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## TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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O/N 117389

### AUGMENTED ELECTORAL COMMISSION

**THE HON PETER HEEREY QC, Chairman**  
**MR ED KILLESTEYN**  
**MR BRIAN PINK**  
**MR PETER ACHTERSTRAAT**  
**MR TJOEN SAN LAUW**  
**MR WARWICK WATKINS**

**AEC PUBLIC ENQUIRY – THE NSW FEDERAL  
REDISTRIBUTION 2009**

**MITTAGONG**

**1.04 PM, THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2009**

**MS JULIET ARKWRIGHT**  
**MR NICK ILLEK**  
**MRS BETTY BERG OAM**  
**MR IAN HARRISON**  
**MS JUDY CAMERON**  
**MR SHANE EASSON**  
**MR RALPH CLARK**  
**MS JUDITH HANNAN**  
**MR LUKE JOHNSON**  
**SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS**  
**THE HON JOHN COBB MP**  
**MR BEN FRANKLIN**  
**MR RON PENNY**  
**MR GRAEME MILLER**  
**MR GRAHAM MCLAUGHLIN**

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon everybody. Welcome to this meeting of the augmented Australian Electoral Commission. My name is Peter Heerey. I'm the chairman of the Commission. Also present on my immediate right is Mr Ed Killesteyn who is the Electoral Commissioner, and on my left is Mr Brian Pink who is the Australian Statistician. The three of us make up the Australian Electoral Commission, and for these purposes we have an augmented Electoral Commission which includes also Mr San Lauw who is the Australian Electoral Officer for New South Wales, Mr Warwick Watkins, the Surveyor-General for New South Wales, and Mr Peter Achterstraat, the Auditor-General for New South Wales.

Now, as you probably know, the Redistribution Committee has prepared a proposal for the redistribution of New South Wales into 48 federal electoral divisions. That was released on the 7 August. Objections were invited, and objections and comments on those objections were received. We have to consider all the objections lodged in relation to the redistribution proposal, and today there's an opportunity for members of the public to make oral submissions about those objections.

Now, under the Electoral Act and due to the relative population decline, New South Wales' entitlement to members in the House of Representatives has been reduced from 49 to 48. So as a result a redistribution is necessary. Now, the Act tells us what factors are to be taken into account, but the principal one is that each division must meet certain numerical requirements. One vote one value suggests that there should be broader quality, but obviously there can't be literal equality.

The Act provides that there should be, as at a time three years hence, no more than a variation of 3.5 per cent plus or minus the average projected enrolment. Now, that average projected enrolment figure is 98,907. So it means that the maximum you can have in any division is 102,369 and the minimum 95,445. Now, within those number constraints the Act tells us that we have to have regard to a number of matters: community interest, that's economic, social or regional interests, means of communication and travel, physical features, like rivers, railways, shore lines and the like, and areas of electorates and also, although of lesser importance, the boundaries of existing electorates.

Now, some objectors may suggest that areas be moved in or out because of community of interest grounds. Of course when that happens there has to be a compensating adjustment which may be difficult because it may bring an adjoining division above the maximum or below the minimum. So it's helpful if people who make objections can suggest how their proposed change would work in with those numerical constraints. Now, this enquiry will be recorded, a transcript will be available, and we would ask speakers to please identify themselves when they speak.

After this enquiry we'll commence our deliberations which we have to finish our considerations by the 17 November and make a public announcement as soon as practicable after that date. So, I'll now call on the first speaker. That's Councillor Juliet Arkwright. Is Councillor Arkwright there please?

MS ARKWRIGHT: Thank you very much, gentlemen, for this opportunity to address you today. Yes, my name is Juliet Arkwright. I'm a Liberal endorsed councillor on the Wingecarribee Shire, and in that capacity I have the privilege to address you today. Gentlemen, you would be aware of a resolution that was passed  
5 by the Wingecarribee Shire Council and then sent to you late August early September. It's a resolution that I, as a Liberal councillor and my fellow Liberal councillor and some independents felt – we referred to it as the half pregnant resolution because it expressed in a way what we don't want.

10 It didn't come up with any practical suggestion bearing in mind, Mr Heerey, what you were saying yourself to begin with that we have to address the practical situation of suggesting an alternative bearing in mind the population distribution, but I think it is clear, gentlemen, to say that emphatically that the Wingecarribee Shire Council and the people of the Wingecarribee Shire do not wish to be put into the federal seat  
15 of Gilmore, and the basic criteria for that is simply that we feel no synergy of real genuine community of interest.

The resolution in a way reflects what the mayor said and what other councillors said which isn't helpful to some extent in the sense that he said "I speak from the heart"  
20 and perhaps I'm not speaking from my head. I wish he had applied both, but, basically, the council and the people of the Southern Highlands would prefer to remain in Hume. I did explain to councillors - and it has been explained elsewhere in the media - that as far as the Electoral Commission is concerned that was going to be an impossibility. You know, it's acceptable that what we might wish from our heart,  
25 gentlemen, you're most probably unable to give us.

That being said, it is the position which I put forward to the Council, and in many ways in private discussion and with the community is acceptable, that if we are looking at causing the least disturbance to the proposed redistribution of numbers,  
30 that the bulk of the Southern Highlands we would prefer to see – or I would as a Liberal councillor and many people in the Highlands would prefer to go to – if we go to the Coast to the more southern region of Gilmore. I myself live in the village of Burrawang which is near Robertson, and up until recently my federal member was Joanna Gash. We were in the seat of Gilmore, the eastern part of the Shire for quite  
35 some years. We feel an affinity there.

There are, I suppose, also other reasons as well. Our director of planning in a way describes the Wingecarribee Shire as being a slightly schizophrenic area. Yes, we do have connections obviously with Wollongong on the basis that the government has  
40 chosen to make it a regional centre. So, yes, if you need to get a new birth certificate or what have you, you go to Wollongong. It doesn't mean that we feel that we have a genuine connection there as far as the business of local government is concerned, or as far as community activity. We essentially feel in the Southern Highlands that we are a rural area rather than an urban industrial area, and if you go into Gilmore  
45 and you head, say, from Nowra further down south part of the areas of the regions of southern councils of which we belong, yes, it does include Wollongong, but it also

particularly includes the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla, and you can't get anything more rural than that.

5 We are constantly alert to the factor that when we wish to combine with other councils over any particular matters we admittedly look immediately to Goulburn or even Wollondilly or further south, Nowra and beyond, but as a council we have not demonstrated any great need to look to the City of Wollongong Council or Shellharbour, and I shan't pursue those points as to why, but we don't wish to be connected per se as a council there. With transport issues there is a problem. The  
10 Macquarie Pass is a nightmare. I am a living example of it and I'm lucky to be living to tell you the tale, but I came to grief with it just after Christmas. It's a dangerous pass. Trucks use it. Its grease laden and the police themselves are in despair as to the attitude of the RTA over improving that pass.

15 We have the instance - for summer holidays a large percentage of the people of the Southern Highlands take themselves off to the coast in the summer. They head down through the Kangaroo Valley. They go to Nowra and they keep heading south to, you know, places beyond even down to Bateman's Bay. We have another issue where if you look at our policing in the Highlands we go to Goulburn. That's the  
20 regional centre. The State Government has put an impost on us as a council to provide up to 15,000 more houses over a period of time for our strategic planning.

This is not an immediate one, but there is an impost on the Wingecarribee Shire to have a bigger population and to provide housing accordingly, and that is on the  
25 strategic plan which is based on the Sydney to Canberra corridor of which we are firmly situated in many ways. So, basically, we feel that our rural identity - even though we recognise we are not an isolated rural area our identity in an ideal world would remain, say, in Hume in rural New South Wales, but recognising the factor that that cannot be. As a Liberal councillor and speaking to many of the electors in  
30 this shire if that is not to be the case, then we would infinitely prefer that the Southern Highlands - the area of the Southern Highlands designated by the Electoral Commission to go to Throsby should be put into Gilmore and that particular part of Gilmore connected with Kiama go to Throsby; in other words, basically just a switch, a population switch.

35 That, if we have to have an option, would be the option that many people in the Southern Highlands would prefer rather than go to Throsby. We feel that we would to some extent - and I believe my Liberal colleagues will make the point further - in a way a slight disenfranchisement federally to be in an electorate that has already a  
40 23 per cent Labor majority which would reduce it to a 16 per cent, but still the people of the Southern Highlands - and I'm not saying this will be the case - but the perception would be that our votes, our feelings on federal issues would simply not carry any weight or receive any recognition.

45 I said that is the perception. I am not in any way saying that that would be the case, but we feel that if we went to Gilmore there would be a greater balance. That whoever is the member for Gilmore would be cognisant of the factor that he or she

did not have such a large majority that a good percentage of the people can be ignored. Our needs would still be looked at along with the rest of the people of Gilmore. So, gentlemen, I can only put to you this particular case. I point out also that the independent schools in the Wingecarribee Shire have been obliged to run  
5 buses to Nowra. They have a large intake of students - Oxley College, Chevalier College, the Christian School; this school here at Frensham has a percentage of day girls and the school has been obliged, I gather, to lay a bus on because many of these students are now having to come up on a daily basis from Nowra, so there is this connection with that part of the coast.

10

And I hope, gentlemen, that the Electoral Commission will consider sympathetically our request that if we have to, if we have to be moved – and it seems that that is the inevitable case – without disrupting the entire southern region of New South Wales, that this shire, the Wingecarribee Shire, well, the bulk of the Southern Highlands, can  
15 go to a simpatico area where we feel an affinity with, which is the area of Gilmore on the southern part of the coast. Thank you, gentlemen,

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any questions? No. Thank you very much, Councillor. Thank you.

20

MS ARKWRIGHT: Thank you, gentlemen.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Nick Illek.

25 MR ILLEK: Good afternoon, gentlemen, and thank you also for the opportunity to be here today to address you on this issue. First of all, my name is Nick Illek, I-I-l-e-k. I have a business in the basin of Bowral - I have been here for five years – of corporate services. I've also got a business in Jamberoo, across on the coastal area, and a dairy farm down in Milton, apart from also living in Sydney, so I think I've got  
30 a cross-section, from my personal experience and from my clients, my friends, my family and contacts generally. I'm fairly involved in the community so I think I can represent a broad view.

I do support the Liberal Party objection basically saying that the nature of this  
35 community up here in the Highlands better belongs with that of Gilmore rather than the coastal urbanised area of Throsby. The business issues really come around from the natural boundaries which have been in this area for a long period of time. The natural boundary of even the Illawarra Escarpment has, of course, historically divided some of this community, notwithstanding that there was a communal interest  
40 from the coast and the Wollongong area across here when the original electorates were set up, but that's obviously changed over time as these areas have remained more rural regional and Wollongong has become more urbanised.

Other interests that run more of this north-south orientation are well-known: Eden  
45 Council, which is on a north-south grid, effectively; a number of government departments work on a north-south basis - the Health Department is one, the Department of State and Regional Development that looks after this area - as well as,

effectively, the Gilmore Electorate is based in Goulburn. As Juliet Arkwright indicated, the policing is done out of Goulburn. It used to be done out of Macarthur, but there was a recognition that the community in the rural regional area was differently policed than one out of an urban area like Macarthur.

5

Even the churches, Catholic Church, for example, has its office for this area, as well as most of the Gilmore Electorate, in Goulburn rather than in Wollongong. So the community interests have been there for a long period of time to sort of divide the urban areas and even the urban coastal areas with the rural and regional coastal areas and rural and regional areas inland. Some of the similarities of business that we have – and business runs on a mindset as much as it does on a practical basis and the mindsets are somewhat similar between here and the Gilmore areas. Wineries, for example. Wineries are a large business in this area. I have a client that has a winery. There are wineries being established. There is quite an old one at Coolangatta Estate near Nowra and others in that area, in the Shoalhaven. That's becoming quite a district for tourism and for commerce.

