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## Transcript of Proceedings

AUGMENTED ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR QUEENSLAND

THE HON PETER HEEREY QC, Chairperson  
MR E KILLESTEYN, Electoral Commissioner  
MR B PINK, Australian Statistician  
MS A BRIGHT, Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland  
MR GLENN POOLE, Auditor-General for Queensland

INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION  
OF FEDERAL ELECTORAL DIVISIONS IN THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND

CAIRNS

..DATE 29/09/2009

CHAIRPERSON: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to this meeting of the Augmented Electoral Australian Electoral Commission. My name's Peter Heerey. I'm the chair. I have on my right Mr Ed Killesteyn who is the Electoral Commissioner and who chaired the Redistribution Committee.

On my left Mr Brian Pink, the Australian Statistician, and other members of the Redistribution Committee who are sitting as members of the Augmented Commission: Ms Anne Bright, Australian Electoral Officer for Queensland; and Mr Glenn Poole, the Auditor-General for Queensland.

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THE HON B KATTER: Mr Chairman, it's a little bit difficult to hear.

CHAIRPERSON: I beg your pardon?

THE HON B KATTER: Can we turn - can we turn up the sound a little bit? It's a little bit difficult to hear.

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CHAIRPERSON: Sorry. All right. I'll try to speak up a bit, Mr Katter.

MR KILLESTEYN: Do you want to come forward? That might be easier as well.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Well, the background to today's hearing is that under the Commonwealth Electoral Act Queensland became entitled to one additional member of the House of Representatives bringing its total entitlement to 30 seats.

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Therefore, the Redistribution Committee considered a redistribution and prepared a proposal for the redistribution of Queensland into 30 Federal electoral divisions. That proposal was released on 24 July. Objections were invited, and subsequently comments on those objections were received. We have to consider all objections lodged in relation to the redistribution proposal.

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The primary consideration is that each division should meet certain number requirements. There is an average and the number should not be more - 3.5 per cent more or less than that average. For Queensland the average - and this is projected average in 2012 - is 97,232. So that means the maximum number for any division is 100,635 electors, and the minimum is 93,829 electors as at 9 July 2012.

Now, provided those numbers are correct, we must have due regard to communities of interest - that is economic and social - means of communication and travel, and physical features such as major roads, rivers, and the like, and the areas of the electorate. Also, although of lesser importance, we have to have regard to the boundaries of the existing electorates.

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Now, this inquiry will be recorded and full transcripts of proceedings will be included as part of the final redistribution report. After the inquiry we will deliberate and we hope to be able to make a public announcement about our decision on the redistribution on the 6th of October. That is a tentative date.

We would ask members of the public to identify themselves by name and address when they make their submissions.

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The first speaker who wishes to make submissions is The Honourable Bob Katter MP, the Member for Kennedy. Mr Katter has made a number of written submissions: the first dated the 24th of April this year, the comments on the public submissions, Mr Katter's submission is dated 8th May this year, and comments on the objections dated 2nd September this year.

I hope I am doing you justice, Mr Katter, as I understand it, basically you say that there should be a cascade because Leichhardt, the northernmost division, has too many, so electors from Leichhardt should progressively go down into the next most adjoining electorate, and so on down through the State. That's as I understand it, broadly speaking, which is again broadly speaking in accordance with the Redistribution Committee's proposal, but anyway please don't let me constrict what you want to put before the Commission, so it's over to you, Mr Katter.

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THE HON B KATTER: Do I sit down, or I stand up?

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CHAIRPERSON: Yes. If you're - that's perfectly okay.

THE HON B KATTER: You're probably aware that my father was a member for 20 years before me, and I - really I don't think anyone could have felt anything except extremely sorry for him that whole areas that he'd spent 10 and 15 years of his life looking after and developing and becoming knowledgeable, and projects that he had going there, were just kicked right out from under him, and he was thrown into a new area, and those people, of course - you know, they'd been working with a member of Parliament and getting programs going. The disruption of this nature is really colossal. I mean, the fact that we're having redistributions in this State every three years is disruptive beyond belief.

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I am in the middle, at the present moment - we've had three meetings with the Treasurer, and we're going to have a very big meeting in Canberra on this clean energy corridor between Townsville and Mount Isa. Now, you know, the person that is familiar with every single intimate detail of that, and that's a very homogeneous proposal, is myself, and really there's nobody else that would know anything about it. If the electorate was cut in half and I wasn't looking after half of that, that great proposal for Australia would simply die, and at least treasury and the Federal Government are thinking that there's very great merit in looking, but I use that as an

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example where you've worked on something for 10 or 15 years and suddenly it is out of your electorate. You've got no locus standi to work with later on at all.

And that's why it's very disruptive, and the laws are very, very bad laws. There should not be a redistribution in anything under nine years, in my opinion, firstly.

Secondly, I presume there are some people here from Cairns - there might not be, but I presume there are - and there's been some controversy here because part of Cairns, as they see it, has been put in a Mount Isa electorate. And, you know, they can - I mean, they're distressed about that, and I think that they should be except, of course, for the fact that it's not a Mount Isa electorate. Very much the centre of the electorate is Innisfail. We have two employees in Mount Isa only because there's only 30,000 people out there, and we have arguably five or six employees at the Innisfail office which is obviously the main office. My chief of staff is here today. She's naturally based in the Innisfail office where 160,000 people are within an hour and a-half drive of that office. So that is in fact the centre of gravity.

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But the situation to me - I try and sit down with these redistributions and figure out that if I was the Commissioner how would I look at this? Well, I don't think the Commission really has any alternative but to divide Cairns. Over the next 10 years Cairns will be divided in two. And you can say: Well, we'll take the Cape. There's no-one living in the Cape. What population is there is dwindling, so, I mean, you can't say: Well, you know, we'll put the Cape in. I mean, there's no population in the Cape. And Cairns itself is too big. I mean, the greater Cairns region now is 260,000 people. You know, that's within an hour's drive of Cairns.

