

AUGMENTED ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE

BEFORE CHAIRMAN MR J. BURCHETT

MEMBERS:

MR A. BECKER, AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

MR D. TREWIN, AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN

DR C. DRURY, AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL OFFICER FOR SA

MR P. KENTISH, SURVEYOR GENERAL FOR SA

MR K. MACPHERSON, AUDITOR-GENERAL FOR SA

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2003 AT 10.10 A.M.

APPEARING:

MR J. RAU, WITH HIM MR I HUNTER FOR THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

MR R. ELLIS FOR SOUTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

MR J. YATES FOR LIMESTONE COAST TOURISM

MR P. BLACK FOR AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS (SA) DIVISION

MR R. LAWSON, WITH HIM MR G JAESCHKE FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA (SA) DIVISION

CHAIRMAN: This is a public inquiry by the Augmented Electoral Commission for South Australia under s.72 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act of 1918.

We are inquiring into objections received against the redistribution of Federal electoral boundaries in South Australia as proposed by the Redistribution Committee for South Australia.

First let me introduce the members of the Augmented Electoral Commission for South Australia. I will ask each member to indicate for your assistance as I name him.

I am Jim Burchett, the Chairman of the inquiry. Mr Andy Becker is the Australian Electoral Commissioner. Mr Denis Trewin is the non-judicial Commissioner who is the Australian Statistician. Dr Christopher Drury is the Australian Electoral Officer for South Australia. Mr Peter Kentish is the Surveyor General for South Australia and Mr Ken MacPherson is the Auditor General for South Australia.

The Redistribution Committee for South Australia was required to produce a proposed redistribution based only on criteria in the Act and necessitated by population changes. It was obligatory to reduce the number of electorates by one.

Of course, in doing so the committee could not and did not refer to political outcomes. They are not included in the statutory criteria. They can form no part of our consideration of the redistribution, although some submissions refer to them.

We have been informed that some persons wish to address us and they will have an opportunity to do so in a few moments. There is no particular order in which addresses have to be received and if anybody has some urgent need to get away quickly we would be entirely happy to try and cater for that.

Subject to that, there is no formal requirement as to who starts and I should add the fact that we are in this courtroom is really fortuitous and is not intended to result in any particular formality.

Please feel free to address us as seems appropriate, first stating your name for the sake of the recording of proceedings.

MR RAU: I am appearing for the Australian Labor Party with Mr Hunter. I am supposed to be back at parliament in a committee meeting so it would be advantageous if I could address you shortly.

CHAIRMAN: I see no reason why we shouldn't hear you first. Would you like to come forward to the lectern?

MR RAU: If the Commission pleases, my name is Rau and I appear for the Australian Labor Party.

The Australian Labor Party has already provided a number of written submissions and am I correct in understanding that all members of the Commission have had an opportunity to see those?

CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR RAU: For that reason I won't labour simply a repetition of everything that is in those and I would just like to highlight some matters that might be perhaps of special significance.

In so doing I note the remarks, Mr Chairman, you made about the statutory requirements that are operating in the activities of this Commission and of course, for those of us in South Australia who have to deal with the fairness test in State arrangements, it is a somewhat different situation than we are used to.

However that said, just very briefly first of all, in relation to the scheme of the Act, it appears that the primary consideration is the quota consideration and then we start having a cascading level of considerations below the quota size consideration.

Of course s.63 sub-s.3(b) is the primary matter and obviously that is the most important matter that must and has, indeed, been taken into account in your determinations.

Then we have to consider the position of s.63.3(b) and in relation to that it is probably relevant to note that 63.3(b)(v) is clearly the least relevant of the remaining criteria.

That, of course, is the one that requires us to have regard to the State boundaries and so forth.

That leaves us with a consideration of what, in a proper application of the other criteria, can be said by way of objection to the findings that have already been made by the Commission.

As I said, we already have submitted to you a written summary of our views in relation to those matters but if I can just deal with a few of the seats briefly.

First of all, the seat of Hindmarsh. In our submission this one is the one that is most transparently anomalous.

The first and obvious point to make about the seat is, if you simply look at the map that has now been produced into the new division of Hindmarsh, you see it is a rather odd shaped creature.

I realise an odd shape is not a prohibition or prohibited outcome under the Act however, when looking at an outcome which is clearly as odd as that one would expect a fairly strong reason for that particular outcome to have been selected as opposed to another equally possible alternative outcome.

Having regard to the material provided in the draft report or the proposed Boundaries Report, which is the basis of these objections, I look in particular at para.51 of that report.

Para.51 points out that suggestion 16, which was the suggestion of the Liberal Party and to a lesser extent 17, which I think was a One Nation submission which had some passing reference to the point, both argued that Hindmarsh had a historic coastal focus and that this argument was accepted by the committee and one can only deduce it was the acceptance of the argument that led to the rather peculiar looking animal we now have in the draft recommendations for the Federal division of Hindmarsh.

I would ask the Commission, in looking at this, to perhaps take a step back as one would if one were looking at the City of Adelaide from a greater altitude and you see Adelaide is a strip, a coastal strip.

And in terms of all of the transport hubs and in terms of all of the suburban layouts of the City of Adelaide, in terms of all of the infrastructure, we largely have a hub and spoke arrangement; the hub being the City of Adelaide itself, where we are now, and the spokes being the major arterial roads which carry commerce and passengers throughout the city.

Having regard to those major considerations of transport and communications and indeed, the pattern of development, if you want to take a look into the historical past, historically the City of Adelaide has developed in a series of rings moving out from the city centre, following basically these transport corridors, out into the more remote aspects of the city.

If you look at the City of Adelaide as it moves west, which is where we are talking about in Hindmarsh, the city has a number of major roads which are included in the division of Hindmarsh and were included in the old division of Hindmarsh.