The other things, like general agricultural. This area and the coastal area in Gilmore were very much dairy farming areas, as I know only too well, and there is still that working between the two areas, with slightly different seasonal climate variations. There is different stocking levels have come from both areas. The Moss Vale sale yards are even used by the coastal areas as a sale yard area on the northern part of the Gilmore Electorate. There is small manufacturing which goes on in this sort of rural and regional type area. Often arts and crafts based things is also similar in the Gilmore Electorate as it is up here.

We are also very tourist-oriented in this region, as is the area in Gilmore along the coast. As Juliet said, there's a great tendency for people, even out of the Illawarra area, to head to the Shoalhaven and the South Coast for tourism, so there is an understanding of driving the tourist dollar, attracting the market and sharing what goes on. The whole nature of this area is climatically even similar; we're more conscious of everything from rainfall to dust storms. Our radio, which is a major source of information for the community generally but also for business, is generally more related to the Shoalhaven-type area, Gilmore, with 2ST a popularly-listened to station, which also broadcasts up here, rather than the Wollongong sort of coastal urban-type radio stations.

The aged community is another large area up here. I think the Southern Highlands is commonly known for its aged settlements and that's more something that is similar with areas around south of Kiama, around Nowra and so on. It's an ageing population. I notice in the Labor Party submission that they talk about that ageing move out of Illawarra to the Shoalhaven area and yes, that does happen - they also come up here – but there is quite an exchange between the Shoalhaven area and up here and the aged services industry generally.

45

Our newspapers have a concentration of rural and regional issues that are shared between Gilmore and the Southern Highlands-type area, rather than the urbanised

5 areas of Wollongong. We have little interest in the industrial activity and work opportunities that related to that from this area, as would Wollongong have in the farming, tourism, winemaking and so on of these areas. Most of it, as I say, is related to small business. Big business does its thing and the boundaries of a social nature, community nature, don't generally sort of come up with a big business decision, but the smaller businesses, which are the major employers of this area and the Shoalhaven-type area in Gilmore, are major local decision-makers that move with the community and the feel of the community and represent the feeling of the community.

10 Juliet mentioned the Macquarie Pass. I don't think that we need to find something to stress that roadway any more than it already is. It's a problem roadway, as Juliet has indicated. We have a number of transport corridors from the Southern Highlands through to the Shoalhaven area from the Jamberoo Mountain Pass on the north side, really, down the Cambewarra Mountain, Kangaroo Valley, all of those sort of things, and business is looking more to those areas because there is a laconic sort of relaxed attitude to business, which is more typical or more shared between the two.

20 I just want to make a couple of comments on the Labor Party notes because I felt there was sort of mixtures of apples and oranges there and some dubious, if not incorrect, statements. Whilst the Shoalhaven may well sort of consider itself as its own community, having sort of lived and worked and had businesses in those areas, there is no way the Shoalhaven sees itself as really part of Illawarra. In fact, they go out of their way to separate that from tourism, promotional and so on. There is a relationship between the two areas because they are in proximity, so for holidays, for getting away, for aged care and so on, there is a movement, but I really do think that Illawarra is Wollongong and Shoalhaven is Nowra and beyond and they will never sort of – their minds will never meet.

30 There is also a suggestion that Illawarra, being essentially Wollongong, is part of the South Coast and again, that's just not the case. The South Coast essentially starts from below Kiama, below the population areas into those rural regional areas of beaches like Seven Mile Beach and so on and would not be associated with Illawarra. They promote themselves quite differently from tourism and from business. We don't deny that there is some relationship between the Illawarra and Shoalhaven work-wise, that there is employment movement between the two, but there is employment movement between the Highlands and all of the adjoining areas, even down through Gilmore and even north.

40 I don't think education is such a huge issue. It's well-serviced and education itself is, I guess, by its nature, something temporary and not quite necessarily an ongoing or permanent part of the community. It is in its broader sense but not for the individuals. So I would just like to sort of conclude that I feel that we have far more in common with Kangaroo Valley in Gilmore than we do with Dapto and that's in 45 Throsby. That's not just sort of a throwaway line. It is a different mindset in business. There are different business relationship. There are significantly different communities of interest, as Jennie George, the Labor candidate or Labor member up

in Throsby, has pointed out. She uses the expression “two separate minds” and you will see that in the Liberal Party’s submission.

5 There is more in common between Gilmore and the areas of the Southern Highland being taken out of Hume and there is more room for those areas to grow and develop in similar ways and support each other. The urbanised areas do not sort of understand the rural regional areas and perhaps vice versa. The community interests will be best served by keeping Gilmore and the Southern Highlands together and the suggestion by the Liberal Party I think is the best way to do that without any effect  
10 on the population, voters and so on, and not mix two areas that really have nothing very much in common. Thank you.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Thank you very much, Mr Illek. Thank you. Is Senator Fierravanti-Wells present? We believe she may be delayed. Mrs Berg.

MRS BERG: Thank you, gentlemen. You're probably wondering why an elderly lady is standing or sitting here.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Mrs Berg, sorry, could you sit a bit closer to the microphone.

MRS BERG: Sorry, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

25 MRS BERG: My name is Betty Berg and I live eight kilometres from the Shoalhaven Bridge going towards Burrier. I have three and a half acres of land which I live, it's a garden, but you're probably wondering why an elderly lady such as myself is here to ask you to consider your selection of the distribution. To me, it's not about whether you're Liberal or Labor or who you are; to me, it's about the  
30 people of my area and the youth. It's not about the – we're talking about the aged population. In my area we have a lot of aged people. That comes to everybody, but it's not important. To me, it's the youth of the area who basically we have to think about and you have to think about what you're going to do with them.

35 I was surprised that you had considered putting Gilmore into an area like Shellharbour, that is very closely populated and really has nothing in common with the people in Gilmore or in my electorate. We are basically a rural area. We don't have that high density where you can almost touch the next door neighbour; you have area around you. And I just cannot visualise anybody – and this probably  
40 doesn't sound complimentary – who would have the ability, as a representative in either Federal or State elections, to be able to represent me and the youth and the people that I believe in, in my area, with the knowledge to be able to look after everybody.

45 The Highlands, as you probably are well aware, has a great deal of studs – thoroughbred. They also have cattle studs here and this coincides, again, with Nowra, with Kiama and down right the South Coast, right down past Ulladulla. We

have some very successful cattle studs. In fact, one member down near Ulladulla is on the world level council. We also share the production of vineyards and our wine in this area is definitely moving and moving and moving. Down at Wandandian just recently one of the ..... gained three first prizes at the world level. We have  
5 Coolangatta that's been there since forever and we are now moving into that type of production of employment of progressing forward.

We have the dairy farms and we all know how important they are. You drive down the highway from Oak Flats and we come first to that massive dairy on the left as  
10 you come through, before Kiama. And we have these dairy farms going right throughout. These have been created by people that I'm saying are asking you not to lump, and that's not a good word, but it's the fact of putting us with a group of people who basically have nothing in common with us.

We have orchards, we have vegetables. We go down to Kangaroo Valley. Look at the amount of farms we have there, cattle reproduction. We have the type of craft that you have here in the Highlands. It is repeated again down at Kangaroo Valley. We have the dams at Kangaroo Valley, one even out near me, a little one. We have the river to look after. We have thousands and thousands of hectares of bushland  
20 that must be looked after. We cannot expect a person who basically is in a city environment, who has a big job to do, to be able to understand and be able to work and include those people with my people that I'm talking about down south.

I really am here – oh, and I have forgot the most important thing of all of HMAS  
25 Albatross and HMAS Creswell and we all know how important those two establishments are to the employment of not only people from here, from Nowra, from wherever, where we can train those people to look after every person's safety in Australia. It is important that we recognise these different areas.

And I'm asking you please to consider the normal voter out there, or the normal person that lives here and is contributing in their own small way to a portion of New South Wales, to a portion of Australia and try not, please, to put us in a category that you're going there because you've got X amount of people. Try to work out how important it is for the human being like myself and the youth of my area, who  
35 doesn't have a vote, to be able to let them have something more than being put over there because they are a number. Would you please think of where you are moving us and give us the dignity that we require to at least think we have a group of people that are basically looking after us.

40 Thank you very much for listening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mrs Berg. Any questions?

MRS BERG: No questions, I hope.

45 THE CHAIRMAN: No, thank you very much.

MRS BERG: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Harrison, Mr Ian Harrison.

5 MR HARRISON: Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing us this opportunity to have a say in your considerations on electoral boundaries. My name is Ian Harrison. I'm a resident of Khancoban and I am also Vice President of the Tumbarumba Khancoban branch of the ALP. I am well aware of the requirement for boundary change and I also would expect that there are a lot of problems that the  
10 Electoral Commission has to address and the difficulty of satisfying everybody's requirements.

My objections to the proposed boundary change in the Tumbarumba Shire from Eden-Monaro to Riverina are basically related to fit wherein the criteria of the  
15 Electoral Commission, the Electoral Commission uses community of interest and the related thing, the physical features and area of the proposed electoral division. In the last Federal election where we were incorporated into Eden-Monaro I believed we were where we naturally belonged. Previously Tumbarumba Shire had been in Farrer and in State divisions of Wagga Wagga and Hume and now, again, we are  
20 being changed to the Riverina which, I submit, is inappropriate on the grounds I have mentioned, that is community of interest and physical features and area.

The Riverina is a vast, basically flat western district of New South Wales. Rural activities are broad acre farming for wool, wheat, rice with some irrigation in the  
25 MIA where fruit and vegetable growing takes place. There is little, if any, contact or linkage between Eden-Monaro and the Riverina. And that is not only between the two electorates but the people within those electorates. We have very little contact with Riverina. I suspect that the Riverina residents, if they think of this district at all, would consider it as a pleasant tourist destination and as such so different from their  
30 electorate with our mountains, forests, snowfields, trout streams, beaches and the hydro developments. That it would be a great holiday spot. I don't think they would think it is a natural fitting partner for themselves in the Riverina.

Between these two electorates the typographies are quite different. The climate is  
35 different. Rainfalls are different. Farming is different and many recreational pursuits are different. One significant factor in the Eden-Monaro is tourism and this is closely related to the Snowy Mountains, to Snowy Hydro and to the Kosciuszko National Park. This relationship can be shown by a few examples. Tumbarumba Shire promotes the Snowy Way as a scenic option for travelling north or south, a  
40 scenic option to the boring Hume Highway. The Shire also legitimately sees its town as the gateway to the Snowy Mountains.

Tumbarumba also has an association with the Snowy Mountains because the students attending Cabramurra School, the senior school, students attending Cabramurra have  
45 to attend, be bussed into Tumbarumba school, so that is a further link. In a recent Border Morning Mail on 03/10/09 the New South Wales Government ad suggests you "invigorate your sense this spring in the New South Wales Snowy Mountains"

and this slogan was accompanied by photographs of Khancoban, photographs of Tumut and photographs of the Yarrangobilly Cave. Again, emphasising the contact between Eden- Monaro and the Tumbarumba Shire.

5 Khancoban was constructed as a Snowy Mountains Authority town in about 1960. And although municipal functions are now a council responsibility, Snowy Mountain staff in Cooma still direct operations in Khancoban at their two power stations and switching stations. Cooma engineers frequently visit Khancoban and maintain a close working relationship with the Khancoban Snowy employees. Kosciuszko Park  
10 also have employees in Khancoban and though that head office is in Jindabyne there is considerable liaison between Snowy Hydro and Kosciuszko National Park in Khancoban.