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And between Gordonvale and Edmonton, which is this new area that's coming into the Kennedy electorate, if you like, the projected population growth there is 60,000 people in the next 10 years. So, I mean, if Innisfail is the centre of gravity, it will be much more the centre of gravity when 60,000 people are lobbed in its suburbs just the same as they're also the suburbs of Cairns.

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So the point I wish to make is that (1) clearly the laws are terrible where there's being a redistribution every three years when there should be a redistribution not under nine years, firstly. And secondly, to wedge the Commissioners in where they've got no flexibility as far as seat size goes, it makes it terribly difficulty. But if you look at North Queensland - I mean, Leichhardt has got nowhere to go. Obviously it can't go into New Guinea and it can't go into the Northern Territory or the Pacific Ocean. It can only go south, and it's completely bounded by Kennedy. Obviously it has to shed - I don't know what the figure is - 10,000 or whatever it is, into Kennedy. Well, I'm sorry, you can't get that from the Torres Straits.

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I mean, it would be really ridiculous to look at the Torres Straits because you can understand most of the population of the Cape York Peninsula is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent. They're a very, very poor people. In fact, the most serious problems exist there because of their poverty. Now, if they can get enough money to get to Cairns they're not going to be able to get enough money to hire a car to get down to Innisfail. So - I mean, they really need to be based on Cairns and it would be very, very bad for them if they weren't based on Cairns. Now, even if they were based on Kennedy there's still not enough votes there. You still end up having to take the bottom part of Cairns out whichever way it goes.

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Now, having said that, we have a situation where the northern suburbs - the northern beaches area of Townsville - has all been in the Kennedy electorate, so I have the northern suburbs and I have what we call the northern beaches area. We've got 300 million to develop the road there. We've got two overpasses. There's only three in North Queensland and I've got two of them there. Now, one of the reasons for that was I concentrated on that. I had that entire road in my electorate and I devoted the full resources of my office, and my own personal attention, and drew upon building up relationships with the key decision makers, and we got an absolutely brilliant result there.

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Now, here - with a much greater population - in the southern approaches to Cairns we've got no overpasses at all. It takes me two hours to get from - we allocate two hours to get from Innisfail, a lousy 70 k, into Cairns, and there's no overpass. And the reason for that is I do not own the southern approaches to Cairns, and I drop out on the outskirts of town here, and I really couldn't justify putting that attention into what was really a benefit for the southern part of Cairns as much as it was for the northern part of the other areas.

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So what I'm saying to you is: It is a natural arrangement that the areas south of Cairns be linked in to Cairns in every respect and that is what is being proposed here, and at all times I couldn't see how redistributors acting with integrity would act in any other way, shape, or form.

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Now, all of the people that I saw - and I'm not saying that was all the people - complaining about the redistribution - all of the ones that I saw were prominent members of the Liberal National Party, the LNP as it's now called. And they desperately didn't want to lose that area because they felt it was an area that voted for them.

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Now, if I could point out to the Commissioners that this is a spurious argument for two reasons. One - and I'll just on a crude political approach - just the crude politics of it - when the northern beaches came in there was a massive effort by the conservative parties to win because they looked at a number of those areas and they were conservative voting areas. Well, in the next State election they voted nearly 70 per cent

Labour and they voted very solidly for me. Now, I mean, the Australian electors no longer work like that. Where you think you're going to get a political advantage in an area it doesn't - it can sometimes work that way - but a lot of the times that's not the way that it works at all. So, you know, I would just advise them, as their political advisor, that they're being rather stupid.

But if we redistribute on the narrow interests of political parties then we get bad government. We really get bad government. If we don't do it on that basis then a person such as myself - who is now representing this area - the northern beaches and the northern suburbs of Townsville - it's his job to get local telephone calls for that area. It's his job to get overpasses so that we can get quickly in and out of the city from the northern beaches area where people can live, you know, on very civilised five or 10 acres and still get quickly to work, and we can provide very cheap land for them if they can get great distances fast.

So I make, as my second point, that the only conceivable argument that you could put up for the southern area of Cairns should not go into Kennedy is a political argument. I defy anyone to put forward a logic that is different than that particular logic. And I should also say - and I think it's one of the major points, Mr Commissioner, that I'm here to say today - is that over the next 10 years Cairns will have to be divided in two. There's no doubt about that. So, you know, whinge, kick, squeal, now doesn't matter. You absolutely will be two electorates. You will never have a single electorate based on the city of Cairns. Nor would it be desirable that that would be the case, and I think quite frankly that Cairns has suffered very, very badly because it has been totally economically focused on tourism and not upon the wider industries that surround it.

Some of the most sophisticated technology is taking place. Airplane skins for airplanes are being built in Mareeba. They have some of the best carbon fibre moulding factories in Australia up there. I mean - you know, people are not aware of that. They need to be made aware of that. They need to understand that they are a centre of an area. They are not a little area - an island. They are part of a greater area. And I think that that would be very healthy for the people living outside Cairns, and very healthy for the people living inside Cairns.

The other point which I'll just touch on briefly today because we're at Cairns is the proposal by the LNP to take half of Charters Towers which I just consider so silly that I shouldn't really be dealing with it, but I just mention it here in Cairns today because if you're in Cairns you say: Well, what are the other alternatives? I mean, why you go to the cascade proposal is there's no population in North Queensland outside of the major cities. I mean, yes, there is. There's a little pod, Mount Isa, 25,000 people, and Cloncurry beside it of about 3 or 4,000 people - 3 and a-half

to be exact. So, yes, there is a little pod there of about 27 - 28,000 people, but they've got to go somewhere and they're North Queensland oriented in every single way. I mean, all of their product will go out through the port of Townsville. All of their fly-in miners are coming out from Townsville and Cairns. About 2,000 of our 5,000 miners working in that area are fly-in miners from Townsville and Cairns. I mean, nobody flies in from Rockhampton or Mackay. That doesn't happen. They fly into the coalfields, they don't fly into hard rock mining fields.