For example, Anzac Highway, it only came into Hindmarsh as a major division with the abolition of Hawker, whereas there is no major communications hub running from the city out towards the coast through the electorate.

We have the tram line which again goes down to Glenelg.

We have a train line running from the city to Grange which runs through Woodville, and various other of the inner western and north-western suburbs.

We then have Grange Road which historically, at least in recent times, has been the boundary since 1993, and has been the boundary on the northern side of Hindmarsh but again, a major arterial road moving out from the centre of the city.

If we then move further to the north of that point we see Port Road forming another arterial road moving out from the city.

Port Road, in a sense, frames in the same way as Anzac Highway does, a fan out from the city along major communication routes.

If you look at the draft division you will see that the only linkage that exists between the element that has been included, I think it has been referred to as a finger or a protrusion in some of our submissions, the only communications link there is the West Lakes area.

That is one road which is a coastal road, it is not a road which is used for transport in and out of the city sense, it is a coastal road.

Then you have the lake itself which is simply a feature, it doesn't represent anything greater than that.

You then have excluded everything to the east of that right up to the city.

Now, in our submission, if we are looking at communications networks, infrastructure, communities of interest, there is a great deal more in common between the individuals for example at Findon, on the southern side of Grange Road and the individuals across the road on the northern side of Grange Road, than there is between any of the individuals in Grange and the individuals right up into, basically, at the beginning of Port Adelaide.

You are looking at a completely different community.

It is a different council, but also the pattern of settlement is different, the socioeconomic situations are different.

You are looking at a completely separate environment.

Most of those individuals have their major transport routes through Port Road as opposed to Grange Road or some of the other roads that are there

So, if you start looking at demographics, if you start looking at transport linkages, at infrastructure, if you look at common features of communities, a more logical solution to the problem that the Commissioners tried to address would be to rotate that coastal finger through 90 degrees, approximately, and take in a section, we would suggest usefully, perhaps using Port Road as the northern extremity and bringing a cut through so that you have Hindmarsh being a more rectangular regular electorate, recognising the community of interest that exists.

I think, in our submission, we have made suggestions about the particular roads that might be taken into account for that.

I don't know that I need to go through that in any further detail.

You can see, looking at the map, that Trimmer Parade for example, cuts a convenient block through territory which is very much consistent with the balance of Hindmarsh.

In effect, our submission would be; by all means remove a number from the electorate of Port Adelaide in order to achieve the required numbers in Hindmarsh, but in making the selection you have, you have picked on a secondary or tertiary consideration, namely a peripheral coastal road, Military Road, of no significance at all, not like Main South Road for example, and focused on the community of interest that exists on both sides of Grange Road and extend that, if needs, back to Port Road.

The other alternative that would be available perhaps would be to consider a movement east to return Hindmarsh to its historic boundary at the parklands.

But, I think the submission we would make is that by far the most reasonable solution, the difficulty the quota requirement does present the Commission with is to adopt that crossing of Grange Road, along the length of the Grange Road, not creating a coastal slip.

I would say that in fairness the only two seats in South Australia that can ever have been described reasonably as coastal seats would be Port Adelaide which has always had the Fleurieu Peninsula, Port Adelaide is only a 1949 creation, in its present form, and Kingston of course, which has the southern coastal area.

But those two seats being coastal are also consistent with the hub and spoke description I have given already about the main transport linkages.

Unless there is anything further on that, I will move on.

Wakefield; really, I don't know there's a great deal I can add to our submissions.

They really suggest that there should be some modest redrafting of the precise boundary between the new Wakefield and the electorate of Port Adelaide and I don't think I can take that much further, other than to refer you again to the details in the submissions and the basis for those.

The issue of the name of Wakefield has been raised by some of the objectors, and although I don't think the Labor Party has a particularly emphatic view about it one way or the other, it is a difficult balance, because you have the name of the federation seat and you have a large number of individuals - in fact, a majority as I understand it - who were previously in a seat named Bonython, and presumably there will be some element of confusion to be expected at the next election.

But whether that's a sufficient reason for you to revisit the determination that Wakefield is the appropriate name, I'm not sure.

The next one was the electorate of Adelaide.

In relation to the electorate of Adelaide, again, we obviously accept that you had to deal with the question of numbers and what you have done is obviously include numbers to create the quota requirement.

However, there are, we say, good reasons, historic reasons and community of interest reasons again, why the particular selection that's been made in the eastern part of the City of Adelaide, in the area around Toorak Gardens and so forth, is not the best solution.

The first matter I observe is that the City of Burnside clearly would prefer that not to be the solution.

Whether that weighs heavily on the Commission, I don't know, but nonetheless, the extent of that submission would obviously go along with their comments, but you would see that the area that has been included to the east of the city is not an area that is particularly contiguous with any existing area in the Federal division of Adelaide, nor has it any particular historic connection with the Federal division of Adelaide, and indeed it is, we would suggest, more obviously contiguous with the balance of the Federal division of Sturt from which it was drawn.

However, there is in the north-eastern corner immediately adjacent to your current boundaries what amounts to a triangle of land which has previously been historically part of the division of Adelaide.

Again, I think we make mention of the specific road area in our outline.

It's a triangle formed by Main North East and Grand Junction Roads; Grand Junction Road forming the continuation of the straight line which commences in the division of Port Adelaide.

I don't know if it's any assistance, but I'm talking of this area, the very top corner up here of the map (INDICATES), you will see that there's a line running along.

Really, the proposition is that there's a greater community of interest between the identified triangle, if I can describe it that way, and the balance of the Federal division of Adelaide than there is between the excised part of the division of Sturt, which appears - and again, if I might just hold the map up, this part here (INDICATES).