I think I've basically covered the factors of the regional differences and the factors of  
15 community interest. I would like to conclude by saying that our branch of the ALP enthusiastically support our hardworking Federal member who is well known to us through his frequent visitors. I would doubt we would get such support and interest from a Riverina Federal member. Not necessarily through lack of intent but due to the vast size of the Riverina I think our little bit would come in for very little  
20 attention. We would see the proposed change to the Riverina as tack on rather than a natural part of the electorate as we feel we are a natural part of the Snowy Monaro electorate.

Thank you for your attention.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Any questions? Mr Harrison, in your view do Tumut and Tumbarumba have a community of interest?

MR HARRISON: I would say Tumut and Tumbarumba do have a community of  
30 interest, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, so it would be desirable that they be in the one division, which ever it was?

35 MR HARRISON: I think that would be a good fit, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I mean they could be in Eden-Monaro but then you'd have to make some adjustments somewhere else to allow for the increase of Eden-Monaro, wouldn't you?

40 MR HARRISON: Yes, I appreciate your difficulties.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Good, thank you very much, Mr Harrison.

45 MR HARRISON: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Cameron.

MS CAMERON: My name is Judy Cameron. I live at Mannus in Tumbarumba and I was the mover that the branch, the ALP Branch, send this submission to the Australian Electoral Commission, and we submit the following protest respectfully from the electorate of Eden-Monaro and its subsequent placement in the electorate of Riverina for the following reasons. The protest is formally based on the criteria used by the Commission, namely transport, communication, geographical features and community of interest. So starting with transport.

The Tumbarumba Shire has no public transport. Over 20 years ago New South Wales Rail ceased to serve country towns in the Riverina and southern slopes. The Countrylink buses which replaced the rail service need six hours to complete a round trip from Tumba to Wagga and back again. Wherever it is possible, people use private transport, which means their use of medical and dental services now include the centres of Tumut, Canberra, Queanbeyan and Albury as well as Wagga. Because the Wagga Base Hospital has not yet been replaced, despite promises, Wagga is falling behind in its ability to serve the Tumba LGA in health matters.

Communication. Landline phone connection works reasonable well, although it is not unusual to have phones drop out in the frequent high country storms. Mobile phones, on the other hand, are often unusable because the mountains block both transmission and reception. The shire is well-served by its local newspaper, the Tumbarumba Times, the headquarters of which is in Tumut. Commercial TV reception is generally good, but like landline phones, can be affected by bad weather. The national broadcaster, the ABC, gives us reasonable radio reception but ABC TV reception is spotty and in many places, impossible.

It is very subject to weather and other interference and it comes to us via an arrangement with the shire and two 60-plus volunteers who drive up the rough track to the tower on the top of Mount Ikes, or Bogandyera as its original name was. They climb the tower and fix whatever has gone wrong. Incidentally, the last thing that went wrong was a swarm of ladybirds in the communication dish. It gives you an idea of how easy it is to set everything off the track. People in the southern part of the shire can get ABC TV from Victoria but on the north, north-east side, internet connection is often interrupted and equipment damaged by electrical storms, especially when the internet connection comes through landline phones.

Geographical features. Tumbarumba – and Mr Harrison has dealt a lot with this; I won't keep you too long on it – Tumbarumba is in the southern slopes region and is climatically very different from the plains of the Riverina. Both agricultural and horticulture are dependent on the cooler climate and thus differ from those of the Riverina. Industry is based on forestry, value-added timber and grape wine production with a growing tourism factor, much of which is based on the Alpine scenery and the shire's proximity to the snowfields.

The terrains of the Tumbarumba Shire and that of the Riverina are totally different. Tumbarumba is mountainous; Riverina is plains and riverine country. Both require quite different engineering approaches to road building and maintenance. The

Tumbarumba Shire shares a border with the Kosciuszko National Park on its south-east side – that's the park's south-east side – and where it is feasible, does some work for the Kosciuszko National Park and gives emergency assistance when required.

5 Like Mr Harrison, community of interest is a very big thing. Tumbarumba's cattle and sheep are still transported and sold to Wagga. The products of its large wine and forestry industries are processed in Tumbarumba and trucked to destinations which, in most cases, do not include Wagga. The shire supports three haulage businesses. With the end of the railway system that linked the towns of the west and the  
10 widespread use of private transport, community of interest between the shire of Tumbarumba and Wagga Wagga has waned. These days, there are more visitors from Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne than there are visitors from Wagga.

Twenty-plus years ago Tumbarumba retirees settled in Wagga Wagga when a train  
15 trip to Wagga was a simple matter for both grandparents and families. Today, our retirees go to the coastal towns and their families drive to visit them there. That's about that part of it but I would like to give you the opinion of the branch and that is that this change does nothing to boost political awareness, interest and confidence in government generally. The feeling today in the shire is that the Tumbarumba LGA is  
20 not a community but merely a number of voters who can be shifted anywhere when the Electoral Commission wants to balance its numbers. The branch further believes that the Commission would prefer its electoral charges to see it and the democratic system of government to which it is responsible in a far better light. Thank you very much for your interest.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Ms Cameron. Any questions?

MR KILLESTEYN: Mrs Cameron, accepting your point about the community of interest between Tumut and Tumbarumba and the connection or the lack of  
30 connection with the Riverina - - -

MS CAMERON: Excuse me. There is a certain community of interest between Tumbarumba and Tumut. Tumut, sort of, Wagga, Tumut, Tumbarumba.

35 MR KILLESTEYN: But your point is more about the connection with the Riverina, or lack of connection.

MS CAMERON: Our particular point, yes, yes.

40 MR KILLESTEYN: Yes. Do you have any – that would - if Tumbarumba was left in Eden-Monaro, that would see the projections for Eden-Monaro exceed what is permissible under the Act. It's one of the constraints that we would have to work on. Do you have any views about where that compensating adjustments might be made to the boundaries of Eden-Monaro, particularly given that there are other constraints?  
45 We can't go into Victoria, obviously - - -

MS CAMERON: No.

MR KILLESTEYN: - - - so there's a hard border there. That, presumably, would see Eden-Monaro boundaries having to move further north, potentially into the Shoalhaven or even up to Goulburn, for example. Are they the sorts of adjustments that you would think are palatable?

5

MS CAMERON: Again, if we go into the matter of community of interest, then obviously there's not a lot. The mountains – it has to be said that these mountains are isolating factors. They definitely are. Again, Mr Harrison mentioned the Snowy Mountains Authority and the great Snowy dam and the days of the '50s, '60s and '70s. Now, these affect Tumbarumba, Tumut, Cooma and those areas like that – Jindabyne, Jingellic, Yarrangobilly and so on. They do not affect Goulburn and I don't think they affect Wagga, even though Wagga, through the irrigation system, has got a lot of the water from the hydro scheme. So I would say no on the grounds of both terrain and community of interest. And I would draw it to the attention of the panel that those mountains are very isolating factors and you need to live in them to believe it.

10  
15

MR KILLESTEYN: I think the Commission's not unsympathetic to the sorts of issues that yourself and the former speakers have made. The question often for the Commission is where do you make the trade-offs, and often you're in the position of the least worst trade-off rather than the best trade-off.

20

MS CAMERON: It's easier, you think, by going into the Riverina?

25

MR KILLESTEYN: Well, as I say, it's the least worst set of trade-offs and that's where we would be looking for solutions to any adjustments that people are seeking.

MS CAMERON: Well, bear in mind too that it is the local government area of Tumbarumba that – I mean, the shire has lodged the protest, I understand – has protested against going out of Eden-Monaro. I don't think Tumut has. Now, in this Tumbarumba LGA there are 1400 households and an overall population around about – I'm guessing here – 3500.

30

MR KILLESTEYN: So you're suggesting a split between Tumut and Tumbarumba across two different divisions.

35

MS CAMERON: I don't think anyone would too much about it. I don't think anyone would worry about that. I mean, we, from the Labor Party branch, we have worked very happily with Tumut, from the Labor Party point of view, but on the other hand, I mean, that's not going to stop.

40

THE CHAIRMAN: What brought about the need to remove Tumbarumba and Tumut from Eden-Monaro was enlarging Eden-Monaro by taking on Eurobodalla. Have you got any comments about that?

45

MS CAMERON: There is a strong connection between us and Eurobodalla, not necessarily Eurobodalla the town but the shire generally. At the present time, in my

capacity as an interior designer, I'm working on a project, would you believe, in Narooma, a big renovation.

5 MR KILLESTEYN: So even the split between Tumut and Tumbarumba and leaving Tumbarumba in Eden-Monaro and Tumut in the Riverina would still be a problem in terms of the numbers.

MS CAMERON: Well, really – what, the 3500?

10 MR KILLESTEYN: Three and a half per cent.

MS CAMERON: Three and a half per cent. Again, I mean, this matter ultimately relies in the lap of the Commission.

15 MR KILLESTEYN: Thank you.

MS CAMERON: I can't - - -

20 MR KILLESTEYN: And we're looking for solutions but - - -

MS CAMERON: Pardon?

MR KILLESTEYN: And we're looking of solutions.

25 MS CAMERON: You're looking for solutions. It rather reminds me of my mother dividing up cakes.

MR KILLESTEYN: All right. Thank you, Mrs Cameron.

30 MS CAMERON: Thanks very much for the hearing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I've been informed a while ago that with the exception of Mr Shane Easson, none of the scheduled speakers are yet present. That's no criticism of them because they were given a list of times and we're running a bit ahead of schedule but can I just confirm that and ask whether  
35 Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells is present? Not yet. Or Mr Ralph Clarke? Councillor Judith Hannan? Mr Luke Johnson? Mr John Cobb? Mr Ron Penny? Mr Graeme Miller? None of those people are here, so I think we'll call on Mr Shane Easson now. Mr Easson, thank you very much.

40 MR EASSON: Your Honour, I have a witness who I wanted to speak in support of the Commissioners' boundary and that witness isn't here yet. I told him to be here by 10 past 3.00 when I was scheduled, so we could either do one of two things. I could start, five minutes explaining why we support the Commissioners' boundary.  
45 My preference, though, would be to do that, have the deputy mayor of Wingecarribee then speak for about five minutes and then sum up for about five minutes, but until he comes, I can't do that. But I'm more than happy to while away the time, if you

would like, in the next five minutes by doing that introduction and we might have someone turn up.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Well, look, thank you, Mr Easson. If you're happy to do that, it might be an efficient use of the time, so we would be grateful to hear from you.

10 MR EASSON: Okay, thank you. Well, as I said, the Labor Party supports the Commissioners' proposed boundaries for Gilmore and Throsby, and I would request two things of the Commissioners. One would be that you go back and have a look at what we wrote in our original suggestion and comments on suggestion because we put in quite a lot of detail concerning how we would prefer the arrangement of the coastal seat south of Sydney. One of the points that we made then was that in 1984 when we had a major expansion of the Parliament New South Wales gained eight  
15 extra seats, and if we're looking at the South Coast running from Hughes to Eden-Monaro, four divisions back in 1984 were drawn east west.

Gilmore itself was a Cowra to Nowra division. Throsby when it was created in 1984 contained Moss Vale, and of course Moss Vale is indelibly associated with Charles  
20 Throsby who discovered Moss Vale. So you'll find Throsby House in Moss Vale, etcetera, etcetera. The electorate of Throsby was called Throsby because in 1984 both Moss Vale and the Shellharbour/Kiama area were contained in the same seat.

The other divisions back in 1984 which somewhat ran east west were Macarthur  
25 which included Narellan and went down to Corrimal and Hughes which ran from Liverpool to the Sutherland area. If we look at the redistributions of 1991, the year 2000 and that of 2006 what we found was that the Commissioners instead of having, as they did have, in 1984 four divisions running east west by 2006 the current boundaries that we had only one of those divisions ran east west, that being Hughes.  
30 So what we had in the intervening 20-odd years which we had the Highlands area being removed from the coastal division, and we thought that was a better arrangement than what the Commissioners had earlier come up and what they've come up with today.