The copper from Mount Isa - Mount Isa's major product - a very significant item in the Australian economy, never mind about the Queensland economy, that copper goes to Townsville to be processed at the big copper refineries in - in Townsville. In days past nickel came from those areas and went to be refined at the nickel factory in Townsville. All of the zinc - and BHP the biggest mining company in the world - its richest zinc mine in the world is near Mount Isa, that's Cannington, all of its zinc comes back for processing in Townsville. I mean, the area's original length - they have a body called MITEZ which is Mount Isa Townsville Enterprise Zone, and that's what's called - the Enterprise Zone - so all of those things - I mean, if you're going to link Mount Isa with somewhere - it'd be ridiculous to link it to Central Queensland. And to link it to south-western Queensland would be imbecilic beyond belief. I mean, that area's a grain and sheep area. We have no grain and we have no sheep. Yes, they have a bit of cattle, but we're all cattle outside of mining, but there's not much population involved in cattle - very, very small - that's not the big interest. The big interest is the mining towns of Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

So, Mr Chairman, in summary, over the next 10 years Cairns, because of its very rapid and wonderful growth, will more and more become two electorates. One will be Leichhardt and I presume the other will be Kennedy as Kennedy is sucked more and more into this electorate. That has to happen because there is nowhere else for Leichhardt to go. There's just no other alternative. And over the next 10 years I can't see any possibility of us getting an extra seat in north Queensland. We just won't be big enough to get an extra seat, so that won't be able to happen. So we're just moving with a trend that will continue, firstly.

The second point I want to make is: It is not good for an area like Gordonvale, Babinda, Innisfail to be cut off from their capital city which is Cairns. They should be linked into that capital city. And I can be very specific by simply stating where they had a single member, North Townsville, then they got 300 million dollars worth of roadways, two overpasses, and a five lane highway with no roads coming onto it much at all. You can get in very rapidly from the northern suburbs. Here it is just a nightmare and there's going to be another 60,000 people dumped in there. They need specific representation by a single person, not half by one person and half by another person. That never works out.

So I use a specific example to point out that the surrounding areas should be, wherever humanly possible, locked into their capital city or - or their centre, which is Cairns, and that's what is being proposed to by the Commissioners, and I - I put in my - anticipating that sensible people would come to that conclusion. I always like my - what I put forward to be as sensible as is humanly possible, in line with the principles of community of interest communication and physical lay of the - the - the arrangements.

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The third point I wish to re-iterate - I've already made the point but I'd just like to make it again, that in North Queensland, there are only three population centres: Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. Yes, we have a significant pod in Mount Isa but those are the three. And if you're going to have to have 95,000 electors, or whatever it is, then you simply have to divide those capital cities up.

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There is no other way of doing it, and that's why we call it a cascade effect. I mean, obviously Cairns has to lose some population into Kennedy. That means that Kennedy has to shed population into Townsville, and Townsville has to shed population into Mackay, and Mackay has to shed population south in Dawson. There's just no other way that this can go. And you can't fiddle around with the western areas because there's no-one living there. There's just - I mean, you can do all the fiddling you like but there's no population there that can meet the requirements of the Act.

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So those are the things that we want to say and - and it may be construed as a little bit nasty and pointed, but really, the only screams that I have heard coming from there have been from people who somehow believe they have a big vested interest in offloading the poor old first Australians that live in the Torres Straits and the Cape York Peninsula who have a tendency to vote ALP. They want them out of Leichhardt, and that's the logic behind it. And if those poor people have to be tremendously inconvenienced, tremendously inconvenienced - I mean, it's no trouble for the southern - people living in the south of Cairns to - to jump in a car and drive down or - particularly when we get the road improved, Mr Chairman - to drive down to my - but I, to get to - to get to my office in Innisfail, I have to go through Cairns every week. So anyone in Cairns will not be at a disadvantage. You can meet me virtually two, three times a week - I will be going through Cairns.

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So they will not be disadvantaged, they will be advantaged even over people that live in Innisfail because oftentimes I'm going to the Tablelands, the Atherton Tablelands area, but to get there I have to go through Cairns. So whether I'm going to Innisfail or whether I'm going to the Atherton Tablelands, I have to go through Cairns.

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So, I mean, those people will not be disadvantaged at all but for the poor black people, the - the first Australian people, they've got to get to here and if they don't happen to be here at the time that I'm here, then they've got to somehow, you

know, get a taxi which they couldn't dream of affording or - or get a hire car which they similarly couldn't afford to try and get themselves down to Innisfail. And to be serviced by someone that is servicing Ingham and Innisfail, and even if you didn't have the west, it would still be a very, very huge task indeed.

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But to ask someone from Cairns to service those areas, well, yes - I mean, you're asking one person to service half of Queensland in area and then you're asking the other person to service a little postage stamp around Cairns. Well, there should be some fairness there too.

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And finally, Mr Chairman, I make one other observation which probably is not so relevant but, you know, I just did some checking again last month but, you know, there is no country on earth that does not make some sort of allowance for remoteness, and the situation is I had to put a formal submission into the Government on my travel for a three-month period. And it was just heartbreaking for me to see that my average travel per week was 42 hours. So before I did any meaningful work, 42 hours was gone in travel.

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This arrangement will actually make it a lot easier for me, and I don't mean for me but for whoever is the Member for Parliament, I'm reaching the end of my run. Whoever will be the Member of Parliament, it - it will cut down on that 42 hours. Not significantly, but if the Member for Parliament for Kennedy was to be given the Cape as well, then he would spend 50 or 60 hours a week travelling, and I mean, that's not democracy. That's some other form of Government but it ain't democracy.

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Or you could just not visit any of those places, but if you visit those places and I visit - I just want to finish on this note, I'm on a committee that went up to the Torres Strait. I hadn't been up there for 20 years, I was the Minister for about 10 years, and every time I've ever been there, the meals were always locally grown product. The fish, crustaceans, they were caught by the people themselves. There was taro and yam and all those things that they grow themselves, bananas. All the meals was local.