The last brief point I'd like to make in relation to, I suppose it's both in relation to Wakefield and in relation to Kingston, is that having regard to the quota positions of those seats, first of all, the fact that Kingston is presently the closest seat to be on quota, and secondly, Mayo is relatively far from quota - I think it's minus 2.17 - and Boothby is also under quota.

If there are to be any adjustments, transferring parts of the Barossa District Council out of Mayo and making up the quota from Kingston or Boothby, seats which are respectively slightly and significantly under quota, would be likely to have further consequential implications disruptive to communities of interest, and if there is a sufficient argument for keeping much of the Barossa District Council in one electorate, then a better alternative would be to take those parts of the Barossa District Council which are proposed to be in Barker, which is plus 3, and place them in Mayo.

The point there being that Mayo is significantly under quota and any adjustment should be able to be accommodated without having any effect on Kingston or indeed Boothby.

The only other matter, and I suppose I'm returning to where I started, as if I haven't laboured the point enough, but I would certainly invite the Commission to have regard to any of the statistical material available for the CCDs which are opposed, on opposite sides of Grange Road, and compare that material with the material that you will find for the coastal finger, and I am confident that if you have regard to that material, you look at bus routes, you look at any of the indicia of a community of

interest, you will find that you have far more ticks in the boxes with a division which sees a line which moves north of Grange Road, roughly contiguous with Grange Road, than the present alternative.

Unless there is anything further I can help you with, those are my submissions.

CHAIRMAN: If there is no one else with a particularly urgent need, if people are not agreed, I will call you in the order of your submissions; that is one arbitrary solution.

So I will call Mr Ron Ellis. Yes, Mr Ellis?

MR ELLIS: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I am Ron Ellis and I am Executive Officer of the South-east Local Government Association.

I represent the interests of the seven constituent councils that make up the South-east Local Government Association and we, of course, are embodied in the seat of Barker.

Our written submission and what I have to say to you this morning refers entirely to the redistribution of the seat of Barker, and you will pardon me for being parochial on this matter, and I'm afraid I do not understand all of the implications of the changes that we might be suggesting, but being representative of that area and of the constituency of about 60 or 61,000 people, I feel that that's where my attention must lie.

First of all, I would like to thank the Commission for holding this inquiry and for giving SELGA the opportunity of producing a verbal submission to you.

I am very encouraged by that.

I am also encouraged by the fact that of the people that know about the proposed redistribution in our area and the people that I have spoken to about it, none of them favour the proposed boundaries for Barker as you have before you, and I am here to implore you to re-examine that and to perhaps take on board some of the arguments that we put to you today.

The reasons that you have come up with such a radical change to the boundaries in the seat of Barker to us in the country are very difficult to fathom, I must say.

We understand that the quota for the seat of Barker could have been achieved with a far less radical approach to the changes in boundaries, and I will come to that a little bit later.

The first point I would like to make about the seat of Barker, the way it is and the way it is proposed, is that presently the communities have a common interest within the South-east with those communities of the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island.

Those common interests basically revolve around the key industries in those districts.

The South-east, as you know, is a prime high rainfall agricultural, viticultural and forestry industry.

The Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island equally have agriculture and industry based on high rainfall undertakings in agricultural and forestry.

The proposed changes in boundaries would clearly remove from the electorate a piece which has common interest with the South-east, and that is the core of our objection.

Furthermore, the proposal to add the Riverland and a piece of the Barossa into the seat of Barker introduces communities which we believe are - and I have not consulted the good people of the Riverland or the Barossa on this, but we believe that their interests are somewhat different, and certainly do not make the same match in common interest as we presently have with Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island.

I can tell you, just anecdotally, that the people that migrate to the South-east do, in fact, come from the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region very often and are interested in the same kinds of pursuits in our region as they have in their former home in the Fleurieu.

For tourism - and you will later get a verbal presentation from Mr James Yates, who is with us today - for tourism that common interest is equally as important, in our view.

Our tourism industry is based upon people who are wanting to experience the eco-tourism attractions that we have in the South-east and coastal environments, and that is congruent with the area along the southern coast of the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island and, in fact, there is an active alliance between the tourism industry in the South-east and the tourism industry of the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island in the form of the Great Southern Touring Route, which is part of the connection between Adelaide and Melbourne, and we feel that that initiative is a very important marketing initiative on the part of the tourism industry and we would like to see it retained within the one electorate.

You have to remember that if we were to deal with the Barossa and the Riverland in our electorate, then, quite clearly, the South-east tourism industry would find itself more in competition with those areas because they are in a different direction.

There is no co-activity between them, and they cater to a similar market; that is, to the food/wine experience, and to eco-tourism.

So we have a feeling that, from a tourism point of view, this would be a very unwelcome move.

I have not been able to study the full logic of the Commission's views of the electoral redivision, but I am told - and you people may be able to confirm it for me - that the new seat of Barker would, in fact, be the most populous seat in the whole Commonwealth.

I am also informed that the new seat of Barker would be, if not the ninth, then certainly the tenth largest electorate by area.

Now, if it is the most populous seat, then presumably the proposal would be to have a seat which is over quota.

From the constituents' point of view in our region, we feel that large seats - although this, I understand, is not part of your obligation to consider, but we feel that in large seats, in order to maintain some sort of capacity of the representative member to deal with his electorate fairly and across his whole region, then large electorates should bias towards under quota rather than over quota.

I note that that is not necessarily part of your obligation to consider, but I just put it to you that, from a fairness point of view, that argument is a reasonable one to put.

I mentioned to you before that we felt that the quota in the seat of Barker could be achieved by a more minimalist approach to the boundary redistribution and, in fact, I am informed that if you were to include the remainder of the District Council of Alexandrina, which is presently dissected by the boundary of the seat of Barker with the seat of Mayo, if that piece of Alexandrina Council were included in the seat of Barker, that would be enough to bring the population up to an acceptable quota.