35 So to be clear in my point, that is, that if we're looking at your Shellharbours, your Kiamas and your Nowras the relationship is far stronger north south than what it is east west, and we feel that the Commissioners should have accepted the logic of our original suggestion and not put the Highlands in with the coastal division, but we're stuck with what we've got. So the Commissioners now, in our view, have to make  
40 two decisions regarding the committee's proposal.

The first decision we think is for you to decide whether the proposed division of Gilmore better reflects community of interest between, say, your Kiamas and your Shellharbours and your Nowras, whether that reflects your proposed division of  
45 Gilmore, better reflects a community of interest between the Kiama/Shellharbour area and Nowra, or does Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale better reflect a community of interest with Nowra. Now, my second request of the Commissioners is to do what

I did this morning and that's take the road down via Kangaroo Valley to Nowra and also travel the Illawarra Highway from Moss Vale to Albion Park and make your own conclusions about which is the better road link between the Highlands. Is there a better road link via the Illawarra Highway or is the road link better if you go  
5 through Nowra?

Now, if you did what I did this morning I think you're left with only one conclusion. If we travel from Moss Vale to Nowra we're dealing with a 60 kilometre zone. We're dealing with a 25 kilometre zone. We're dealing with stock crossings. By the  
10 time you get down to Kangaroo Valley you've got the historic Hampton Bridge which is only a single lane bridge. If we look at the Illawarra Highway that's a far better road link notwithstanding the Macquarie Pass, a far better road link to Albion Park from Moss Vale than what you find if you travel by road from Moss Vale to  
15 Nowra.

Now, there has been some talk today I've heard concerning Kangaroo Valley and so forth which both under the Commissioners' proposal and that of the Liberal Party would be in Gilmore, but also under – the Labor Party also supports the  
20 Commissioners' boundaries which place Kangaroo Valley in the Division of Gilmore. We've had some talk about the amount of agriculture in the Shoalhaven area and statements that the agricultural pursuits are similar to those between Mittagong and Bowral and Moss Vale, etcetera. Well, can I ask the Commissioners to have a look at the state electoral district of Kiama which runs down to the Shoalhaven River, so includes Bomaderry, all of Kiama itself, Kangaroo Valley,  
25 etcetera, and also the South Coast State Electoral Division – District, I should have said – which runs south of the Shoalhaven River.

The only figures which I've got are based on the current state electoral boundaries for Kiama and South Coast and they are taken from the ABS and here I'm referring  
30 to the number of employees in agriculture, forestry and fishing. In the State District of Kiama there are 798 people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing. In the State District of South Coast there are 651 only. So when we hear talk of this similarity between the Bowral/Moss Vale area and south of Nowra take into account that if we're looking at the South Coast north of Bateman's Bay which is where the  
35 Shoalhaven Shire begins you find fewer people engaged in an agricultural pursuit than what you do in the area around Kiama, Kangaroo Valley and so forth, right.

So it's not true to say, in our view, that Bowral links better on agricultural grounds with Nowra and south of Nowra, but what you do see is if we combine the State  
40 Districts of Kiama and South Coast and then transpose them onto the federal maps that we have here today what you will find is that the agriculture concentration of Kiama together with the agriculturally focused areas of Shoalhaven are combined in the one division of Gilmore.

45 My next point would be that in regards to the National Party objection to the proposed boundary I would like to point out that the National Party's original suggestion to the Redistribution Commission was to have all of Eurobodalla Shire

removed from Gilmore and placed in Eden-Monaro. That was done by the Redistribution Committee. Their second recommendation was to unite all of Kiama Shire in the one division being Gilmore. That was done by the Redistribution Committee. The third request which the National Party wrote in its original suggestion was to have Albion Park included in the division of Gilmore. That was done by the Redistribution Committee in its proposal.

We now have an objection from the National Party to the committee doing the very thing that it had recommended in the original suggestion. Now, when we look at the employment in the Wingecarribee area and in your Bowral/Mittagong area, Moss Vale you'll find that most of the employment is locally sourced. Where people work elsewhere they'll tend to work or come from the Wollongong/Shellharbour type area or in areas further north or south. They don't travel from Nowra to work in Bowral or Moss Vale by and large. You will find more people engaged in light manufacturing coming from the Albion Park/Kiama area working in your Moss Vale/Bowral area than what you'll ever find from Nowra.

My last point at this stage is to point out that under both the current National Party and Liberal Party objection they divide the Shire of Kiama. Under the Redistribution Committee's proposal Kiama is united in one division being Gilmore. Now, the Liberal Party have tried to make a virtue of uniting the Shire of Shellharbour via their objection in the Division of Throsby, but, in so doing, they divide Kiama as it's currently divided between two divisions. So, in summary, we do not believe that the arguments put forward by the Coalition Party and others in their objections carry any real weight.

Firstly, the arrangement which they suggest for the Division of Gilmore is a worse outcome in terms of community of interest than that particular division than what had been proposed by the Redistribution Committee. Secondly, as I've said, there is a stronger connection in employment terms between Wollongong and Bowral than what there is between Nowra and Bowral, and for that reason the proposal made by the committee should be adopted. And finally, as I began by talking about, you actually have in your proposed division of Gilmore the main agricultural areas on the mid South Coast united in the same division being Gilmore. I don't know - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: Is your colleague here?

MR EASSON: I'm sure he'll ring me, but I told him not to be here till 2.30. He's actually working at - I might have him - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, if you'd like to leave the table and go and see what's happening.

MR EASSON: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Easson, what's the position?

MR EASSON: Well, my witness hasn't turned up as yet.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

5 MR EASSON: If you don't have anyone else, and if you don't have any questions to me at this point.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

10 MR EASSON: I would like to cover a number of other matters dealing with other divisions.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker has arrived, but I think it's more efficient to continue your presentation. So if that's all right with you, we'll let your witness - - -  
15

MR EASSON: Sure, I did speak to Mr Lauw last week and my intention was to cover the Gilmore /Throsby appeal today and to deal with a couple of other matters and then deal with other issues like Calare at the Sydney hearing tomorrow. But, look, whilst we are filling in time, let's deal with the naming of division issue, and in particular the controversy concerning McMahon and Reid and let me now put the Labor Party position to you.  
20

Firstly, it's ironic, but we're here to support the Commissioners' decision to call a seat after Sir William McMahon. There's been a lot of silly comment, including  
25 from my friend, the Chief Justice of New South Wales, concerning the name of McMahon. All I can say is that if anyone has been a Minister for 21 years, including Treasurer and Foreign Minister and ends up as Prime Minister, that person deserves a seat named after him. And it's actually been semi-scandalous when we consider how quickly a division was named after Sir John Gorton that we've had to wait 21 years  
30 for a seat being named after Sir William McMahon.

The next point I'd like to make concerns the Division of Reid. We did not oppose the Commissioners' decision to abolish that division notwithstanding the number of submissions that you have received. We didn't like the fact that the Redistribution  
35 Committee removed Bathurst and Lithgow from Macquarie, but that then gave you a numbers problem in Sydney and you also had to deal, and I think you properly dealt with the lingering problem at Parramatta where Parramatta, and close suburbs to Parramatta, were not included in the Division of Parramatta. So we can understand why the Division of Reid had to be abolished on this occasion.  
40

However, we do have precedent in Victoria where a seat named after a significant person has been effectively abolished because of requirement from surrounding divisions but then has been recreated somewhere else at the same time in the State. I refer to the Division of Scullin which I think was radically altered in, I think it was  
45 1989, don't hold me to that. I can find the exact seat tomorrow, I was going to deal with this tomorrow, but there are precedents, notably in Victoria, where if the forces of the numbers cause you to abolish a division named after a truly significant person, which we

accept, Sir George Reid was, it's not to stop you creating a division somewhere else in the State.

5 Now we do have some place names which are not, in my opinion, especially significant. For example, I would call Sir George Reid a more significant person than Lindsay, or Fowler or Prospect or whatever, but the Commissioners, notwithstanding the fact that they felt forced to abolish the seat of Reid, can respond to some of the objections concerning the name were you to retain the name but in a division reasonably far from the current division so as not to cause confusion for those electors. Okay. So that's all I wanted to say on names.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Easson. So have you got your colleague ready?

15 MR EASSON: I beg your - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: Is your colleague ready?

20 MR EASSON: Look, he was due to come at 3 o'clock. We were due to be on at 10 past 3. If you like I can deal with Eden-Monaro.

THE CHAIRMAN: I misunderstood you, I thought he was here.

MR EASSON: No, he's not. It was someone else, it was not one of ours.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, I understand Mr - thank you. Any other questions of Mr Easson.

MRS BERG: Yes, I have a question, if you don't mind.

30 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MRS BERG: As speaker he covered figures I don't agree with.

35 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Mrs Berg, you won't get on the transcript, would you like to come forward to the microphone.

40 MRS BERG: It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. I just want to know if he has figures for his own area. He seemed to have figures for Kiama agriculture, ..... now it goes right down past Ulladulla ..... the issue Nowra, and if you could give me the figures for your own area, if you could give me the figures for agriculture areas in Kiama, which I found it rather amazing that there was more there than in the Shoalhaven area, but if you could give them, you must have them there surely about your Moss Vale agricultural area - - -

45 MR EASSON: Actually I don't - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: For the record, Mrs Berg asked Mr Easson if he has figures, agricultural figures for the Moss Vale area, that's correct, yes?

5 MRS BERG: Has he got the figures for his own area, that's all I wanted to know, thank you.

MR EASSON: I don't have them on me.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: You don't?

MR EASSON: No. I can get them. I am not afraid of them. I can dig them out, I just didn't bring them with me today.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: All right, thank you.

MRS BERG: I just naturally thought there would be a comparison with the area that he didn't want to include in Gilmore Electorate, I thought he would have a comparison. That was all. Thank you very much.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Good, thank you. Well, Mr Easson, have you completed what you wanted to say apart from the colleague that you were calling?

25 MR EASSON: Well, when my witness comes up I might sum up for two minutes on just the Gilmore/Throsby, when we're done with that. We could quickly cover the Eden-Monaro area now, if you like.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, all right, we'll do that then.

30 MR EASSON: Firstly, we support the Commissioner's decision to remove Tumut and Tumbarumba from the Division of Eden-Monaro. Eden-Monaro is a Federation division. In 2006 for the first time in its history it straddled both sides of the mountains. Tumut Tumbarumba are better on the western side of the divide and the historic arrangement for Eden-Monaro has been a east of the Great Divide division. That has been the case from 1901 to 2007 and is now proposed to revert back to that  
35 historical arrangement. We support that.

40 Now, if we look at what happened, so that you understand our appeal concerning a partial incorporation, further incorporation of part of Palerang Shire into the Division of Eden-Monaro. Let's go back very quickly to what happened in 2006. In 2006 we added Tumut, the Commission added Tumut Tumbarumba to Eden-Monaro. That then meant that part of Eurobodalla Shire went into Gilmore, that part being Batemans Bay etcetera. Then whereas almost all of Palerang Shire, prior to the 2006 redistribution, was already in Eden-Monaro. The ripple effect of including Tumut and Tumbarumba meant that part of Palerang Shire was removed and placed in  
45 Hume at the last redistribution.