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This time, I did not touch a single piece of food that was local. AQIS has closed down, they claim - AQIS has closed down all of their farming. Most certainly all of their pigs, all their chooks were taken away by the quarantine service, and they are left no way now of providing any food for themselves, which means they have to buy the food in from the mainland. By the time it gets up there, it's almost double in price.

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And they've got to buy all other household items; toiletries and - and toothpaste and all of those things that have GST on - on the transportation and freight. And on the shelves, there was only - I'd say about seven per cent of shelves were rice. That's all they could afford to buy, was rice. They're like a third world country. Their diabetes and heart attack

has reached a point where it's almost epidemic proportions. That was the reason why the committee went up there but I could see clearly if you had a diet which was almost exclusively rice, you were going to get terrible problems of - of diabetes and - and heart disease.

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But I point out to you that if the Member of Parliament goes there, then he will become aware of those problems. And if he is in any way a decent Member of Parliament, he will fight for those people. If he doesn't go there, he's got no time to go there because he's having to spend 60 hours a week travelling, then he will never know what those problems are. You won't know that those people are - I wouldn't have known that. I'd seen figures but I didn't believe those figures. But when I go up there and saw it for myself, I understood that there was a very serious problem.

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So nothing beats being there, and to be there, you need time. And - and that is an enormously difficult resource with all electorates being equal size in Australia. In Great Britain, last time I looked, Orkney Isles had 22,000 electors. East London, who also have a Member of Parliament, had 130,000 electors. Nonciak, in Canada, there was about 20,000 electors in Nonciak, and Quebec South had 120,000 electors. Every country in the world - the State of Arizona, their - their Senate legislates, unlike our Senate, is-----

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CHAIRPERSON: Yes. Well, you'd appreciate this is an important-----

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THE HON B KATTER: I've got to go.

CHAIRPERSON: -----policy consideration which is really beyond our powers, yes.

THE HON B KATTER: I know, Mr Chairman, but I think it impinges upon how the boundaries are drawn. And just give me one second more, in the United States, Arizona, with two million - last time I looked - people, has two Senators, and 40 million people in California only have two Senators. And it's a legislature - in fact, the ethanol legislation, very near and dear to my heart, was - came through from the Senate, not from the House of Representatives in the United States.

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So all these other countries - and it was held by the Supreme Court in the United States that - that it is able to have electorates of unequal size, but that's not our situation in Australia, and - and that's very bad for Australia as a whole, as well as being absolutely dreadful for northern Australia.

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Mr Chairman, thank you very much. For the Commission, on every redistribution I have written down what I think is a sensible thing to do before the Commission sat, and in each case, that has been what the Commission has done, because I think that they as far as humanly possibly kept their integrity with the people and we want to thank you for that.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much, Mr Katter. Well, the next speaker we've got is Mr Bob Richardson. Mr Richardson, over to you. 1

MR RICHARDSON: Bob Richardson, 45 Riverstone Road Gordonvale. I have in front of you - Mr Chairman, I've tabled some submissions. It is different to what you've already had.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, we've got that. 10

MR RICHARDSON: And I also hand out my address as well which I will read or give it to you now. Mr Chairman, Commissioners, I welcome the opportunity to address you here today. It's 25 years since I last appeared before this Commission. That was when the then existing division of Leichhardt had to be split to increase the size - to allow for the increase in the size of Parliament. I've tabled some additional information which I have for the assistance to the Commission in determining the final boundaries. 20

Kuranda. First I'd like to thank Mr Mark Freeman of Kuranda for allowing me to use his suggestion and objection to the State electoral redistribution in 2007 and 2008 as part of the presentation today. I draw your attention to the aerial photograph of Kuranda on page 7. It sets out the total area that is classed as Kuranda as explained by Mr Freeman, page 4 and I've highlighted that. 20

CHAIRPERSON: That's page 7 and page 4----- 30

MR RICHARDSON: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON: -----of - of your document this morning?

MR RICHARDSON: Yes, of the - the one with "QRCS" on the front of it, Mr Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON: I don't seem to have that bit.

MR RICHARDSON: There's an aerial photograph on the first one. Is that----- 40

CHAIRPERSON: Oh, I see. Okay. Thank you.

MR RICHARDSON: Yes, and then page 4 is what Mr Freeman has set out as the - as the area that defines Kuranda, and I've highlighted that. That is - that is Kuranda shows several communities on the map under "Physical features."

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, we have that. 50

MR RICHARDSON: Yes, okay. So then you would note from Mr - from this photo, Mr Freeman's submission that Kuranda is totally surrounded by mountains and as such cut off from the rest of the Tableland Regional Council area. It has a different economic basis to the rest of the Tableland and regional council area. In fact, when the Mulgrave Shire Council and the Cairns City Council were amalgamated in 1995

consideration was given to including Kuranda, the Kuranda district, in that amalgamated local authority; however, it did not eventuate. 1

The tourist industry is closely linked to the Cairns industry by the Kuranda Scenic Railway and Skyrail with over a million tourists being transported to Kuranda annually. A couple of years ago the rail line to Kuranda was closed for a considerable time so the mountains on the side of the track could be stabilised and the Kuranda economy suffered badly because of the lack of tourists. 10

Then we go to Koah. Koah is a part - a part of Koah is in the district division of Kennedy between the Clohesy River and Davies Street along the Kennedy Highway. Mr Freeman points on page 2 of his objection, that's over past - it starts off on - I've written on top - on top "Kuranda/Cook Barron River Boundary."

