING: No, I know, only that you've got 30 more people in the Parliament that can't take it.
25

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Manning.

MR MANNING: Good, thank you.

30 **THE WITNESS WITHDREW** [1.57pm]

CHAIR: Mr Paul Neville.
35

PAUL NEVILLE [1.57pm]

40 CHAIR: Yes, Mr Neville.

MR NEVILLE: Thank you, Mr Commissioner, and other Commissioners today. I don't profess to be speaking on behalf of the National Party, but I would like to give my views as an individual, and by way of background, I've
45 spent most of my working life in regional development, so I have some knowledge of what makes dynamics work in country areas. I may be in the minority, but I think this was a very good re-distribution. It's the first new division that's been created in central Queensland or north Queensland since

1984, and in that time, over those 23 years, in terms of election to election, we've had 10 new Federal electorates and they're all in Brisbane or out of Brisbane, or in the case of Blair, in the south, and Forde in the south-eastern corner.

5

So I think it was both fair and timely that another seat go to north Queensland or central Queensland, and taking central Queensland as that area from Bundaberg to Mackay, I think the new seat of Wright reflects the growth in the Wide Bay, Burnett and Capricorn areas and that was evident from the way that
10 Wide Bay, Hinkler, Capricornia, and to some extent Dawson, were over quota.

I'd like to say a few words about Wright because part of it is contained in my current electorate, or parts of it are contained in my current electorate. I think the Commission did a fairly - gave a very thoughtful consideration to this
15 because what it did was to create, to put together three clusters - the Gladstone cluster of Gladstone, Calliope, Miriam Vale, Banana, and a bit of the North Burnett; the southern coalfields cluster, coming across again through Banana and Duaringa and Emerald where it picked up all the southern highlands coalfields; and then what you could loosely call the Longreach cluster.

20

And when you put those together, it does meet a lot of the requirements of the Act. For example, it contains almost the entire Capricorn Highway and the western railway or the midland railway, whichever you like to call it, all but a little bit from Gracemere into Rockhampton. so from that point of view it
25 certainly meets the transport requirement. And if you look at Emerald, Blackwater, Callide and the northern part of the proposed Dawson, Surat basin coalfields, it would mean that nearly all those coalmines and their rail systems would be within the new electorate.

30 Now, where does that lead us? That leads us to Gladstone, and there is a huge empathy between Gladstone and all those coalfields. Gladstone is the fastest growing port in Australia and exports 12 per cent of Australia's exports by volume. So to link that to the central Queensland coalfields to my way of thinking was eminently justified. And I'm not going to buy into that western
35 argument. I know some people out there are unhappy and I respect their view, but it seems to me that this new seat is not unlike several versions of Capricornia over the years, the only difference being that it's anchored on Gladstone rather than on Rockhampton. And again, I think with the emergence of Gladstone now as a major industrial city and administrative centre, I think
40 that also makes a lot of sense.

Going back to transport, there are no RPT passenger transport services from Rockhampton to Longreach, nor are there from Gladstone. So that's 15-all. Whoever services that electorate is going to have to service it largely by road
45 and by charter aircraft, which is allowed for in our conditions. It seems to me that the Commission, to create this new seat, had to create one large rural seat and a tight seat on the coast, and I looked at just about every way you could do that with community interest and regional development principles and so on,

and I think someone else has mentioned this this morning, maybe former Senator Cherry and the ALP may have mentioned this - there's only one other place where you could do that, and that would be to put Gladstone and Rockhampton back together again in a seat that had Livingstone,
5 Rockhampton, most of Fitzroy, Calliope and Gladstone. One might see that perhaps as retrogressive.

Now, the only other place where you can do a tight seat like that on the coast is Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. So I think the Commission was put into a rather
10 unfortunate dilemma and then they had to make that judgment. If they had gone for the Rockhampton - if the Commissioners had gone for the Rockhampton option, it would have meant three big rural seats, one coming out of Bundaberg, one coming out of Hervey Bay, and one coming out of Maryborough, fanning out around behind Capricornia, one of them going all
15 the way up almost to Mackay. And I suppose that would have attracted a lot of attention, though there is a precedent for that. The old Dawson, when Sir Charles Davidson was Postmaster-General, went from Mackay to North Bundaberg, and there was a time when Capricornia came into North Bundaberg as well.