Flash forward for a year, new redistribution, the Commissioners decide to reverse the previous decision concerning Tumut and Tumberumba. That then meant, quite properly, that they united all of Eurobodalla Shire in the Division of Eden-Monaro. So now we have on the coast the boundary line between Gilmore and Eden-Monaro, it's the local government boundary separating Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla. If we go to the inland, though, Palerang remains divided between Eden-Monaro and Hume. However, we can't put all of Palerang Shire into Eden-Monaro because the numbers won't allow it. So basically the ALP objection which involved around 500 or so electors, not a very large number, incorporate the Lake George area, which is the iconic part of Palerang Council, and places that into Eden-Monaro.

So in summary, all we try to do is add a little more of Palerang into Eden-Monaro. The balance, the majority of Palerang is already in Eden-Monaro. We add just a little bit more, including Lake George. It's only about 500 or so electors. It's about as many as we can take in order to stay within the plus or minus three and a half percent, but it's a better proposal than what the Commissioners have done, that very minor change because it would just be in regard to Palerang Council and we note that in its comments on suggestions the National Party said that it could understand why we were proposing what we were proposing, but then said, well, you can't put all of Palerang in so why bother doing any more of Palerang.

But bear this in mind, all of Palerang was in Eden-Monaro before the last redistribution. Most of it is going to be in Eden-Monaro with this redistribution. All the Labor Party's done is edge Eden-Monaro a little closer to the three and a half percent, a future number, projected number, but that is to incorporate Lake George, the iconic part of Palerang Council, a little more Palerang Council into Eden-Monaro.

That's it. Now, you'll have to be patient and I'll contact my witness.

THE CHAIRMAN: All right then, thank you, Mr Easson. Mr Ralph Clark.

MR CLARK: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name's Ralph Clark. I'm President of the Bundanoon Community Association. I'm not here to make a detailed submission. I do appreciate the constraints the Commission has to work under. However, from a Bundanoon point of view, which is the only perspective for which I, and my Association, look upon this, we just consider it just is almost a disaster. We have absolutely no affinity with Wollongong, contrary to what I heard the last speaker say where he maintained that Bowral, which is not the area on whose behalf I speak, has more affinity with Wollongong than with Nowra. When most of the Wingecarribee Shire was in the electorate of Gilmore it worked. It says in the report that after going through pages of community affinity and communication all of a sudden out of the blue we have the electorate of Throsby running east west.

All I can assume is that this has been done from looking at an aerial map because the means of communication, to get from the Wingecarribee to Wollongong you go down Picton Road. Macquarie Pass, which isn't mentioned anywhere in the report, winds its way down an escarpment. It is a physical barrier between, I would suggest

the Wingecarribee, but most particularly my village of Bundanoon. In the definitions in the report the electorate of Throsby is described as provincial. The electorate of Hume, in which we are at the moment, and the electorate of Gilmore are described as rural. Now, Bundanoon most certainly, and even more certainly the adjoining  
5 villages of Penrose and Wingello, are most definitely rural areas, in no way provincial and in no way having any affinity or communication with the coast.

I am not empowered to speak on behalf of the Shire, obviously, but I do note the objection from Duncan Gair, the Mayor, which strongly makes the point, in this case  
10 not mentioning an electorate, but saying that the Shire of Wingecarribee needs to be treated as an entity. And I would certainly endorse that. The boundary proposed mentions that it follows the Hume Highway. Well, it does that until roughly Berrima and then deviates on a pathway that I have great difficulty in following, but it manages to neatly bisect the road between Penrose and Bundanoon. Now, those  
15 villages of Penrose and Wingello, which, with Exeter, Bundanoon and Canyonleigh make up the southern villages group are rent asunder. Penrose and Wingello and Bundanoon are an entity. They are, Penrose and Wingello are virtually suburbs of Bundanoon and to have them separated like that makes absolutely no sense.

So in summary, I believe that we should be looking at the escarpment, that  
20 Wingecarribee must be treated as an electorate and I note also the submissions from areas like Hill Top on the northern area. The solutions, obviously changing Throsby is going to be a set-back, however, I speak on behalf of people in the area, we should either leave Wingecarribee, including Bundanoon and the adjoining villages in the  
25 electorate of Hume, which I think would make a far tidier and more workable electorate of Hume, or alternatively, we should look at what was the situation up until 2006 where most of the Wingecarribee, if not all, was in the electorate of Gilmore and certainly from a Bundanoon perspective, that is something which worked well, so either Hume or Gilmore but please, not Throsby. We have no  
30 connection whatsoever. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any questions? No. Thank you very much, Mr Clark. Is Councillor Hannan here?

35 MS HANNAN: I have also have Luke Johnson, who's the next person - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, I beg your pardon?

40 MS HANNAN: I also have Luke Johnson, who's the acting general manager of Wollondilly Shire Council with me. He's the next person on your agenda but we'll only be very brief and if we can go together that would be appreciated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, very well. Thank you.

45 MS HANNAN: Okay. We're from Wollondilly Shire and we're very grateful to be able to come and talk to you today. We've made a written submission but we would just like to talk about a couple of facts. We've got two points that we would like to

make. We've always had a dream that Wollondilly would obviously be in one electorate but we do appreciate that this new plan is an improvement. We were in five different electorates before - but we have one little, small area, that is the Mount Hunter, Theresa Park and Brownlow Hill areas. The first issue is that Mount Hunter is a township in our area. The new distribution splits the township down the middle. You could live in a house on one side of the street and your children attend school on the other side of the street and if you had an issue, you would have two different members to be addressing.

Interestingly enough, the most urban part of Mount Hunter is in the Hume Electorate and not the Macarthur Electorate, so Hume being more rural, one would assume that you would be looking at the entire part of Mount Hunter to be in Hume. The second part is Theresa Park and Brownlow Hill. In the redistribution notes it talks about Theresa Park being similar to Oran Park. At the moment, Theresa Park and Brownlow Hill are localities. They have no water, no sewer, no street lights, no shops, no schools, very little transport and they involve farmland; dairies mostly and turf farms.

Oran Park, on the other hand, has just had a town centre created, it has street lights, it is going to have thousands of houses, it is going to have schools, and Cobbitty also has schools and it is urban. They talk about using natural areas or natural boundaries. We have the Nepean River that is the natural boundary of the local government area of Wollondilly. At the moment, the new redistribution heads off through the middle of Mount Hunter, down a road called Big Hill Road - which fortunately is tarred at the moment but was really a dirt track - and so they're random roads. Simply, if it followed the river and the local government area and took in these three localities, it would improve things.

Not only would it improve things for us as a council and for our people that we represent, but when we look at the numbers in the redistribution - we look at Hume. There is just over 96,000 and they talk about Hume being able to gain about 6000 people or it could simply lose about 600 people to remain within the numerical tolerance. Hume has a projected enrolment growth way below average. On the other hand, Macarthur has 98,000, could gain 4000 or lose nearly 3000 but the projected enrolment growth is the highest in the State at 14.46 per cent. So if you could simply take the localities of Mount Hunter - or half of Mount Hunter - Theresa Park and Brownlow Hill - and there's not very many people there - and shift them into Hume with the majority of the Wollondilly local government area, it would be beneficial to us and I think improve things for everybody else. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you. Mr Johnson, is there anything you would like to add?

MR JOHNSON: Look, I don't really have anything to add other than to say council has obviously had a close look at it and having been represented by five different electorates, there's obviously an issue for council, but we've sought to be particularly realistic in terms of coming here today and what we've raised with you and we think

what we have raised is not only reasonable from our point of view but perhaps even assists with the parameters within which the boundaries are considered. I do have a map that I've marked up the change. I'm not sure if you need that or not.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MS HANNAN: So the pink area there would simply be moved into Hume if our wish was granted.

10 MR JOHNSON: Not very technical. It's done with a highlighter, I'm afraid.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Thank you.

MS HANNAN: Thank you very much. Thank you.

15

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. No other questions, so thank you Councillor and Mr Johnson. Is Senator Fierravanti-Wells present? Yes. Thank you, Senator.

20 SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Thank you. Can I just ask, is there a time limit to make an opening statement or what's the procedure?

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, could you speak up, please?

25 SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: What's the time limit? Is it making an opening statement and then a time limit on speaking or?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're pretty flexible.

30 SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Pretty flexible. Thank you. Can I just start, if I may, and thank you for the opportunity to present today and in so doing, I do so as a senator from New South Wales, of course, you represent the whole State but I have – in this situation I have my electorate office located in the Illawarra and I also am born and raised in the Illawarra so I know this area, I know –  
35 have been travelling around here for many, many years and so I suppose I come not only in terms of representing and you do have the Liberal Party submission before you, but also to give perhaps a more human perspective over a number of years in relation to some of the issues here.

40 Having a look at the criteria in relation to your role in terms of the redistribution, the key criteria of community of interests within the proposed electoral division, the means of communication and travel and the physical features, I think when you look at those together, some of the proposed changes in relation to Throsby I think will cause difficulties. The shift of effectively what is a north-south seat to an east-west creates, I think, concerns in relation to each of those three criteria. They have been  
45 canvassed in detail by the party's submission but I do want to in particular focus on a number of issues.

You talk about and you mention in your finding about the low projected enrolment growth, yet, if you do look at the statistics in relation to the Shellharbour and the Wollongong local government areas, and I've come at this looking at it from the local government areas of Wingecarribee, Shellharbour and Wollongong, the median  
5 age is actually higher in Wingecarribee than it is in those other two seats, so I'm not quite sure in relation to where you've come from on that point, but I would say that when you do look at the demographics, that you do have a younger median age in the Shellharbour and Wollongong areas, so there are various areas of community of interests.

10 I guess the question of the adequacy of the transport, as somebody who's travelled around that area and I don't know if any of you have ever done the trek from one side to the other and up and down Macquarie Pass, it really is one of the worst roads, I have to say, in this State and having done it as – and watched it effectively change  
15 very little over many, many years, having been born and raised in the Illawarra, we had family in Canberra so I remember as a very young girl using that road, it really is a terrible road.

I mean, effectively, to get from one side of your proposed Throsby – for example,  
20 my parents live at Port Kembla, and for me to go from one side of Throsby to the other now I effectively will have to go up through Cunningham, up through Wollongong, hit the – up Picton Road and then hit the Hume Highway and then come back into Throsby from that direction, because I really do think that hanging this change effectively on the so-called great transport of two roads which are – one  
25 of which is basically a bullock track that has been expanded to and has bitumen on it and has been – is one of the most difficult roads to traverse, as it is during, you know, good weather. In inclement weather it's absolutely appalling, so, and it really will cause some difficulties. So I think that there are issues in relation to the transportation.

30 I guess when you look at the two seats you're really bringing together two very, very different communities. You're bringing together what has been classed as a provincial, effectively a manufacturing coastal area and combining it with a rural area. The two sides of Throsby, effectively the escarpment divides these two areas  
35 and there's a different psyche, it's a different feel to this area as it is to the coastal areas and in particular as Throsby is at the moment, it really has the community – the community of interest between the north and the south of the current seat are very, very, very similar but you are now effectively creating a division which is chalk and cheese. You know, the two communities are very, very different and I  
40 guess the escarpment is effectively that area.

Can I just say – and I note the comments that Jennie George has made also in relation to this – irrespective of what the representation is, whether it be Liberal or Labor, it will be a very difficult seat to represent, simply because any member of – I mean, the  
45 concentration, of course, is on the coastal area and that would be where the – where I would assume the person would have their electorate office, but you do have a community that may well risk being not represented in the sense that the distance and

the difficulties in accessing over these roads – and there's really two principal roads but mostly the Macquarie Pass – I think will make it very difficult.

5 And I myself at one stage had a satellite office in Orange and, of course, it is difficult, it is an expense and I think under the current changes that are now being proposed by the special Minister of State to entitlements by Members of Parliament, I think that you really ought to take that into consideration, because this is really going to have to be a seat that will require some representation because of the diversity and the difficulties that are associated with that.