CHAIRPERSON: What page is that, Mr Richardson? 20

MR RICHARDSON: It starts off with the objection and it - you've got the maps of the - the original submission and then you go to this, and on - on page - you're right now?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

MR RICHARDSON: On page 2 Mr Freeman against sets out the difference between the - the Kuranda area and the Mareeba area, and he states that the postcodes change, the - at the Davies Street bridge. The delivery of the local paper changes, the ambulance and police areas change and so does where people tend to bury their loved ones, Kuranda or Mareeba. Mr Freeman tells me that after the last State redistribution he had - had been completed he received a phone call from a member of the committee who told him that he'd never before thought of where a person was buried could help define a community of interest, but when you think of it, they usually got to their - on a borderline wherever they look at their main town. 30 40

I apologise for the quality of this print, but I will be able to - there's one being posted down to me and as soon as I get it, I'll say - we've got one for the records, I'll send it down to Gordon. The areas involved - these are the two areas in Kennedy now that I believe should go in with Kuranda into Leichhardt. The CCD is 3303022 which has an enrolment of 330 at the moment and projected enrolment of 396 at the 9th of the 7th, 2012 and part of 3030306, that is east of the Barron River. Some of it over in the Biboohra area is in that CCD2. 50

All right. As I said previously, and that's in the submissions I've made to you, that this CCD includes those areas outside which I've just raised and I do not know how many people would be on either side. However, the CCD had a total of 312 on the 19th of February this year - that should be nine, not seven, sorry - and 334 on the 9th of - projected on the 9th of 7th, 12. Even if the whole - even if the whole

CCD was transferred, my alternative suggestion for the division of Leichhardt would still be under that magical figure of 100,635 on the - and that - sorry, that figure again should be 012, not '09. 1

Also it would have no bearing on the minimum figure of Kennedy. Kennedy is pressing the upper limits, not the lower limits. As I stated in my objection, that for my alternative suggested division of Kennedy to be under the 100,635 projected enrolment as at the 9th of the 7th, 12, it is crucial that this area be transferred into Kennedy. As Mr Freeman states on page 6 of his suggestion, that's the original front page, Mount Molloy and Julatten have similarities and social cohesions with both Mareeba, Mossman and Mossman/Port Douglas areas. Sugar cane grown in that area is taken down the Rex to be crushed at the Mossman Sugar Mill. Julatten is to Mossman what is Kuranda is to Cairns, a cooler place to live and work down the coast. 10

Julatten people use Mossman and Port Douglas for goods and services they cannot obtain locally, just as Kuranda uses Smithfield at the bottom of the range and the Cairns CBD. Very few people in these localities would use Mareeba. All three towns are on the road to Cooktown. Mount Molloy on the Peninsula Development Road, now called the Mulligan Highway, from Mareeba, Julatten is on the Rex Highway from Mossman and Mount Carbine, which is closer to the Cook Shire boundary is passed through no matter which route you take, the - from Cairns, the Kuranda Range, Kuranda or the Rex Ranges. If these towns are retained in the division of Leichhardt they would also - they would be on the road to Cooktown should the local member drive there and where they would be just an northern outcrop in the vast division of Kennedy, with all respects, Bob. 20 30

THE HON B KATTER: No, that's fine.

MR RICHARDSON: Next to a river versus the Cook Shire boundary. As stated in my objection I consider the Mitchell River a more recognisable boundary than the Cook Shire boundary and therefore it should be retained as the boundary between the divisions of Leichhardt and Kennedy. It was the - it's been the boundary since 1984 and therefore it has withstood the test of time. It's a noticeable - as I said in my objection - I won't go into the details, but a river is more noticeable than property boundaries, as what's the Mareeba Shire boundary is. 40

General. All the areas within the old Mareeba Shire that are in my alternate suggested division of Leichhardt are critical to keep the alternative suggested Kennedy under the 100,635 at as the 9th of the 7th, 12. 50

Now we go to the case for the compensation area. Timberlea, near Edmonton, the CCD - CCDs I suggest that be transferred from the proposed division of Leichhardt to the proposed - proposed division of Kennedy, to compensate for the addition of the areas of the Mareeba SLA to the proposed division of Leichhardt, are: 3012106, 3012119, 3012129. It should be noted that I suggest that only the part of these CCDs that are in the suburb of Bentley Park be included in the division of Kennedy. The remaining parts of these CCDs in the suburb of Mount Sheridan remain in my alternate suggested division of Leichhardt. But there's no electors there, as I go on to say; there's just mountains.

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The last page of the material I've tabled is a map of the area I've suggested be transferred. It's that map there, Mr - yes - are you - everyone right? Be transferred - this is the same map as I attached to my objection, except that a new shopping centre is being built on Walker Road, Edmonton, and I've marked that as a pink blob on the - on that map, down there... It's in the - yes - can you follow - follow that position? It will also - it - the shopping centre includes Coles and it's not going to be just a corner store. It will also have specialty shops. As with the adjacent Isabella State School, which is marked there too and it was marked on my objection, this shopping centre will service the area over the creek, which I suggest be transferred to the division of Kennedy.

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General: the overall projected electors as at the 9th of the 7th, 2012, in my alternative suggested division of Leichhardt is 99,888, which is 1799 more than the committee's proposed division, but still is 747 less than the allowable maximum.

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Kennedy division, Dawson/Herbert boundary - Herbert/Dawson boundaries, my alternative suggested division of Kennedy remains all the northern beaches pinnacle SLA. That means that it retains the coastal area between Bluewater and the Black River, which under the Redistribution Committee's proposal is transferred to the division of Herbert; retains the existing boundary with the division of Dawson, south of Townsville in the Woodstock area. I believe these boundaries create a clearer boundary than the - that proposed by the Redistribution Committee. Transfers can - transfers considerably less electors than that proposed by the Redistribution Committee; 3,800 instead of 8,400 as at the 19th of the 2nd, '09, and on projected enrolments at the - 9th of the 7th, 2012, 4,242, instead of 8,671. My alternative suggested division of Kennedy is still within the legislative maximum of projected electors as at the 9th of the 7th, '12 of 100,635 by 273 projected electors. That's where that transfer of colour comes into it.

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The total enrolment as at the 19th of the 2nd, '09, and the projected enrolment as at the 9th of the 7th, '12 will be slightly lower than these figures show once the exact enrolment and the projected enrolment of the split CCD in the Koah area are known.