20 So although there would be some distant precedents for that, I think that of the two options, although it will cause some heartburn, I'm sure, in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, it was probably the one the Commissioners went for. And if I could just make another comment: when, in 1983-84, the Commission decided
25 to divide, for the first time Rockhampton and Gladstone, there was an outcry in central Queensland and said you couldn't possibly put Bundaberg together with Gladstone, they would never work together. Well, quite the contrary has been the case.

30 In fact, Hinkler has been a very successful seat, and I think the synergy between those towns has seen major upgrades to the Bruce Highway, a new road, a new back road from Bundaberg up the Agnes Water Road and across to the Bruce Highway, that takes a half an hour off the trip from Bundaberg to central Queensland. So it has also seen the emergence of Gladstone not as an
35 adjunct to Rockhampton but an administrative centre in its own right. And to have it as the anchor centre for a new seat I think was eminently good judgment on the part of the Commissioners.

So that's my comment on the new seat, and I just throw my tuppence worth in,
40 as everyone else has. If the Commissioners decide not to substantially alter Wright, my recommendation would be that you called it Thiess. No one was more responsible for that coal industry and the development of the Port of Gladstone than Sir Leslie Thiess, and if one person was pre-eminent in creating the circumstances which allowed that area to become a seat, it would have
45 been Sir Leslie Thiess. That's my tuppence worth.

I'd like to move on, if I could, now to some minor changes and these are premised on the basis, of course, that the Commission stays substantially to

their current plan. Sorry about that; I thought this was a reflector one but you all have a copy of it in front of you. I refer you to the yellow map. That is the - sorry, I apologise to the gallery, Mr Commissioner, but the sort of yellow is the proposed seat of Hinkler. My suggestion to you is that if you're going with
5 that, it makes more sense to put - and you're going to have Isis and Woocoo, it makes sense to put Biggenden together with it.

You can see the Isis Highway goes right through the middle of those, and then the Biggenden Maryborough road joins the Isis Highway at Biggenden, so
10 from a point of view of transport linkages, I think putting Biggenden into Hinkler makes a lot of sense. First, as I said, because of the - I said because of the road system and the other thing is just above the "g", the second "g" in Biggenden, there's a new dam called the Paradise Dam, and that will feed the cane and small crop areas of Isis, Burnett and Bundaberg and by including
15 Biggenden in Hinkler, all the southern side of the Burnett River in that agricultural belt will be in the one electorate.

So I think from the point of view, first, of the road system, and second, the water system which, of course, is critical to that area with its sugar cane and
20 the biggest small crop growing area of Australia, the more you can keep those sort of things together, I think, the better it would be. Numerically, it adds only 1119 on the 2005 benchmark, and only 1135 on the 11th of the 7th benchmark, so it doesn't offend - numerically, it doesn't offend. I'd then like to make a comment about - - -

25

CHAIR: That's in respect of Hinkler?

MR NEVILLE: Hinkler.

30 CHAIR: What about where it comes from?

MR NEVILLE: I was coming to that right now. Now, I would also propose that even if you did that, you could still do that without offending the balance of any of the seats involved, but having been the Member for Mount Morgan
35 for a number of years, six years, in fact - and I don't come at this with any particular political agenda. Mount Morgan people get furious when they're put out of a link with Rockhampton.

They've always - they had up till that time always been in Capricornia, and
40 they were moved into Hinkler, and that was for the elections of 1998 and 2001 - for the terms that followed 1998 and 2001, and I found a real resentment in that area in being associated with Bundaberg and Gladstone, and it was a very difficult area to service because there is no airport, private or council, in that shire. So the Member who lived in either Bundaberg or Gladstone couldn't use
45 his charter allowance to get into Mount Morgan, and it was very difficult to service from Bundaberg because you might go up there for a morning tea, or something like that, a three and a half hour journey each way, whereas it's only half an hour from Rockhampton and very much a part of the Rockhampton

community.