That part that I'm talking about includes the township of Strathalbyn and the immediate area around it included in the Council of Alexandrina.

Now, I have not consulted with the good people of Strathalbyn either on that particular proposal, but I am sure that they would find it acceptable.

I would like to just finish by suggesting to you people that in the redistribution that you are proposing, that the area increase in the seat of Barker is to be extended by some 20%, that is from about 52,000 square kilometres to 64,000, and that we are asking one member to cover that area as in the past with no further resources.

Constituents of the South-east councils would argue that if we are to impose more on our sitting members to represent their constituents, then let's do it in a way that enables that person to get around as easily as possible.

I can assure you that the larger area and the more difficult position the representative is put in in getting around the electorate under the new boundary would disadvantage constituents in his electorate.

It is more convenient for him, incredibly perhaps, but it is more convenient for him to deal with people in the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island and the South-east, rather than to include the Riverland and the Barossa, which are not historically, socially or industrially, related to the people of the South-east.

I would put to you that we ought to be thinking about that kind of issue in the decisions that you are making.

Mr Chairman, I think that's about all I have to say to you.

Once again, thank you very much for your invitation to attend and I am hoping that you will be able to do something that satisfies the people of the South-east on this matter.

MR TREWIN: Can you explain why you think it is easier to get to the Kangaroo Island Fleurieu area than the Riverland area?

MR ELLIS: I understand that the electoral office in the seat of Barker, there are in fact two - one at Mount Gambier and one at Murray Bridge.

DR DURY: Electoral office?

MR ELLIS: The electorate office, I beg your pardon.

Was that the misunderstanding or is the question still valid?

MR TREWIN: From Murray Bridge it is easier to get to -

MR ELLIS: Obviously from Murray Bridge that's simple, and there are air connections to Kangaroo Island which any member would have to take perhaps, but there are not similar easy and quick routes from Murray Bridge to Renmark and the Barossa, they are all driving assignments.

CHAIRMAN: Logically, and also as it happens in the order in which we proceed for submissions, Mr James Yates comes next. I will call on him now.

MR YATES: Thank you, Mr Chairman and members of the Commission.

I'm James Yates and I represent Limestone Coast Tourism.

I'm actually based in the Coonawarra myself.

Limestone Coast Tourism, which was formally known as Tourism South-east, covers an area including right up above the South-east Local Government Association.

It goes out virtually to Lameroo, on the Lameroo/Pinnaroo Road, to Murray Bridge and part way through Tailem Bend, takes in the Coorong, the Murray Lakes and all that area.

Coorong District Council has been a recent addition in recent years.

With respect to the Commission, I would like to comment on the process that I have a little criticism of.

I believe that the reaction that has been in our region since it was known that an objection was being made to the boundaries has been quite substantial in the media, and I believe the process was a little unfair, in being only 28 days for objections to the process, written objection.

The reason I say that is because the notices came out in The Advertiser on a Saturday, and therefore no-one read those or anything until the Monday, or could action them until the Monday, and there were a couple of organisations I know in the region, who were larger picture organisations like ourselves and the South-east Local Government Association, have placed objections, but there were other organisations, for example some of the bodies like the South-east Area Consultative Committee, whom I'm pre-empting what they would say, had no opportunity unless they called a special meeting within the month to consider the matter.

A lot of large organisations either had their meetings or meet on a bi-monthly basis, such as the Local Government Association, and I would have liked to have seen the process - while you want to get the process over, I understand - but it would have been great to have more like a six week period or something, so those organisations that we believe, in a large electorate like ours, are affected more could have had time to consider the matter.

I know they can comment on the objections, but I feel that perhaps in the future that could be looked at.

Limestone Coast Tourism has roughly 270 financial members, which are businesses in the region, right across the region, and it's a very active organisation with an \$800,000 budget, plus other activities.

We have objected to this, as you see, along similar lines to the South-east Local Government Association.

Right at this moment - in fact in the next week or so, on the 19th - the Great Southern Touring Route concept is being officially launched in Australia, and that concept is to bring together the communities of Kangaroo Island, Fleurieu Peninsula and the Murray Lakes, and what we now call the Limestone Coast, with the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, as an iconic route in Australia.

It is a major promotion.

We find it very difficult to reconcile the fact that the seat of Barker is going to drop off a large part of those communities of interest and include an area that, while we all have sympathies in tourism, have no connection with our region.

Probably the most likely connection is parts of the Barossa Valley where tourists come through, international tourists in the main, on a travelling route, but in terms of local interest and local funding and locals seeking Federal assistance in matters, etc, we see our linkages to the Riverland and the Barossa Valley as very tenuous.

If you look at our transport routes, the way our agriculture, our tourism industry I have already mentioned, all those things have a very common style and linkage right through the area we're talking about.

And, likewise, as we observed in our submission alongside SELGA, we see the seat of Barker, with no consideration as to how you are going to handle the matter

otherwise, could remain almost the same by the inclusion of the Strathalbyn area and the communities of interests.

Now, I noticed earlier one of the members there had questions about the difficulty with linkages to the Riverland for the member.

It's quite so.

There is a sort of a vacuum in the middle there where there's no commercial air, and while we know that the members get charter allowances, I actually questioned the sitting member and it's actually quite difficult to get charter at the drop of a hat, or to go to the Riverland and places like that.

And so with Mount Gambier being 25,000 people, 24 or 5,000 people in the city itself, in Mount Gambier, obviously for a member, whoever represents the seat, has a considerable focus in the lower part of the region a lot of the time, and in fact there's an office there.

I see that while my organisation, Limestone Coast Tourism, severely questions the ability of the member to service our electorate the way it has been in the past, there is no doubt about it, that it's going to be far more difficult.