Herbert/Dawson divisions: I believe that my alternative suggested divisions, place like suburbs with like, South Townsville and Railway Estate, with Cluden, Oonoonba, Stuart and Dawson. And I would like to say that I took that from Mr Katter's original suggestion and I'm quite pleased to credit Bob with that suggestion. And Annandale, which is predominantly a residential area of Lavarack Barracks, in Herbert with the barracks and the neighbouring university suburb of Douglas. The boundary is considerably more straightforward and easier to follow: University Road, Stuart Road, Ross River and Ross Creek and the one proposed by the Redistribution Committee.

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The transfer of electors and projected electors would be considerably less under my alternative suggested divisions than that proposed by the Redistribution Committee: 6,666 instead of 9,312, as at the 19th of the 2nd, 2009; and on projected enrolments as at the 9th of the 7th, 2012, 6,879 instead of 9,683, which is 2,646 less than at the 9th of the 2nd, 2009 and - and 2,804 less on projected enrolments as at the 9th of the 7th, 2012.

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Both my alternative - alternate suggested divisions of Herbert and Dawson have slightly lower and projected lower enrolments and projected enrolments than those proposed by the Redistribution Committee: Herbert, 355, as at the 19th of the 2nd, 2009, and on projected enrolments at the 9th of the 7th, 2012, 368. Dawson would have 1443 less on the 9th - 19th of the 2nd, '09 and on projected enrolments at the 9th of the 7th, '12, 1547.

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Conclusion: I thank the Commission for giving me this opportunity to appear here today and also the - redistribution secretariat, in particular Gordon and Matthew, for their assistance throughout the process. I thank the Commission - ask the Commission if they have any questions as to my presentation today or on any of my submissions during the process.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much, Mr Richardson. Any members of the Commission got any questions? No. Well, thank you very much, sir. Good. Now, are there any - any other speakers?

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MR KILLESTEYN: Mr Johnston.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes. Yes?

MR JOHNSTON: Selwyn Johnston.

CHAIRPERSON: Oh, yes. Yes, thank you. Sorry, your name is?

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MR JOHNSTON: Selwyn Johnston, Gordonvale.

CHAIRPERSON: So how do you - how do you spell your name?

MR JOHNSTON: S-E-L-W-Y-N, and Johnston, with a T and without an E. I've been asked that question many times.

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry. Yes, thank you, Mr Johnston.

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MR JOHNSTON: Mr Chairman, thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, initially I'd like to thank today's organisers for allowing me the opportunity to present my comments here. For me it was at short notice, but I'm grateful all the same.

As I am aware of the implied formula the AEC to attain State electorate - electoral - electorate quotas, I will not waste your valuable time addressing them.

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The whole Australian election process seems to be based on the premise that electorates are designed to - to elect a local community representative whose role is to represent his or her electorate. However, this has become absolute nonsense. There is no such thing as equal representation of constituents under the current Electoral Act. It is way past time the AEC took an objective view on the holistic picture regarding current electorate redistributions, which by way of a variety of anomalies are being misused, abused or otherwise corrupted, rather than being effective, as well as efficient.

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Unfortunately, the word "democracy" has become the most abused word in the English language. In the framework we are currently addressing, democracy inherently indicates a choice between different people, parties and philosophies. As the political parties have become so similar or intrinsically identical in policies and philosophies, the less effective our democratic process has become.

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When philosophy and policy are indistinct to the point where there is no real choice, it is for this reason I believe the non-participation by the increasing number of informal and ineligible non-voters could actually change an election outcome.

In 2007, Kennedy and Leichhardt electorate results highlight the "didn't bother to vote", "disinterested" or "disillusioned" attitude by voters which produced some disturbing figures that deserves redistribution soul-searching by the AEC. Take Kennedy: an enrolment of 91,713; formal voters of 82,319; an informal vote numbered at 3,291 or 3.84 per cent; eligible non-voters, there were 9,394, which represents 10.24 per cent - which gives a total eligible voter variance of 12,685 voters, which represents 13.83 per cent.

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Leichhardt: the enrolment of 94,312; formal voters, 82,943; informal vote of 4,417, which is a percentage of 5.06 - is ridiculous; with eligible non-voters 11,369, which represents 12.05 per cent. This gives a total eligible voter variance in the number of 15,786 or 12.05 per cent.

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Keeping in mind the two examples of far north Queensland's two massive electorates of Kennedy and Leichhardt, I advisedly draw your attention to the following. There are two enrolment quotas calculated during the redistribution process. The current quota or average divisional enrolment and the

projected quota or average divisional enrolment is the projection time, which is usually three and a-half years after the expected completion of the redistribution. In each case the quota is calculated by dividing the number of people enrolled by the number of members, to which the State or territory is entitled, and the current voter, current quota, uses the number of electorates on the roll when the redistribution commences and is permitted to vary by up to 10 per cent in each division. The projected quota, on the other hand, is based on the projected enrolment figure, usually three and a-half years after the expected completion of the redistribution, and may vary by no more than 3.5 per cent in each division.

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Ladies and gentlemen, I make these points to demonstrate the delicate art of drawing electoral boundaries, begins to more resemble the re-arranging of the deck chairs on the Titanic rather than enhancing the democratic process, despite all the hard work and genuine well-meaning effort that goes on by the AEC. It is to the point where the cynicism of the voting public supersedes the subtleties of drawing boundaries-----

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CHAIRPERSON: Yes, Mr Johnston, you'll have to appreciate that our powers are limited to considering-----

MR JOHNSTON: I understand that. I understand that.

CHAIRPERSON: -----the merits of this proposed distribution.

MR JOHNSTON: Unfortunately, that's the case because you're - you're governed by legislation, although I have no doubt that those present here will work honestly and diligently to achieve a totally neutral political outcome.

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The two-party system has been allowed to become firmly entrenched into Australia's democratic process with the effect that a party candidate, when elected, is subservient to his or her preferred political party, rather than the constituents who either wittingly or unwittingly elected. The outrageous suggestion that the alleged or so-called democratic process of equal representation by a Federal electorate has become a sick joke. Elected party politicians don't give a tinker's cuss about the expressed majority will of the people, mainly as a direct result of two mandatory party directives - (1) being the complete exclusion of public consultation; and (2) the strict adherence to the public - to the party line.