Now, if you move that back into Capricornia, which is about 2200 votes, and you moved Biggenden into Hinkler, Wondai, which is the northern-most of the
5 South Burnett shires and has a contiguous boundary with Gayndah and Mundubbera and Eidsvold, it has approximately 3300 votes which is almost an even balance, and you might say, okay, if you - "if we accepted your argument and put Wondai in there, what's the effect on Maranoa?" Well, Maranoa - you would find that Maranoa based on the 2nd of the 12th of '05 benchmark, is the
10 second highest coverage in Queensland, so to remove Wondai from it would put it closer to a real balance.

So those three changes would do very little to offend any one of the electorates involved, and would be almost politically neutral and I've outlined in my dot
15 points to you there that - and you can see them there, 3055 against 3200 on the .05 benchmark, and 3135 against 3199 on the 11th of the 7th benchmark. So those are my two principal submissions to you. They're only minor and I repeat they can be achieved in a numerical and politically neutral way. I'd like to just finish, if I may, on the options if - well, put before the Commission that
20 if it decided to do a minor re-draw, and I refer you now to the shaded pink area of appendix C, that area is a sugar cane and small crop growing area, and as the mayor of Burnett said this morning, that really should be part of the Bundaberg and Hinkler community.

25 I put three stars there: two of those stars on the south side of the river in Hinkler and one is on the north side. They represent the three sugar mills in the district. So I know what you've done; I know it was difficult for you. That area on the north side of the river in the Burnett shire was once the Gooburrum shire. Gooburrum and Woongarra shires north and south of the river were
30 merged some 10 years ago, and the Commission has virtually put the old Gooburrum shire in Wright. I would urge you that should you decide to do a major re-draw, that you would reconsider putting those back together and that the Kolan shire which also has sugar cane would also probably wish to be part of that electorate, and I understand they may have made representations to you
35 this morning as well. Having said - - -

CHAIR: What would the numbers be there?

MR NEVILLE: About 8 or 9 - - -
40

CHAIR: In your pink area.

MR NEVILLE: Eight or 9000, so - - -

45 CHAIR: So it's bigger.

MR NEVILLE: - - - it's certainly impossible, in a Hervey Bay Bundaberg scenario. I appreciate that.

CHAIR: Yes.

MR NEVILLE: If you were doing quite a comprehensive re-draw, then I
5 would ask you to try to keep the northern Wide Bay Burnett together and that's
Gayndah - that's Burnett, Isis, Biggenden, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Eidsvold,
Monto, Perry, Kolan and Miriam Vale. They are the traditional northern Wide
Bay Burnett seats, and I've outlined them there. They generally work together
and - as a group. They're all part of the Wide Bay rock which is really in two
10 sub-sets: there's the Maryborough Hervey Bay sub-set, and then there's this
northern sub-set of Bundaberg. So, Mr Commissioner and other
Commissioners, I thank you for hearing me today and am happy to answer any
questions.

15 CHAIR: I'd just like to understand the typed version you gave us. On page 3
- - -

MR NEVILLE: Yes.

20 CHAIR: - - - reading it at first sight, at least, you've got about the middle of
the page, just above your heading Re-draw Option:

*I do not anticipate a major re-draw, but ask the Commissioners to give
consideration to two factors if they are contemplating such.*

25 Then you've got your heading, Re-draw Option, see appendix C, in the event of
a minor re-draw; is that a typing error?

MR NEVILLE: No. Perhaps that's not perfectly clear. What I meant was if it
30 was a minor re-draw, just those pink areas which are the cane and small crop
growing areas.

CHAIR: Yes. But there's still eight or 9000 people?

35 MR NEVILLE: Yes. If you did a major re-draw, then I think it makes some
sense to put the whole northern Wide Bay Burnett together.

CHAIR: Yes, all right. I follow that.

40 MR NEVILLE: Yes. Sorry if I - - -

CHAIR: I understand you now.

MR NEVILLE: - - - didn't make that quite clear before.

45 CHAIR: Mr Trewin?

MR TREWIN: No questions.