We were rather fascinated by the sort of foray into the Barossa Valley which we found, from a parochial point of view, in bartering for federal funds, we found it was - and whether you people are commissioned to take these things into account, I'm not quite sure - but we really were concerned about having to go into bat in your electorate with sort of two very strong areas at each end of the electorate, the Barossa Valley and Mount Gambier, and we feel that there would be a conflict there rather than communities of interest.

In fact, there is testing when you observe the boundary.

It's been observed to me, and it's not really my affair in the sense of our organisation's affair because we hope it's addressed, but one of the icons of the Barossa Valley/Seppeltsfield is not going to be in what is the rest of the Barossa Valley in the proposed new Barker electorate and, based on an early submission, I certainly support the concept of putting the Barossa area into Mayo.

I think that would be a better solution.

The Adelaide Hills represent a major political barrier for our region.

It's a physical barrier and it also seems to be a political barrier.

We make jokes about it, but it is a fact that a politician may spend two days in Goolwa and half an hour in Mount Gambier because of the constraints of time and distance.

We see that because we of large seats in South Australia, and we know about the largest one, we see no reason to pursue that if it can be avoided by making Barker a smaller seat.

We concur with the concept that was put, as I said, earlier, that we see no need to have one of the largest, if not the largest, the second largest population seat in Australia in the new proposal.

We're very concerned about it. I know it's only hearsay, but since this issue has been raised in the region - as I said, it has received quite high profile, more than any other boundary distribution has - there have been numerous comments to me and not one has been positive; in fact some of the statements aren't repeatable as to the view of the proposed concept of the area of Barker.

Our submission is purely apolitical.

I myself am not a member of a political party and haven't been, and we have approached the South East Local Government Association; irrespective of who holds the seat, we're very concerned about the service we get and the division of our communities of interest.

A lot of the other things, issues, I think it would be fair to say have already been covered by the South East Local Government Association in it, but I just exhort the commission to reconsider the boundaries.

It's not an enviable task, I know, but we really would like to see a much better resolution for our member, irrespective of who it is, than that that has been proposed.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Sticking to the order, Mr Paul Black.

MR BLACK: I thank the commission for this opportunity to address the commission.

My name is Paul Black, I'm a member and speaking for the Australian Democrats SA Division in relation to the proposed redistribution.

Like the Labor Party, we have made a number of written submissions and I don't propose to reiterate those in any detail.

There is one criticism of our objection by the ALP which I do wish to address, and I will address that when I come to the area of Barker.

I wish to address some of the matters raised by others this morning as well.

As a preface, like others, including I think Mr Bevis, who spoke in Queensland recently, I found some difficulty in appreciating precisely the reasons for certain decisions made by the original committee.

However, unlike the South East Local Government Association and the Limestone Coast Tourism Commission, thought that the reasoning in relation to the South East, and in particular the decision in relation to the Fleurieu, was apparent from what was written by the original committee.

I found the greatest difficulty in Hindmarsh.

My difficulty in Hindmarsh was not precisely the same as that experienced by the ALP, although as you will see from our comments on the objections we agree with the position taken by the ALP in relation to Hindmarsh.

Our more fundamental concern was that it didn't appear from the reasons of the commission that the proposal made by a number of those who made initial submissions, and which we concurred with in our comments on the initial submissions effectively realigning the metropolitan seats so that the seat of Boothby was more south-eastern suburban, the seat of Hindmarsh, or as I submit it, renamed Hawker, was more south-western suburban, and effectively creating four seats in four corners and a central Adelaide seat, why that was not apparently considered and why the committee seemed more concerned to maintain boundaries, particularly in the case of Hindmarsh, because there was a suggestion that the committee wanted to do as little surgery to Hindmarsh as possible.

Now whether that decision flowed from the decision which we think was entirely supported and well explained that the boundary between Kingston and Boothby shouldn't change, I don't know, but again, that's not explained.

Historically, Boothby has been a south-eastern suburban electorate.

Admittedly, it has long gone into the hills as well, and it lost a lot of the Adelaide Hills area when South Australia gained a 12th and 13th seat in 1984.

Before that, it was certainly south-eastern suburban and also into the hills; Stirling, Crafers, Bridgewater and further east and north.

Now it was our submission in the comments, and it was the submission of some others earlier on, including the Labor Party, that an electorate based on south-eastern suburbs, and particularly councils such as Burnside, Unley and Mitcham - in the case of our submission, the Adelaide plains section of Mitcham - would make for an historically supportable Boothby with identifiable community of interest, and would then allow for other changes to be made which would be more supportable on community of interest grounds.

Mr Rau's submissions referred to the 'hub and spokes' layout of Adelaide.

In my submission, if one accepts that premise, the major spokes are the diagonal roads: Anzac Highway, North East Road, Port Road and Glen Osmond Road.

If the commission could make those corners the basis for the electorates, then there would be substantial communities of interest identifiable areas in and around Adelaide in the metropolitan area which would form more sensible electoral

boundaries and, as it happened, one original submission, and I think it was from Mr Connelly, identified not only a way of carving up the Adelaide metropolitan area broadly in accordance with that method, but he also did so in a way such that the boundaries could be almost entirely created from council boundaries.

You will recall that many of the original submissions were from councils, and many of the original objections were from councils seeking to be kept within the one area.

There was particular focus in Sturt because of the fact that the previous two redistributions had involved the carving up of the City of Campbelltown, but there were others who made such submissions and, of course, there have been some in response to the draft redistribution, particularly from the Barossa and Burnside.

So while the ALP's proposal in relation to Adelaide might satisfy the Burnside objection, we suggest that there is a more radical alternative which would satisfy Burnside, in fact satisfy far more of the councils in the metropolitan area, and would have historical precedent and would still very much comply with concept of communities of interest.