10 Can I just say there is a different psyche between these two communities. There's the coastal beach psyche of that – the coastal component to it and then there's the colder climate, you know, past the escarpment, and so it's a different feel, if I can put it, sort of different social circumstances. These are two very ethnically diverse areas. I mean one only has to look at – the Illawarra, of course, is the manufacturing heartland and it is a population that is effectively – a good component of it is migrant based, and certainly when you do look above the escarpment and below the escarpment there are very marked differences, I think, in the socio – including also socio-economic diversity of these two communities, as I said, a manufacturing heartland as opposed to a solidly rural base.

25 I took the opportunity to have a look at some of and compare the Shellharbour, Wingecarribee and Wollongong Local Government areas and some of the statistics, and I think if you actually do go through the various criteria that are the basic community profiles of those three Local Government areas I think that you will find that there are considerable areas where the community of interests are very divergent from the two areas that you're seeking to combine in this seat of Throsby, and I would urge you to go and have a look at some of those statistics.

30 As I said, when you look at things like median age, median individual incomes, you look at also in particular the diversity and countries of birth, you look at most of the people that – and whilst you do have a consistent born overseas component in each of those areas you will find that in the Wingecarribee end it's mostly born overseas, but from English speaking countries whereas in the sort of Wollongong/Shellharbour area there is a component that's born overseas, but it's born overseas from non-English speaking countries. So that of course brings with it very different and diversity of interests that don't, I think, fit your community of interest criteria that you're obliged to meet.

40 Also with that come languages and languages that are spoken at home. For example, in my parents' household Italian is the language that's spoken and so with that comes a diversity of needs that's very different in one component. I mean you effectively have two very, very diverse communities that you're seeking to roll into one seat and a diversity of interests that, as I said, I don't think falls within the criteria and I don't think meets that community of interest criteria.

I will just complete my comments and I'm happy to answer any questions. When you look also at the employment breakdown of the industries within which people are employed in those three areas, and you look at Wingecarribee is different to the other two. I've used those Local Government areas as descriptors if I can put it in terms of the areas within the new Throsby and, of course, the occupations, and when you do look at that I think that that also needs to be taken into account when you are looking at the community of interest. So looking at the Liberal Party submission what I've tried to do is bring out those particular points and, of course, I reiterate the points that the party has made in relation to the submission, but I do think that the established and used transport corridor, I think that there are some real issues in relation to that, and I think they're certainly covered in the submission; the question of the coastal focus as opposed to the rural focus, the question also of the older citizens, and when you do look at the Wingecarribee and the Shoalhaven Local Government areas have much more community of interests as far as that is concerned.

In terms of the seats themselves, of course, it has traditionally been a seat that has gone lengthwise and I think that in the end if there are to be movements – and I accept that there have to be movements – I think that I would ask you to reconsider. Rather than going east west to reconsider another configuration basically goes north south because I think that that meets the criteria a lot more of section 66 of the Electoral Act than your proposed Throsby.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Senator.

SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Thank you.

MR KILLESTEYN: Senator, I wonder if I might - - -

SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Certainly.

MR KILLESTEYN: You've concentrated very much on the communities of interest criterion, and I think you'd probably accept that the Commission and the Committee wrestles with that particular issue all the time.

SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Yes.

MR KILLESTEYN: The numbers, of course, is the primary criterion and tends to drive a lot of the description of the boundaries. Accepting for the moment your point about two separate community of interest, one on the coast, one on the tablelands, is it your view that two or more communities of interest can't co-exist within a single electorate?

SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: No, I'm not saying that. I mean there are other seats where I'm sure that there are different communities of interest, but this is a seat that you're proposing to – it's physically divided by an escarpment with very difficult access, you know, whichever way you want to look at it we're talking about difficult access from one side to the other. As I said, I mean, to get

from one side of Throsby to another now on your proposed it's easier time wise for me to go up through Throsby, up into Cunningham, cut across and then come back down. I wouldn't go right across. I mean I wouldn't go Macquarie Pass.

5 I'm not saying that they can't co-exist, but in this particular instance you have physical – the escarpment. You have, I think, the transport issue. You have travel  
circumstances. The public transport system, I mean this is not – those roads –  
certainly I'm aware that – I'm not sure if there is public transport going up and down  
Macquarie Pass, but I think that you need to take that into consideration. I'm not  
10 saying that you can't have different communities, but in this case it is compounded,  
and the difficulty here is because, I think, of the physical – the escarpment being as it  
is, and those other difficulties that have been raised in the Liberal submission  
particularly in relation to communication and transport and the physical features. I  
mean physical features is component C of section 66, and certainly an escarpment  
15 with a single lane going through it is, I think, a physical feature that I think you need  
to take into account.

MR KILLESTEYN: Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Could it be said, Senator, that whilst it's desirable to have a  
community – identifiable community within the one division there's something to be  
said for having several such communities which might be very different because the  
member would be informed by quite differing views on social and economic issues  
and would be the better equipped to take a broader view or to take a less restricted  
25 view when debating those matters in the national forum.

SENATOR CONCETTA FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Well, yes, and certainly as a  
senator representing the State that's certainly something that you do, but it's also  
important in terms of effective representation of a seat that has, if I can put it this  
30 way, or will effectively a lot of different issues right across it, and more than the  
norm, more than say a seat, an inner western Sydney seat of similar characteristics. I  
mean you are really putting into this one seat a very broad spectrum of diversity and  
with that diversity will come a whole range of different issues which this particular  
member, I think, is going to have a greater onus in terms of delivering good  
35 representation to his or her community, and irrespective of whether that  
representation is Liberal, Labor, Green or whatever the diversity of this seat will  
make it a much more complex seat, and I think in fairness and certainly Jennie  
George picked it up in her comments that she made which are contained in the  
Liberal Party submission.

40 Diversity is good, but this is certainly taking diversity to a much more complicated  
level, and my concern at the end of this is, is a person going to be able to give  
effective representation where you are really dealing with such a broad spectrum of  
community, if I can put it that way, that's probably over and above what your  
45 average member of Parliament would have to deal with simply because you're just  
going from A to Z. Now, most MPs cover issues that might be, you know, A to F. I  
mean I'm trying to simplify it here, but in a seat like this as you're proposing, you  
really are going to have to cover provincial, rural, manufacturing, a whole, whole,  
whole

range of issues which will, I think, put an increased burden on the member of Parliament complicated by issues of effective representation and making sure that you do give effective representation.

5 When you're located at one side of the escarpment you're really going to have to look at doing something and having some sort of an office or something in the other side of the escarpment. I mean, if I were in that position as the member for the new Throsby I would have to give serious consideration and divide my time between the two areas.

10

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you very much. Mr Cobb? Yes, thank you Senator. Yes, thank you, Mr Cobb.

15 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Yes, look, thank you. I appreciate the time to speak with you today. I guess I don't know how often you get the same person in front of you three years running. Probably not very often where the area concerned is so affected as it has been in the last couple of reshuffles, and I don't imagine that this is probably the highlight of your careers having to pass judgment on where lines go on maps anymore than we like being affected by them, and perhaps you might read the  
20 small print on your executive contracts more carefully next time before you realise that it makes you having to decide all these issues for the Electoral Commission.

25 Could I say firstly I'm not going to introduce new material. I think that the submission that you were given which only involves two electorates it does not have ramifications beyond the electorates of Calare and Parkes that was put to you by the National Party is probably the most comprehensive, pragmatic and makes more sense than any submission I think I've seen put to the AEC. I guess the issue we've got is that the biggest electorates in New South Wales certainly are being very, very much changed twice in three years, and I guess I'm here not just because I'm a member of  
30 a lot of it currently, but because it does have issues that are very specific to it community-wise, physically, medically.

35 It is an area that has been very affected by your decisions which you have to make, but I just want to give you the opportunity particularly to ask me questions because very few people would have a better knowledge of the area than I do, and I think that I can if you have questions about it put it in a way to you which you will see the sense of, but, look, firstly, it's very much about the fact that – or our submission – the National Party submission is very much about the fact that the strongest  
40 community of interest that exists in that region is being set aside twice in a row, and I specifically firstly talk about the Shires of Parkes and Forbes which are being totally or certainly in a representative sense disenfranchised from their physical, medical and community of interest regions.

45 Mudgee and the south of Wellington – Mudgee first which is a beautiful stretch of country and makes a very good drop of wine, but it does not have the enormous physical and medical continuity with Orange which is a big area, which is the centre of the area we're talking about. The new Calare obviously takes in Orange, Bathurst,

Oberon and Lithgow. However, the original Calare, from the historical perspective, didn't take in those areas; it took in Parkes and it took in Forbes and they were the biggest centres in the original electorate of Calare in 1906, just as an aside. But Orange is the only serious – and I mean this – the only serious medical centre west of  
5 the Blue Mountains. Dubbo – it's got certain facilities but it's not in the same class as Orange. However, for the basic medical infrastructure, Parkes, Forbes and Condobolin to the west of it all go to Orange. Without fail, they go to Orange. The further west you go, then there's more chance they might go to Griffith or Wagga, but Parkes and Forbes and mostly Condobolin, they go to Orange. Nowhere else.  
10 Orange.

Mudgee, on the other hand, because of the huge physical range in between – between them – it tends to go to Sydney and I guess to back that up, Mudgee, along with a lot of other towns in the west, within the last 12 months lost their air service, their  
15 regional air service. Now, of all those towns, be it Cobar, be it Bourke, wherever it might be, Mudgee is the only one that's had one reinstated and a company has now reinstated a service to go from Mudgee to Sydney. Why? Because the flow of traffic from Mudgee to Sydney, particularly medically, is so huge. The reason they don't go to Orange, which I guess in a straight line is a lot easier to get to if there were a road  
20 to do so, to Orange, is because the geographic really don't allow it. The roads don't really it.

So Mudgee, whereas Bathurst is a bit more like Dubbo medically – it's a stopping centre, even though it's got a good hospital – so they tend to go to Sydney.  
25 Wellington would go to Dubbo and it might come to Orange but Wellington itself wants to stay with one council and one electorate, which is fair enough, and it seems to make perfect sense to allow it to stay in what is now the seat of Parkes as a – they want to stay together so they might as well stay there. But Mudgee, which is quite a big centre, without doubt, its medical link is really to Sydney not – it's certainly not  
30 with Orange.

The medical issue cannot be underrated. I grew up 100 miles west of Condobolin and even there, we went – if we went anywhere, we didn't go to Dubbo. Not from there. We went to Sydney or we went to Orange. That's just where you travelled.  
35 Condobolin, Parkes, Forbes - you go to Orange. That's where everything goes. Even though I was a Member of Parkes for a long time and loved it, I had to get to know Dubbo when it became part of the electorate because Condobolin, Parkes and Forbes people, they don't really go to Dubbo. They go to Orange. That's just the way it is.

The physical characteristics, quite apart from the fact they separate Mudgee and Orange in particular, which is obviously the seat of this area, particularly medical, also lend themselves to the valley which Parkes and Forbes are in, which is the Lachlan Valley. And you can't underestimate that. Orange, which more or less sits on the divide between the Macquarie and the Lachlan Valleys, and Cabonne which is  
40 pretty much half and half itself, but Parkes and Forbes are all in the Lachlan and to put them across with Dubbo in the Macquarie Valley is once again to physically, well, to deny nature in a physical sense.  
45

I think once you look at the natural community of interest, because let's face it, the more west you live the more you go east – once you go right west, then you go south and some people even go – if you go far enough west they go to Adelaide, but once you get in around Condobolin, they go east. They might slip down to the south-west  
5 as I said, earlier, to Wagga or even to Griffith, but once you get into Forbes and Parkes, there are just – there is no question about where you go. You go east, you go to Orange. You don't go south, you certainly don't go north.