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Thus the process of redistribution has become just another political gain at the expense of disillusioned and, in many instances, disenfranchised Australian taxpayers.

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May I respectfully suggest that the AEC applies commonsense and reconsiders the current ill-advised proposed redistribution of the electorates of Kennedy and Leichhardt, that will without doubt adversely affect some 200,000 rural FNQ voters. For the above reasons, I make no detailed contribution on the redistribution process other than to say

that the old adage about "not seeing the forest for the trees".

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In conclusion, to those politicians or bureaucrats who believe these redistribution changes will - which defy sound reason, will make no adverse affect on regional voters, then why change them?

I finish within my 10 minutes. Thank you very much for the attention.

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CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Mr Johnston. Do any members of the Commission have any questions for Mr Johnston?

MS BRIGHT: No.

CHAIRPERSON: No. Thank you. Thank you, Mr Johnston.

MR JOHNSTON: My pleasure.

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CHAIRPERSON: Mr James Robertson?

MR ROBERTSON: Thank you. My name's James Robertson. I did not make any written submissions, so I came here this morning to listen to the various arguments and debates about this issue and I felt that I should have something to say on it.

Your Honours, I haven't prepared any demographics or - along this issue, as you can see, and I haven't made any - because I haven't made any written submissions. I would just like to say a community representative, you know, should - has to represent the immediate community and I - I cannot see how dividing Cairns from its satellite areas can help anybody. If we're worried about the size of electorate of possibly Kennedy becoming to encompass the number of persons, we only have to look at the issue in Western Australia where the seat of Kalgoorlie occupies about two-thirds or more of - three-quarters of the State of Western Australia. It goes from the south-east - or from the southern part, right through to the north and north-west of Western Australia. It is a huge electorate and, yet, one man still manages to serve it.

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Now, I - I believe that Cairns should be united with its satellite areas of Edmonton, Gordonvale, Kuranda and surrounding areas because we are of a like nature, and I - I understand that part of the constitution is that areas can - electorates can have a 10 per cent difference from city to country - country, over the national average, but to also to keep in mind like areas.

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Thank you for listening to my two minutes.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Any members of the Commission have any questions of Mr Robertson?

MS BRIGHT: Yes. Mr Robertson, Anne Bright. Good morning. Thank you for sharing your views with us. The way the legislation is framed, the Commission and the previous

Redistribution Committee must draw up boundaries that meet certain criteria, and one of those criteria are the numbers. And in drawing up the Federal boundaries there's no weighting for country divisions versus city divisions, per se. But in the case of this current redistribution what we are now considering, as - as the Commission, is the comments that all of you have put forward to us this morning, plus in addition coming up with a final proposal to ensure a thirtieth seat in the State.

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Now, bearing in mind everything we've heard this morning, what - the rules we are working with and within say that we, in looking at Leichhardt, as Mr Katter explained to us earlier this morning, there is nowhere that electors can go, except move on the land mass of the State of Queensland. So in doing that have you got a suggestion for the committee as to which area we should be looking at, other than what's already been expressed and spoken through this morning?

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MR ROBERTSON: No, I - I don't know how the demographics would stack up if - if the area of Cape York and Mareeba, Cape York and that part of Leichhardt were to be swung in to Kennedy, but it would - would seem to me that it would be an area more of like interest with western Queensland than what Cairns and surrounds are. That's the only thing I can suggest there.

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MS BRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.

MR ROBERTSON: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON: Good, thank you. Thank you, Mr Robertson. Ms Yandell?

MS YANDELL: Hi, my name's Marg Yandell and I'm the coordinator at the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre. I put in a brief written submission which outlines some of the issues that I could see from a human service perspective, and I guess that's where I'm coming from. I'm not equipped to look at the demographic information around electoral numbers, but I guess hearing some of the previous submissions, there are some solutions that might solve what I feel would be disadvantageous for the Kuranda community.

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So I guess from a general overview, and I've worked in the human service sector a fair bit in far north Queensland and I guess I could liken Kuranda to the Tully area where I also managed the community centre for a while where there seems to be a bit of an overlap, but only a tiny little bit for those particular areas. So Kuranda will miss out from resourcing in terms of services on the ground. So we rely on, as Tully did, on outreach services coming to Kuranda. So that's the model that we've used because we don't have those, I guess the resources available on the ground. We rely on services from Cairns and from the Tablelands to come and deliver direct services. Being a geographically isolated area, people find it very difficult to travel to Cairns or the Tablelands to get those services.

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So in terms of how we do that, the relationships that we have with our Members of Parliament is critical, and that's across all layers of Government. So the Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, the linkages in the relationships we have with those people makes it possible for us to resource ourselves well enough.

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If we were to become part of a larger electorate where the person that we need to have that relationship with, which is more important for us to have than for, say, a larger centre to have, it would be far more difficult if that person is responsible for a very large area where the population is less, but the area is large. So I can see that the disadvantage for the Kuranda community in terms of human services would be significant.

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THE HON B KATTER: Mr Commissioner, I don't know if it's proper for me to make a comment-----

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, certainly.

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THE HON B KATTER: -----on what's been said, but the only area that I would disagree with is at Kuranda and, you know, I'd love to look after Kuranda, and Kuranda's in the Tablelands council area, Local Government area. It's not in the Cairns. But to me it should always have been in the Cairns Local Government area, and - and you know, much as I'd want to have Kuranda, I've got to agree with the two previous speakers that there's a lot of logic in - in Kuranda staying in Cairns. I would not say - agree with the speaker before the last speaker, in - in saying that Gordonvale - I don't think the argument is made out at all - but - but the Kuranda argument is. I mean if you got in a tall tree there you can see the courthouse here from Kuranda. You most certainly can't do that from Gordonvale.

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MS YANDELL: And I guess if you look at-----

CHAIRPERSON: Excuse - just for the record, that comment was from Mr Katter. Yes, Mr Yandell?