Kingston would be left pretty much as it is proposed on that basis, but there would be major changes required to the proposed Boothby, Hindmarsh, Port Adelaide, Sturt, Makin and Adelaide itself.

Other than generally to agree with what Mr Rau said about Hindmarsh, I don't want to particularly add anything more.

In relation to Adelaide, perhaps for reasons associated with the anticipated votes of electors, not only does the ALP seek to remove the area which is proposed to be added in the Toorak Gardens and Norwood area, but one proposes to add it in the north-eastern suburbs, and it then creates an electorate which is like a square on the bottom with a triangle on the top of it; each would then suffer from the defect of being somewhat odd-shaped that Hindmarsh does.

I'm not sure that the ALP particularly has outstanding community of interest reasons.

Nevertheless, we would have thought that their proposal was better than what is proposed by the commission.

On the other hand, and this would certainly not be in the ALP's interests, one could suggest that another area which might be added, just looking at the map, is the area bounded by, I think it's probably Payneham Road and Stephen Terrace, although that would then divide the city of Walkerville, and I think that also wouldn't produce enough numbers.

Effectively, if you take the red line which was the boundary out a little bit further, there is another road heading roughly north-north-west which actually crosses the River Torrens there and then joins another one of the roads which run north-east.

That, I believe, is Stephen Terrace, and that would probably make a more sensible looking geographical electorate, but I think it would also divide the council of Walkerville.

In our submission, what the committee has done in relation to the removal of the Fleurieu Peninsula from Barker and the inclusion of the Riverland area in Barker is the correct thing, it's what the ALP submitted originally, and it was that the objections overlook a number of important matters.

Firstly, there is plenty of agriculture and viticulture in the Riverland.

Secondly, the entire Riverland in one electorate has much to commend it from an environmental point of view and, from the point of view of having a wine member represent the downstream riparian interests in the Murray River in Parliament and Canberra, it seems very sensible.

There is historical precedent for it because that is roughly the shape of the electorate from 1984 to 1991.

There is tourism in the Riverland, although certainly not as extensive as in the Fleurieu and probably not as extensive as in the South East.

There were questions raised about transport between the various parts of the proposed electorate and the old electorate.

One of the difficulties which we specifically addressed in our comments on the original submissions was that most of the submissions which were put before the original commission, and which did not involve the reuniting of the Riverland in one area, came from those who effectively wanted the Riverland to be the basis for an ongoing electorate of Wakefield.

Almost all of those submissions required, for numbers reasons, Murray Bridge to be excised from Barker and put into that new electorate or the newly redefined electorate of Wakefield and, as I saw the numbers, if you wanted to keep what is known in South Australia as 'the Riverland' - there is Renmark, Waikerie, Berri Barmera etc. - in one electorate and keep that with areas such as the Barossa, Gawler and Light, then you effectively had to include Murray Bridge in that electorate.

Now once that is appreciated, that demolishes all of the objections on transport grounds about the new proposal in relation to the Riverland because Murray Bridge is the link, the transport link, between the South East and the Fleurieu.

If, to maintain the Fleurieu and the South East in one electorate, what you have to do is to remove Murray Bridge, then you are completely removing any transport justification for the link that you had in the first place.

Secondly, there are transport corridors up the River Murray.

They are secondary; certainly most of the roads lead out of Adelaide just as they do in the metropolitan area in a hub and spoke manner that roads to the country, primary

roads, lead out of Adelaide, but that is not surprising, but there are roads between Murray Bridge and the Riverland towards the New South Wales and Victorian borders. One can drive from Murray Bridge through Mannum, Swan Reach, up to Morgan, Cadell and so on, so I would have thought that there would be no significant difficulty in a member based in Murray Bridge servicing all of those areas.

I would accept, of course, that a member based in Mount Gambier would find it extremely difficult to do that, but then a member based in Mount Gambier would, I would also have submitted, find it difficult to service the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island.

As for Kangaroo Island, well to get there, either you have got to get there from the Fleurieu or from the city of Adelaide - you're not going to get there from Murray Bridge - so the member, if they are going to Kangaroo Island, is going to have to go to Cape Jervis and across the passage or, alternatively, come down to the town and fly over anyway.

In the case of a member based in Mayo, whether that is based in Stirling or Victor Harbour or Strathalbyn even, there are those lines of communication which include going down to Cape Jervis and across the passage.

Alternatively, the member for Mayo's Parliamentary office is, in any event, going to be closer to the Adelaide Airport and there is the capacity to flow over to Kangaroo Island in any event.

MR BECKER: Is there a connection between the Mount and Kingscote, an air connection?

MR BLACK: That, I don't know.

MR BECKER: Is there an air connection between?

MR ELLIS: Regular flights?

MR BECKER: Regular flights.

MR ELLIS: Not via Adelaide.

MR BECKER: Nothing regular?

MR ELLIS: No.

MR BECKER: They would have to come to Adelaide in any event.

MR BLACK: On the current seat the member, if based in Murray Bridge, which would be the sensible position to be based if you're servicing the Fleurieu, could at least service constituents in the South East and then fly to Kingscote, but you're still not going to go there directly from your base, and nor are electors really easily going to be able to.

It's not just the servicing of the electorate by the elected member which is important, it's also the capacity of the elector to access the services of the Parliamentarian's office as well, which should be considered.

That then brings me to the other end of the electorate.

Commissioner Becker and Commissioner Kentish will both recall from other hats dealing with South Australian electorate redistributions under the State system, that we have historically been provided with population projections.

As I see it there are three major statistical divisions, namely Adelaide metropolitan, outer Adelaide and the rural statistical division.

As we put in our initial submission, the numbers in the rural statistical division could neatly make up two electorates, and what has happened is that there has been an encroachment by Barker into the outer Adelaide statistical division in the Barossa Valley area and Wakefield, for its part, goes into the rural statistical division in the Clare Valley and the adjoining council of Goyder, the Goyder District Council.