I don't really want to belay [sic] the obvious because as I said, I think that's one of  
10 the best submissions I've ever seen made to the Electoral Commission from anywhere, but apart from the historical which I mentioned, it quite amused me to see where the original Calare was. And it shouldn't surprise us because it was about the Lachlan River, now, it wasn't about anything else, but as I said, you cannot underrate the medical issue here because that is the biggest community of interest that exists, is  
15 the medical one, particularly from people who live west of Orange. So gentlemen, I thank you for your time but I'm really here to fill in any gaps you may have because, you know, for obvious reasons, I think have a better knowledge of the region than most people.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Cobb. Any questions?

MR WATKINS: Yeah, I might raise a couple of points, if I may. You place a lot of emphasis on medical and I accept that, being a country person myself, but wouldn't you also support the view that the point you've made about Orange means that  
25 Orange is going to support multiple electorates simply because of the nature of the services, so whilst I - - -

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: That is true. That is true. Certainly it supports  
30 Cowra and what have you, except you've got to – you've got to - as I said, Wellington and Mudgee, Wellington tends to go to Dubbo because it's – they all, they just work together, that's just the way it happened, but Mudgee does not come to Orange. Bathurst might come to Orange. Lithgow doesn't. Lithgow goes to Sydney. It's just the way it works. I mean, Bathurst would even go to Sydney, for obvious reasons, a lot of the time, but when it gets to serious medical things, the west go to  
35 Orange, the south go to Dubbo, but they also get flown through.

I mean, Dubbo does drop people at Orange occasionally through the helicopter service or the Flying Doctor but mostly they go to Sydney. But Mudgee really does not come to Orange. I mean, we are talking two electorates here. We're not talking  
40 – so it doesn't make – quite apart from the medical, it doesn't make any sense having taken Parkes and Forbes one way, then to suddenly swing them back. I must admit I'm totally flummoxed as to why Parkes and Forbes, which are so centred on Orange, would suddenly be taken out again and Mudgee and Wellington, well, northern Wellington, southern Wellington added to it. But you're right about Orange being  
45 such a big centre, but not to Mudgee.

MR WATKINS: Okay. If take up another point. I can appreciate the points you make about pretty well the equal swap of electors, right, and your arguments have been well - - -

5 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Yeah.

MR WATKINS: - - - well-based on that, but how would you then explain to the electors that have been contained in the Hunter and split away because Hunter's got a problem, in your consideration, how would you suggest that we deal with the loss of  
10 electors in the Hunter?

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: You mean the people who were on the - and I'm not as familiar with this - the people who are in, well, basically - they're basically in Mudgee local government area and they've been taken over to the Hunter? I can't  
15 explain. It's not something I would do.

MR WATKINS: Yeah, it's in the Kandos and Rylstone area, right?

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Yeah. Well, I personally would leave them in  
20 Parkes.

MR WATKINS: The numbers don't add up.

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Well I think I'm right in saying, without having all the figures in front of me, that Parkes has - and I think I can guess why you've done it - got more numbers than it needs in your current redistribution, therefore, having  
25 guessed because you think you're doing it for the future - I'm not quite sure what the numbers at Kandos and Rylstone add up to, but can you give me one second?

30 MR WATKINS: Yes, certainly.

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Look, I'm just being told that the numbers add up if you do the direct swap of Parkes and Forbes. I think the point you're getting at is that they're actually physically separated from the Hunter. Is that what you mean?  
35

MR WATKINS: Yeah. What I'm saying is that by making that physical swap, I accept the numerical numbers come out right within the tolerances, - - -

40 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Yeah.

MR WATKINS: - - - but also - - -

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: You mean you've got the same problem with Rylstone and - - -  
45

MR WATKINS: Well, that's right, because what we've got here is you were making some points about council boundaries. Well, we've already had to split the Mid-Western Regional LGA, right, and that's - we looked at aspects to put Mudgee, right, be kept with Rylstone and Kandos and it just can't be that way.

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Yeah. I would have thought it was possible to take it further north but I'm - - -

5 MR WATKINS: All I'll flag is that having done a lot of number crunching around that area, whilst I take the spirit of the equal swap, it does have an impact. It cannot be said that there is no external impact.

10 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Okay. Our particular one doesn't but if you take the same theory, then why would you take Rylstone? Our particular – what we're saying with regards to Calare and Parkes doesn't affect what you're talking about.

MR WATKINS: Sure.

15 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: I accept your point and I'm sure that that will be made to you by others. I guess I'm not – don't have the figures in front of me to totally address you. I accept your point and I don't think it's a good thing to have physical barriers splitting electorates to that extent. Mind you, I will say I could never work out why Tibooburra ended up with Albury either but we won't go there.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Cobb, your friend is welcome to come to the table if he – yes.

THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Ben, you're welcome to make the point.

25 MR FRANKLIN: Apologies. Ben Franklin's my name. I'm the State Director of the National Party.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

30 MR FRANKLIN: I just wanted to make the point, if you do want to include Rylstone and Kandos with Mid-Western in the seat of Parkes, your point is quite correct, Mr Watkins, that Hunter then does fall below the requirement, but then you can move part of, at least, the Liverpool Plains if you wanted to go down this line - which we're not recommending, but it's an option you could do – into Hunter from  
35 New England and that would keep both New England and Hunter within the appropriate range.

40 MR WATKINS: Yeah. I accept there are a range of corrections. Equally we could go into Paterson or any of the surrounding areas.

45 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: I think the whole basis of our submission, if I can say so, is we accept you have a job to do and we don't always like the way it turns out but we're trying to be pragmatic about this and Parkes and Forbes are so much of the Orange sphere of influence and everything, far more than Mudjee or Wellington, and I realise it's only part of Wellington you're talking about but Wellington want to keep their shire in one hit, which I can accept. That's fair enough. But we're trying to give you a way to do the right thing by the spheres of influence and at the same time, not give you a flow

on effect to 20 different electorates and I think we've done that. I think we've been able to show you a way in which that could be done without being unfair to anybody.

5 I mean, I would love to have Mudgee - it sells very good wine - so does Orange - but I do think that it is not being doing the right thing by Parkes and Forbes and I mean, the issue of Parkes being in Parkes, I don't really think is that big an issue. I mean, you obviously didn't think so three years ago and it wasn't named after the town, it was named after the man, so I, you know, I really think it's just an issue of doing the right thing by the people concerned without creating a headache.

10

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any other questions? No. Thank you very much, Mr Cobb.

15 THE HON JOHN COBB MP: Thank you.

15

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Penny, Mr Ron Penny.

MR PENNY: Well, firstly, thank you for giving us the opportunity of being able to speak here today. I am a councillor at Forbes. I've had business in Forbes. I owned a property. I was raised there, went to school there. I've moved around the state in an occupation at one time and I married a Parkes girl. Have more relations in Parkes than I do Forbes. So I believe that in truth I can speak from the heart about Forbes, about Parkes and why we want to remain within the seat of Calare. There are obviously very good reasons. Among those, for example, is CENTROC. Now, CENTROC, as you are probably aware is a combination of local government towns that formed that body.

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If you look at CENTROC you'll find that it mirrors the local government area of basically the Federal electorate of what we are talking about wanting to remain in. In other words, all those towns of interest and influence that we deal with, if you like, on a daily and weekly and yearly basis are in Calare, not outside Calare, within Calare. The one time I was the chair of an ACC based in Orange, travelled from Forbes to Orange to chair that body, when there was a change of government I was asked to go on to the interim board of RDA and did so. Now, when we looked at all those things there is absolutely no doubt in my mind about the area that we require to remain within because of the influence it has over where we are and the things that it has that we need.

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35

Do I travel to Dubbo? Yes, I have because the Newell Highway goes through Forbes and Dubbo and whatnot and I travel up that way to go to Tamworth to visit my son. That's the amount of times I would travel through Dubbo is on my way through it. No business, never have had any business activities in Dubbo. It has always been either in Forbes or Parkes, Orange, Bathurst, Sydney. Now, I also sit on Sydney University's Community Rural Advisory Board where we are looking to try and improve the uptake of doctors in the bush and nurses and overcome some of the many problems that we see sitting in those areas. And where are we working to? Well, it's not to Dubbo, unfortunately, it's to Orange, Orange and Bathurst again

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because we are actually working in with Sydney University's campus in Orange, their rural campus in Orange and CSUs campus in Bathurst.

5 A gentleman that will be speaking after me is the chair of JRV, Jemalong Retirement Village, they are relocating. We are looking at that because it's next door to the hospital in Forbes. Forbes Council are building a walk in, walk out medical facility there for doctors. We're going to great lengths and strife and trouble to try and improve the lot that we have. We've got a helipad that we're putting in. Will the helicopter be going to Dubbo? No, it won't. It will either go from Forbes direct to  
10 Orange, or Forbes direct to Sydney. And where do I go for my business? Well, as I say, local, Orange, Sydney. So why do we want to remain within, or go into the Parkes electorate with Dubbo when we've got no interest, none at all? The only interest that exists currently, to my knowledge between Forbes and Dubbo, but it applies equally to Orange, is in rugby and ruby league because that takes in that  
15 competition. Surely we are a bit better than just running around a paddock.

I would like to think that we can look at shopping, business, education. Now, as I've already mentioned the unis that in Bathurst and Orange and TAFE. We have no link with TAFE in Dubbo. We are trying to get more tradespeople in Forbes. And where  
20 do we go? We go to Orange, to TAFE, and council's put up money so that, and a block of ground, for the house to be built and TAFE are going to do it. We have caused a program to come into place to teach people how to be builders, plumbers and all those things that are necessary, vitally necessary of which we have skill shortages of in our region. Would you want to put us away from that? Orange is a  
25 natural direction. Look at the road networks, transport. If I didn't have a car I'd have to get out and thumb a lift to Dubbo. But I can get a bus, I can get transport on to Orange, or Dubbo, I can catch a plane, fly down to Sydney. Everything is in that direction.

30 So I hope I'm not being too emotional or silly about it, but I really believe in what I'm saying. I really want you to believe what I'm saying because no other way can we survive properly. We've had a shocking time. Wyangala Dam is back to about six per cent. Irrigation has been a non-event. The only irrigation we have going out there at the moment is through bores. But the Lachlan Valley we're all part of.  
35 Forbes and Parkes are in the heart of it. We don't want to be shifted up to the Macquarie because we are Lachlan. Incidentally, if I'm correct, Calare means Lachlan in Aboriginal. We don't want to go away from there.

40 So without labouring over it all, I mean I think of shopping, school, businesses, the unis the education and health, because in Orange you have a new big base hospital being built and we're trying to piggyback in on that by having a mini campus established in the JRV complex that's there now to work in with that and for the teachings of year 3 and 4 in med students, in nursing, for chemists and the likes, and we can do that with working in with Orange, but we can't do it working in with  
45 Dubbo. We don't want to be shifted. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good, thank you very much, Mr Penny. Any questions?

MR PENNY: Yes, are there any questions?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, thank you.

5 MR PENNY: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Graeme Miller.

10 MR MILLER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. My name is Graeme Miller. I'm a  
lifelong resident of Forbes. I was on Forbes Shire Council till the last election, I was  
deputy mayor. So I have a fair idea. As I go through I'll tell you my positions that I  
hold within the community. I sold the farm about eight years ago which was  
probably one of the best moves I've made in my life due to the drought. Forbes is,  
15 it's a natural – in position. I look at Orange as a category one town. There's a lot of  
towns, say Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Wagga, towns like Forbes which I call category  
2 towns, they do feed off these larger towns. And as the previous speakers have said,  
it's so important that we keep the relationship with Orange and that's why I think it  
is just important we stay in the electorate of Calare.