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MS YANDELL: And I guess that's the main issue that we have. There's been a lot of community support to keep Kuranda closer to those other areas on the coast that it has more in common with, and it's not just from a tourism point of view. It's not just from an Indigenous point of view which is significant, but it's there. It's from a community and service and human point of view. So, in - I guess if we're looking at as the crow flies, which so many formulas are based on, as the crow flies Kuranda is very close to the - to the Cairns area. If you're going to travel, it's 15 minutes down the range. So I guess, yeah, it's - it does need some level of consideration that, you know, what we would lose if we - if it was to be cut out.

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MR POOLE: Yes-----

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, you've got a question?

MR POOLE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, Ms Yandell. Sorry.

MR POOLE: Can I ask Mr Katter a question?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes - yes, certainly Glenn.

MR POOLE: Sorry. Glenn Poole. Mr Katter, you talked earlier about the southern boundary of Leichhardt northern boundary of Kennedy; you also spoke about Kennedy encroaching effectively on both Cairns and Townsville. Do you have a view as to whether perhaps the boundary between Leichhardt and Kennedy should be moved further into Cairns at the expense of moving the southern boundary of Kennedy further north and therefore making Kennedy a seat that has more of Cairns and less of the Townsville area in it?

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THE HON B KATTER: You see, it's a small pod but it's still a significant pod that - we call it Mount Isa and the midwest. The midwest are the little towns, but really Cloncurry's more Mount Isa. But, you know, at most they wouldn't reach 30,000 people there, and to put them in with Mackay is crazy. I mean there's just no community of interest at all. I mean some people think my - coalmining, that's like sort of saying I'm growing potatoes or I'm growing cattle on a 100,000 acre property. I mean it's just a different world altogether. You couldn't possibly call them Mackay. There's no community.

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Rockhampton is worse still. There's just nothing in common there between Mount Isa. So I mean it sure would be nice if Mount Isa could continue to be linked in with Townsville. I mean I deeply regret losing that northern - but the imperative here is if they've all got to be of equal size, Cairns is just too big. I mean it really has to go somewhere. Part of Cairns has to go somewhere, and the only place that that part of Cairns can go is into Kennedy. And, you know, nobody in this room, including the Commission, makes the rules. You know, I'm supposed - I'm the only one that has a bit of a say in the making of the rules, but - but I most certainly wouldn't make - but I'm just sort of saying to you that - that, you know, that would just be outrageous and - and just, as - as - as Selwyn said, absolute contempt for democracy to put Mount Isa anywhere else except in Townsville or - or Cairns. It's sort of equidistance if you look at a map from Cairns as from Townsville, and not all that many people drive all the time. But - but since population has to go out of Cairns somewhere, well, it can only go into Kennedy.

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But if you were going to push Mount Isa or Charters Towers south, I mean to me that would just be - I mean I never see anyone from Ayr. You know, I mean it's - you can say well it's not all that far away, but there's just no reasoning for me to go to Ayr. I mean it is a sugar cane town and entirely different. It's an irrigation sugar area. My sugar areas are not. There's a profound difference between the two. It's just two separate industries completely. But I just never go

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there and I'm a person that if anyone was going to go there, I would go there. So there's no community of interest whatsoever between Ayr and Charters Towers, and infinitely less between Mackay and Charters Towers. And as for linking Mount Isa, that's just lunacy of the first - first order.

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The rugby league teams are always a good guide. The midwest rugby league team - that's Mount Isa to Townsville is the midwest. The midwest rugby league team is the Midwestern Gulf. They play all the gulf communities. So those areas look north. Our cattlemen almost exclusively do not own cattle stations south of the Mount Isa/Townsville line. They all own cattle north. They consider themselves gulf men. Anyone in the midwest or Mount Isa, they consider themselves gulf men. And the main city for the gulf is Cairns. I mean that's - that's how north Queensland works. I mean Mackay most certainly is linked in, in so far as its sugar areas, but once again Mackay is mainly irrigation sugar which is a profoundly different animal than sugar cane where you just grow it on the vagaries of the seasons. If we get a flood or a dry year we're in desperate trouble. They're never in trouble because they've got the same amount of water available every year.

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So I'm just saying that, you know, these redistribution is - is pretty easy, I reckon. I mean it was pretty predictable what the Electoral Commission did because I couldn't see that you could do anything else if you acted with integrity. The next one may be more difficult and all I could say is, you know, I may not be here. You know, and whoever is, is - that's - that's - will be a very serious headache for them because some of the issues raised by some of the other people here today will be infinitely worse than they are now. And the fate of, you know, the - my - my own homeland, the midwest and Mount Isa, would be very, very bad indeed. I just can't see how you can sort of re-arrange. It will be very, very difficult.

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But that's in the future. We're looking at what we've got to deal with today to - to look after - for the next three to six years until the next redistribution. I just - in answer to your question, I couldn't see how you could go any other way.

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But I just emphasise that Charters Towers' place in the Townsville competition, I'm very much a leader, you know, a - a player or an official of my - and - and the midwest place in the gulf competition, it's more a gulf competition now than a midwest competition and that's the way that's it's always worked and always would. But if you suddenly started throwing them in with central Queensland, well, you know, Selwyn's remarks become infinitely more valid then.

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CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Are there any other submissions? Right, well, thank you very much to-----

THE HON B KATTER: Chairman, could I just make-----

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, certainly, Mr Katter.

THE HON B KATTER: -----just an observation for all the people who don't - please understand that the Electoral Commission has to get the population sizes right. They're not doing this because they want to do this and think it's a good thing to do, it's just because how would you draw it? I mean, you - you - I just can't see you've got any alternative but to - to break up Cairns, which is not a good solution, I'll be the first to admit that, so - but the only revision that I would consider, possibly, is that Kuranda going back into Leichhardt.

CHAIRPERSON: Yes, thank you very much. Well, this hearing is now closed, thank you for your attendance.

THE HEARING ADJOURNED AT 10.19 A.M.

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