Our submission initially, and we still maintain it, is that while it adds area to Barker, it corrects the overpopulation of Barker.

If what the commission does is to excise Goyder from Grey, excise Clare and Gilbert Valleys from Wakefield and add them to Barker, and excise the Barossa from Barker, you add that to Wakefield.

I'll show the commissioners on the map.

The Goyder council is here, but it extends off the top of this map, and the Clare and Gilbert Valleys is this quite discrete area marked by the old boundary between Grey and Wakefield and the proposed new boundary between Grey and Wakefield, that is one single District Council (INDICATES).

Now our suggestion is that those areas could be added to Barker with the parts of the Barossa council in Barker removed.

That would reduce the numbers in Barker so that they are closer to quota.

That would also reduce the numbers in Grey.

The Wakefield District Council itself could be reunited in one electorate, namely Grey, if the Grey/Wakefield boundary is moved south from where it is marked to the green line just below the word 'Wakefield' on that map, and that would be more than permissible in quota terms as far as Grey is concerned.

You would then have removed two areas from Wakefield, namely the balance of the Wakefield District Council and the whole of Clare and Gilbert District Council, but added the most of the Barossa District Council to Wakefield.

In our submission, you could actually add the whole of it from Mayo and do a whole lot of other things in Mayo which I've mentioned in our written submission and which I don't want to go to today.

All of those submissions are possibly achievable, although what would then be required is an adjustment of the boundaries between either Wakefield and Port Adelaide, or Wakefield and Makin.

None of those suggestions are impossible, either with the general thrust of what has been done in metropolitan Adelaide or, alternatively, with my suggestion of using the four corners of the city as the basis for the four of the metropolitan electorates.

I said that I wanted to deal with one comment by the ALP.

That actually relates to the point that I've just made.

The ALP suggested that our argument was that Barker was geographically large, it should be redrawn to have fewer projected electorates, yet we were then making that larger.

They suggested that that was illogical and flawed.

Well, I agree.

What we were suggesting was that if you're going to have a large electorate, it is probably not ideal to have that one being over quota or the most over quota.

This is not an argument that country electorates should have fewer electors; this is simply an argument that if you are going to have extra difficulty in servicing your electors, then that should not have an over quota problem super added upon those difficulties.

Our solution: yes, it makes the geographical area of Barker larger, but it makes the population smaller, closer to quota, and we suggest that that is a more appropriate solution.

In terms of transport again, there are transport links between the Riverland, particularly parts of the Riverland towards Murray Bridge with the areas which would be added, towards Murray Bridge, Mannum, Swan Reach and then out into the areas which we propose to add.

There is little doubt that whatever is done in South Australian country is going to make some people unhappy and is far from ideal but, we suggest that our proposal makes the best use of the possibilities.

CHAIRMAN: If you decrease the numbers in that very large electorate, for the sort of reason you have given, which is fair enough standing on its own, is there not a problem, where country areas are losing population, that all you are going to do is have adjustments which you are going to have to change all over again next redistribution?

I mean, it's not terribly wise to make a change that you are sure you are next time going to have to reverse, that is what I am getting at.

MR BLACK: There is some irony in that; that is precisely the submission we made in 1999.

CHAIRMAN: You might have been right.

MR BLACK: To the electorate of Grey when we suggested the Yorke Peninsula should have been added at that stage and that Clare and Gilbert shouldn't have been added at that stage because it was inevitably having to be reversed.

CHAIRMAN: I am comforted to hear the consideration I am putting to you has appeal to you too.

MR BLACK: It has.

CHAIRMAN: I am just suggesting to you that is something we have to think about, isn't it?

Have you any comment to make about the application of that principle this time around?

MR BLACK: Firstly, we don't anticipate that we are going to need redistribution as quickly.

One would expect this redistribution will last for the best part of seven years.

Secondly, there is potentially some value in doing as you suggest, if you can reasonably confidently predict that the next time you are called upon to redistribute the area which you have deliberately made over quota for that reason on this occasion is going to be somewhat immunised from the need for change on that next occasion.

All the population indicators are that the country of South Australia, rural areas in South Australia are reducing population, particularly proportions of population in seven years when we have the quota date and the projection date, that it would be extremely likely that even on the proposed boundaries Barker would need change anyway.

Secondly, consideration of any potential changes or consideration now of what is likely to be needed in relation to Barker in seven years time could only be undertaken with a consideration of what is likely also to happen to Grey in seven years time and Wakefield.

Now, whether it is going to be possible to extend Grey further south into the Mallala Light areas and Clare and Gilbert Valleys for that purpose and leave Barker relatively unchanged is a moot question.

I would have thought that the population proportion reduction in rural areas is going to continue at such a rate that Grey would have to move further south or would have to encroach on some of the areas currently added to Barker and that with perhaps the exception of the Barossa there are no areas in Grey or Barker which are likely to experience sufficient population growth let alone population proportion growth to help save those electorates from having to be the subject of significant surgery next time anyway, no matter what you do.

It is a long answer but the answer is then, in theory, your Honour's proposition has merit but I am not sure that in practice in this State in that electorate, with the adjoining electorates, it is practicable.

Unless there is anything further I am happy to withdraw.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR LAWSON: My name is Robert Lawson. I appear for the State Director of the Liberal Party of Australia (SA) Division.

I thank the Augmented Commission for this opportunity to address the objections.

I will be brief if the Commission pleases.

Perhaps my opening remarks should be that there has been some criticism in the objections of the fact that the report of the Commission did not adequately disclose the reasoning of the Commission for the boundary selections.

We don't share in that criticism.

We think it is unfair and the report of the Commission does analyse in sufficient detail the various options and reason for selecting them.