20 As a councillor and former deputy mayor of Forbes Shire Council the importance of  
CENTROC is very important as a lobby organisation with the State and Federal  
Government. The centres of that is moved towards the east of Forbes which is the  
natural course to stay in Calare. .... is a large organisation because of the size of it,  
and with the medical situation and specially the new hospital at Orange, I look at that  
25 as the Westmead of the west. There's some terrific specialists there. There's a lot of,  
any person who is transported from Forbes, most people are transported to Orange  
and a small number are transported to Sydney.

30 As chairman of Jemalong Retirement Village we were very lucky to receive a large  
grant from the previous government, and endorsed by this government, of 5.9 million  
which is one of the largest grants in rural Australia for an aged care facility. We are  
in the process of building that facility at the moment. It's about \$18 million. It will  
probably be one of the best age care facilities in rural Australia when it's finished.  
We are in association with a larger organisation which is Catholic Health Care.  
35 Forbes Shire Council, our association, Catholic Health Corp and the Federal  
Government working together. Catholic Health Care have facilities in Dubbo and  
also in Orange. They did have an office in Orange which has been closed due to the  
economic situation and the funding for age care.

40 The existing Jemalong will become vacant within 12 months, and as the previous  
speaker, we have been working very hard. The main thing what we got to do is try  
and retain some of our young people in the rural towns, especially the size of Forbes,  
professional people. If we can get an association with the Charles Sturt University,  
Sydney University, the Western Institute of TAFE and get a small campus started on  
45 this site here out of that we will retain, the statistics say we will retain some people in  
the rural towns.

One of them, my son, is a partner in a large accounting firm in Orange and he has just opened up with his other partners an office in Forbes. So there's that relationship between Forbes and Orange again. My daughter is a pharmacist. She's part owner of the two pharmacies in Forbes. She's a member of a group of pharmacies which are related in Parkes, Orange, Bathurst and Forbes. So there's another group of pharmacies, they are in a buying group, that she is part of that organisation.

At this stage I am chairman of the community housing between Forbes and Parkes. Anything that we have problems with, we're supply for the residents of those two towns affordable housing. Now, they've just changed the name, the Community Housing Division is based in Orange. So there's another link between our area and Orange. The community transport, which I was part of up till about 12 months ago. They went from a full flown committee to an advisory committee and I couldn't see any sense staying on it when you couldn't make any decisions. But the transport between Forbes and Parkes is basically all to medical appointments in Orange.

So it just looks to me, as a resident of the town now, that it seems good business and good sense to stay in the Calare electorate and I thank you for the time.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Good, thank you very much, Mr Miller. Any questions?

MR KILLESTEYN: Mr Miller, I apologise if this sounds like a stupid question, but I'll ask it anyway.

25 MR MILLER: Yes.

MR KILLESTEYN: All of the strategies that you've outlined, or, sorry, the relationships that you've outlined between Parkes and Forbes to Orange, and all of the strategies you have for strengthening those relationships, would they change if the proposed boundaries were confirmed?

MR MILLER: That is very hard to say. We have just been so used because, as the previous speaker, we don't go to Dubbo. All our focus is - - -

35 MR KILLESTEYN: Can I ask the question why would they change if the proposed boundaries were confirmed?

MR MILLER: They probably, look, I really can't answer that. I'm just a resident of Forbes. I'm not a political person. I'm not affiliated with any political party. I can just see is the corridor and the electorate is based on, it is just where it is placed in the state.

MR KILLESTEYN: Thank you.

45 MR MILLER: Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Good, thank you very much. I think Mr Easson, is your friend here? Thank you.

5 MR McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, gentlemen. I bet you're glad to see me, I think I'm lucky last. My name is Graham McLaughlin.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.

10 MR McLAUGHLIN: My name is Graham McLaughlin. I've been a resident of this shire nearly all my life. I work in the shire. I'm actually on council. I'm currently the deputy mayor at the moment. I know you have a submission from council and I'm not speaking to that recommendation. I'm actually speaking to the recommendation that you would understand of Throsby – your recommendation. Now, the mayor has made a submission which was confirmed by council.

15 I actually left the chamber at that time with another councillor to not have any part in this, so I'm speaking as a resident, as the endorsed Labor candidate, as a person that works in the shire and has brought my family up here. I'd also, if I could, just acknowledge my other councillor here, Juliet Arkwright, who I'm sure you've heard from today. Where do I start? It's very interesting. Basically I think that the mayor wanted the LGA to basically contain the whole shire which makes sense, but I understand that you gentlemen have got to work out the quota and see where things fall.

25 What I would say to you gentlemen, I work in the industry. Let me tell you about where I work. I work at Blue Circle Southern Cement in Berrima. I've worked there for 30 years. Now, we do have a lot of local people that work there, but can I tell you we've got a lot of people that come up from Albion Park, from down the coast. Can I tell you that our general manager, Ian Unsworth, actually resides in Kiama along with – I would say there would be more than a dozen, probably 20 out of our employees that would travel up the coast. My wife is a school teacher. She actually works in Wollongong.

35 My children when they left school went to Wollongong University. What I'm saying is our affiliation here is very much centred to the coast. On a hot summer's day where's the closest beach? You know its Shellharbour, and that traditionally is where the people of the Highlands – I know you might talk about – and I've heard people talking about the escarpment. A lot of people negotiate that every day without any drama. I think it's a 10 or 12 minute drive, and I think, gentlemen, if you get the opportunity to go to the Illawarra Fly and you can look down across Lake Illawarra you can see the whole electorate, and that's where we're connected, I think, quite rightly.

45 I did my apprenticeship here in Vale Engineering. Now, Vale Engineering is an engineering workshop precisely for the coal industry. The coal industry was the Southern Coalfields. That's down the coast. So traditionally that's where – Vale Engineering is going through a big expansion. Can I tell you that our product – our

clinker from Blue Circle Southern Cement travels down the coast? So we have this link. We have trucks in, taking clinker and cement down to grinding facilities down the coast.

5 Council – I don't know if you're aware, but we're trying to set up an inland port that uses the rail line and the well-established transport system that runs from this shire down the coast. So in that regard we are very much connected. I mean I work with people that come from there. I don't work with anyone from Nowra. Basically we have got that connection. You've probably heard people say that we should be more  
10 connected with the Nowra – the Gilmore side of things and I would say, gentlemen, that what you have done putting together Throsby, I think it stands very much like the 1983 version of Collin Hollis's seat. It very much mirrors that. I mean just the name Throsby I mean we've got a Throsby House. The land grant that was given to Throsby in the early years, his house still stands in Moss Vale.

15 So the name Throsby is connected and we have been connected with Throsby in the past not that long ago in the eighties. Look, I could talk about - where we get our TV stations come from? Where do we get our radio? All these things are a connection to the coast. Education or transport, sports, for instance, soccer, rugby, the  
20 connection is down the coast. In Hume – what connection did we have with Young or Goulburn? Our connection is affiliated with the coast, and can I tell you, gentlemen, that with regard to our Southern Highlands Business Unit we have an association there. The president up here of the Southern Highlands Business Chamber has associations with the Illawarra Business Association.

25 We actually employ a tourist advisor, Steve Roser, and we have connections with the coast for our tourist industry, the Grand Pacific Drive, for instance. There are many examples of the connection that we make with the coast rather than to Gilmore. Look, I could go on speaking about all the different connections, the university.  
30 Look, I could say, for instance, that the Minister for the Illawarra, David Campbell, also includes the Southern Highlands as part of his area of responsibility. On the state level we are split, and I don't think it's concerned this shire, but Robertson doesn't fall in with the seat of Goulburn, and that hasn't been a great drama.

35 All I can say is that I recommend to you – I think that the proposal that you gentlemen have put forward makes good sense. As a councillor, as a person that works on the Highlands – some of the other things that I should have mentioned was our bus service. There are two daily bus services down the coast to Albion Park, Albion Park Rail into Wollongong. There are none into Nowra. In fact, last  
40 Monday's paper, on the 18<sup>th</sup> the bus service that was going to be run from Nowra by Kennedy's is ceasing on the 18<sup>th</sup>. So it's just not used. So the connection with people on that side was not viable where traditionally we've had two buses.

45 These are used for people that want to go shopping to Shoalhaven Square, Shoalhaven, and my children use it when they wanted to go to the coast and go surfing when they were younger. So, you know, traditionally, I think, we very much see ourselves – and I think even though we are separated by the Macquarie Pass and

certainly our temperature is a lot colder than they get down the coast, as my wife tells me when she gets home from work, it's 10 degrees colder here, but we certainly have that connection with the coast. Look, I'm happy to answer any questions if you have any. Thank you, gentlemen.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr McLaughlin. Any questions? No, thank you.

MR McLAUGHLIN: Okay, thank you.

10 MR EASSON: If I could just sum up - - -

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr Eason.

15 MR EASSON: If I can sum up for a couple of minutes. Firstly, we're here to support the Commissioners' boundaries concerning Gilmore and Throsby. We've had an argument as to what fits best with Nowra and the parts south of Nowra within the Electorate of Gilmore. We've earlier argued that you might have been better off having north south coastal electorates except for one as you had done in 2006 and as you had ..... from 1984 to 2006, but we didn't do that. So we've got a decision for  
20 this augmented Commission to decide whether to uphold the Committee's proposed boundaries or to decide whether the Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale area fits better with Nowra or with Wollongong.

25 I think we've had a compelling argument from Mr McLaughlin who works for the largest employer in manufacturing on the Southern Highlands, Blue Circle Southern Cement, and we found out that none of their employees come from Nowra, none, but several come from Kiama, Albion Park and places in Wollongong. Here we have an example where Wollongong's radius extends fairly far and wide, but Nowra's is limited. Let's just have a look at where the University of Wollongong has got  
30 campuses. It's got one at Moss Vale. It's got one at Nowra. It's got one in Loftus in the Division of Hughes. It's got one in Bateman's Bay and in Bega which you propose to put into Eden-Monaro.

35 That's just a small illustration of the radius of Wollongong which is clearly going to be greater than that of Nowra. Then we come to the other examples of that. You've got a rail freight link between Port Kembla and Moss Vale covering the rail stations along the Southern Highlands that we're talking about from Bundanoon up. It's a rail freight connection with Nowra. You've also got Countrylink providing bus services between Bundanoon and Bowral to Albion Park. You've got those bus  
40 services being provided.

Now, sure, there are some coming from Nowra up north, but as we've just found out the Kennedy bus service running from Nowra to Bowral is now to be cancelled. So clearly if the Highlands is going to have to fit somewhere it's a much better fit with the Kiama and Albion Park area than what the Liberal Party has proposed. Finally,  
45 to go back to my earlier point, you've got the agriculture in the southern part of the

Kiama seat which incorporates your Kangaroo Valley and Bomaderry which are within the Shoalhaven Shire and Kiama itself. Go through Kangaroo Valley, have a look at the dairying that's there, and then compare that to, say, Jamberoo and the area around Saddleback Mountain and so forth in Kiama.

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You'll find very similar dairying and other farming arrangements with the Kiama Shire, the northern part of the Shoalhaven Shire which are all within the State Seat of Kiama. So we feel that the Commissioners in their proposal have actually - with the north south division of Gilmore have put like with like. If you're going to put the Highlands with one area it's a better fit to put it in with Throsby. It would turn that Moss Vale area where Charles Throsby came from back with Kiama and Shellharbour in the originally drawn Throsby of 1984. That's a better fit than trying to come up with some arrangement with Nowra, and if you travel the road from Moss Vale to Nowra and from Moss Vale to Albion Park you can answer for me what road you'd rather be on. Thank you.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Well, that concludes today's hearing. The Commission is grateful for everybody's attendance and for those who made submissions. Thank you.

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**MATTER ADJOURNED at 3.46 pm INDEFINITELY**