CHAIR: Anyone else?

MR NEVILLE: I've done an extra copy of this for Mr Trewin as well.

5

CHAIR: Thank you very much.

MR NEVILLE: Thank you, Commissioner.

10

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[2.16pm]

CHAIR: Well, that now brings us to Mr Bruce Alexander. Is he here?

15

BRUCE ALEXANDER, called

[2.17pm]

20 MR ALEXANDER: Your Honour, and committee members, thank you. I'm
Bruce Alexander. I'm not a member of any party, and I have come into this as
I am concerned with the excesses of centralism. I've got a very young
daughter, and there's another thousand reasons about centralism, which I won't
go into now, which I will just mention by that. Now, what has been said here
25 earlier today, I think, reinforces what I said about the Dickson electorate,
which I live in, and what I suggested was: have none of Esk Shire and make
the Dickson electorate totally Pine Rivers. I think the population would go
relatively close to it, anyway.

30 And what I stated was to get Esk in with Kilcoy and join up to Fisher, and that
way you wouldn't be reorganising too many electorates there. The other item I
talked about a lot was Maranoa. I've lived in a lot of places in this State,
elsewhere in Australia and overseas, and this electorate is one of a few, like
O'Connor and a couple of others around the country, which must be extensive
35 because there are so many small population places there, but they still have
their centres, like Roma, Longreach and Dalby in Maranoa; and what I have
said - it's liable to cause a first-rate furore if you do it, but - was to split several
councils either in Maranoa or, say, Rockhampton, south of the river.

40 I think I would like to praise you a lot for what you have recommended for
making the electorate of Wright up because, as Mr Neville said, it's a fair while
since anything was done north of Noosa, and these country places, or
provincial places - this builds on my experience overseas as well - if they have
more than one Member - the most important thing I think I've put here is to
45 have Winton joined with half of Longreach, and that would mean there would
be two Members have to go to Longreach. Longreach has got better air
facilities than almost any place there in that part of Queensland.

And I think that would be very good for everybody concerned out there. And I might add now, from what I've heard today, too, and to clarify something else I put about the western half of Warwick, I think it's terrible that Maranoa electorate extends from Stanthorpe and Glengallan all the way up to the north-
5 western mining and pastoral country. And, to me, it would be far better to put Groom right down to the border, and if you've got population problems there, take half of Warwick out. It wouldn't hurt Warwick either, to have two Members in it.

10 But the so-called knock-on effect might apply, from what I've heard today, on any of the places from Maryborough north, because the great discontent about what's happening with Maryborough and Hervey Bay - if you had half of Maryborough linked with places further north, then you could rearrange Maranoa to be linked with some of the places in the South Burnett. I haven't
15 done any counting. For that, I apologise. But I didn't want to spend time on figures when you people have more resources than I have in that, in a lot of ways.

But it would be a very big thing. Hobart is the only other place I can think of
20 in Australia which has not any comparison in population with the other State capitals, and Franklin takes in, I think, still a little bit of Denison, with Denison around the Hobart area; and I reckon there would be a terrific boom for all these places from Maryborough north, if, say, part of Rockhampton, or even part or all of Emerald - Emerald is now in the Maranoa electorate, and I think a
25 more compact, better coordinated electorate would be there, if you could get right away from the south-eastern border as much as you can, and fill your population up like that. Thank you.

CHAIR: Anything, Mr Trewin?

30

MR TREWIN: No questions, no.

CHAIR: Anyone else?

35 MR CAMPBELL: No. I would make an observation. Mr Alexander seems to be arguing quite strongly against a number of other people who say they want one Member, whereas you can see the strength of two voices at various times. But that's an observation.

40 MR ALEXANDER: Yes.

CHAIR: Very well. Thank you, Mr Alexander.

MR ALEXANDER: Thank you.

45

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[2.22pm]

CHAIR: I think that completes our list of speakers. I thank you all for your attendance, and we will consider everything that has been said, as well as what has been written; and the decision will come out in due course. Thank you.

5

ADJOURNED INDEFINITELY

[2.23pm]

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