Those who object most vehemently have not, in our submission, identified any errors in the report and certainly have not identified any manner in which it is suggested that there has been a misapplication of the criteria by the Commission.

Notwithstanding that, we and the Liberal Party do make a submission for a minor change to the boundaries between Wakefield and Grey and I will come to those in a moment.

Like others who made submissions, I certainly won't be repeating what the Liberal Party has put in its various submissions, objections and suggestions.

Mr Rau, on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, in relation to the seat of Hindmarsh, described the boundaries selected along the coast as most transparently anomalous.

But, one would imagine this Commission would realise that the Labor party's objection to that particular boundary is not actually so much its shape but they are seeking, and as is obvious in the written material they have laid before the Commission, they seek a particular political outcome.

But, as you, Mr Chairman, reminded us all at the outset, that this redistribution is not designed to achieve any particular political outcome.

Mr Rau's principle submission was that the metropolitan area of Adelaide has a hub and a spoke type arrangement and as anyone is familiar with a road or transport map of Adelaide, it is true that from the central business district there are a number of roads radiating.

If the Commission had on the wall a map of the major arterial roads in Adelaide it would certainly be true to say that the city does have that hub/spoke characteristic.

However, whilst that may be true of transport it is certainly not true of the local government boundaries in South Australia or electorate boundaries, nor is it true of the communities that have developed in Adelaide.

One only has to look at the map of the existing and proposed boundaries to know there is no hub/spoke arrangement and nor would it be possible in the electoral boundaries to suggest that the Commission has erred in drawing the boundaries of Hindmarsh in the manner it has inconsistent with the hub/spoke arrangement, is really not to address the issues that the Commission itself had to address, namely to identify the communities of interest.

Mr Rau dismissed Military Road as a peripheral road but as those members of the Augmented Commission who live in Adelaide or who are familiar with the geography of Adelaide, Military Road is a historic road along the coast, it is a road of major and increasing significance with the developments that have been taking place along the coast with much new development, more intensive development and urban infill that is occurring on there.

We would submit that the coast of South Australia, the coast of metropolitan Adelaide, does provide a strong community of interest.

Issues about the coast, about its development, about the sand replenishment, the beaches and the like are very prominent issues in the western suburbs of Adelaide and they do provide a strong community of interest along the coast.

The suggestion made by Mr Rau and the Labor party in their written submission, that the West Lakes area, which is in the centre of the finger, as described, of coastal land now included in Hindmarsh is part of the Port River system, is really an artificial notion.

Anyone familiar with West Lakes will realise that of course it is an artificial construct and the idea, whilst it might be, in geological terms, part of the Port River system, it is not in terms of community of interest.

We submit that the Australian Labor Party has not identified any error or failure to exercise appropriate consideration of the criteria in drawing the boundaries of Hindmarsh.

No doubt the Commission would have been alive to the fact that, as you mentioned I think Mr Chairman in your last question to Mr Black, that if future developments are likely to lead to further population expansion, in Port Adelaide where there is a great deal of urban infill being undertaken and as the Commission has moved the boundaries of Port Adelaide in a north-easterly direction to include the new Mawson Lakes development, it is likely the retention of the seat of Port Adelaide will become more east/west than north/south.

That is consistent with the fact that the major metropolitan council in that part of Adelaide is an amalgamation of Enfield and Port Adelaide which has introduced an east/west dimension to that area to that electorate.

CHAIRMAN: Which councils did you mention an amalgamation?

MR LAWSON: Port Adelaide Council based on Port Adelaide and the Enfield Council to the east.

I turn now briefly to the Labor party submissions in relation to the electorate of Adelaide.

In our submission the Commission in its report correctly identify the unifying element in the seat of Adelaide as being its proximity to the central business district.

The Labor party object to the inclusion of the area immediately to the east of the parklands, which includes Dulwich, Toorak Gardens, Rose Park and Norwood etc.

That inclusion is both logical and consistent with the approach which has been adopted in relation to the City of Adelaide which includes obviously the central business district, the parklands and to the north, to the west and to the south of Adelaide of the parklands, the adjoining suburbs have been included in the electorate of Adelaide.

The Commission is now completing that process by including an area on the eastern side of the parklands which is a logical and sensible, with the greatest of respect, approach.

One didn't hear, for example, the Labor party complaining about the excision from the seat of Myrtle Bank and Fullarton, which are areas previously included in the seat, for fairly obvious political reasons.

So we would submit that the Commission has got it right on Adelaide, or not that we need to say 'got it right' but we believe the Labor party's objections and suggestions in relation to Adelaide should not be sustained.

I turn now to our submission in relation to the seat of Wakefield and Grey.

In our objection we have suggested that part of the District Council of Wakefield, which include the small townships of Snowtown, Brinkworth and Blyth be removed from Grey and included in Wakefield.

The reason we advance that is that this small number of electors - it is only 1390 on the roll as at March of this year, projected to be 1367 on 31 July 2007 - is that there are strong communities of interest between these townships and the centre of Clare which is, of course, the centre of the Clare Valley.

As we mentioned in our objection, the Snowtown to Blyth Road has been recently sealed and that is one again strengthening the communication links through Clare.

If the Augmented Commission has the time I would certainly urge them to visit the Clare valley to see for themselves that community of interest which can be appropriately accommodated.

We also submit that the name of Wakefield, this seat should be kept for the reasons stated by the Commission in para.60 of its report.

Wakefield is a most significant commemorative name, not only a Federation seat but important for historical purposes in South Australia and an entirely appropriate name to commemorate.

I have no other submissions if the Commission pleases, unless there are any questions.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

I think that concludes the formal, if I may use the expression, proceedings.

I, on behalf of the Augmented Commission, thank you all.

ADJOURNED 11.54 P.M.