

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS (ACT DIVISION)

SUBMISSION

TO THE

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES REDISTRIBUTION 2003

Introduction

In March 2000, The ACT Democrats submitted a proposed redistribution of electoral boundaries to the ACT Electoral Commission ("the Commission"), which was not then taken up by the Redistribution Committee ("the Committee"). However, the ACT Democrats still believe our suggestion provided a more sensible layout of electorates for the ACT Legislative Assembly elections than exists at present.

This submission presents a modified version of our previous proposal, reflecting the changes in population distribution since then, and reviews a range of social, economic and environmental data to support our conclusions.

The ACT Democrats continue to support the principle that electoral boundaries should place electors into groups that best reflect their common interests, demographics and spatial location.

In particular, the ACT Democrats continue to oppose the division of Gungahlin between two electorates, believing that it is unwise to divide a small suburban cluster with similar electoral interests, and particularly one that is in the early stages of community development and representation.

Secondly, the ACT Democrats continue to believe that the inclusion of Gungahlin in the central electorate of Molonglo does not represent any meaningful community of interest. This creates an electorate with little spatial integration and few social, economic or developmental commonalities.

This submission begins with a short discussion of demographic change in Canberra, but will focus principally on the northern electoral boundary dividing Ginninderra and Molonglo. It will also discuss the Southern boundary between Brindabella and Molonglo, as well as touch upon some issues surrounding the Electoral Act 1992 ("the Act").

Demographic Change in Canberra

Demographic change in Canberra follows a familiar and moderately predictable pattern. As new suburbs are established, the population grows

rapidly as new housing is developed, and people whose ages are, on average, younger than in general, populate them. The population continues to rise over the next decade or two as these people have children. Average incomes also tend to rise, and home ownership increases as mortgages are paid off. As a suburb ages, children tend to move away, and the population begins to decline, the average age rises, and incomes continue to rise. Finally, as initial residents become aged, and also move or pass away, a second cycle begins, often accompanied by an increase in real estate sales and redevelopment as the housing stock ages.

Different areas of Canberra are in different stages of this suburban life cycle, reflecting the periods in which they were settled. The newly developed suburbs of Gungahlin, west Belconnen and Tuggeranong are still in a stage of rising population growth and infrastructure development. The “middle ring” of suburbs – Woden, Weston Creek and inner Belconnen are experiencing ageing populations and declining numbers of children. The inner suburbs of North and South Canberra are undergoing considerable redevelopment as the housing stock ages and young professionals demand a new mix of accommodation close to the city.

Indeed, a second, related variable in determining the different social and economic pressures of Canberrans is their geographic proximity to Civic and the parliamentary triangle. Central Canberra contains the bulk of Canberra’s employment opportunities, as well as government agencies, social services, and cultural sites and activities. Thus, the further one resides from the centre of the city, not only is the expense and time required in travelling greater, on average, but the level of access to these services and connectivity to the city-wide community is lowered.

The Northern Electoral Boundary

Overview

The current configuration of the northern electoral boundary between Ginninderra and Molonglo continues to be controversial. In particular, the placement of the bulk of Gungahlin in Molonglo seems arbitrary, as there is little evidence of similarity between Gungahlin and the remainder of the electorate. In addition, the inclusion of the suburb of Nicholls in Ginninderra appears to have unnecessarily divided the district of Gungahlin that is otherwise considered to be cohesive and whose residents are united by similar social and political concerns.

The ACT Democrats maintain that the configuration of electorates would better reflect the criteria of the Act if Gungahlin was within a single electorate, and joined with the district of Belconnen in a redrawn electorate of Ginninderra. As this would clearly be in excess of current electorate requirements, the south-eastern parts of Belconnen could be moved into Molonglo. In a sense, the Committee is currently faced with the choice of retaining the bulk of Gungahlin in Molonglo, or moving it into Ginninderra and

replacing it with the near suburbs of Belconnen. This submission argues that the latter option results in a far better configuration, as on almost any measure, the suburbs of south-east Belconnen (SE Belconnen) are more similar to the remainder of Molonglo than either Gungahlin or the rest of Belconnen.

The ACT Democrats proposed redistribution for the Northern Boundary

This submission proposes the following redistribution:

- Place the entire district of Gungahlin into the electorate of Ginninderra
- Move the suburbs of Hawker, Weetangera, Macquarie, Cook, Aranda and Bruce into Molonglo
- Move the area south and west of these suburbs and bounded by Drake Brockman Drive, Stockdill Drive, The Molonglo River and Black Mountain Nature Reserve, into the electorate of Molonglo

This would result in the new border between Molonglo and Ginninderra being (from East to West) the Federal Highway, the border between Lyneham and Gungahlin/Kaleen, Ginninderra Drive, Aikman Drive, Eastern Valley Way, Belconnen Way, Drake Brockman Drive, Stockdill Drive, the Molonglo River (near its mouth), and the Murrumbidgee River to its border with NSW.

This configuration produces a boundary that runs generally east-west, and avoids the current loop-shaped boundary that results in the odd “peninsula” of Ginninderra.

Population Sizes

According to the data provided by the Commission, the current configuration of electorates is not beyond the tolerance levels set by the Act. This alternative proposal also falls within the tolerance levels of the Act:

In fact, based solely upon sections 36 (a) and (b) of the Act, this proposal fares slightly better in terms of fitting the required quota for the electorate of Ginninderra (likewise, it improves the distribution for Molonglo).

While the current configuration is within the tolerance levels set by the Act, there is no stipulation that rules out a redistribution (for a further discussion of this point, see below). To determine whether a redistribution should occur, the Commission must consider the items listed in part 36 (c) of the Act.

Table 1: Projected Ginninderra population

Suburb	Actual persons enrolled 2 April 2003	Projected persons enrolled 16 October 2004	Projected growth (%)
Ginninderra Total (current)	63868	64312	0.70%
Quota	64645	65999	
Variation from quota	-1.20%	-2.56%	
Suburbs Deleted in Democrats proposal			
Aranda	1814	1791	-1.27%
Cook	2158	2124	-1.58%
Macquarie	1700	1690	-0.59%
Bruce	1675	1811	8.12%
Weetangera	2042	2029	-0.64%
Hawker	2277	2248	-1.27%
Suburbs Deleted Total	11666	11693	0.23%
Suburbs Added in Democrats Proposal			
Amaroo	2574	2791	8.43%
Gungahlin - Balance	229	1544	574.24%
Ngunnawal	5906	5928	0.37%
Mitchell	2	2	0.00%
Palmerston	3788	3798	0.26%
Suburbs Added Total	12499	14063	12.51%
New Ginninderra Total under Democrats proposal	64701	66682	3.06%
Quota	64645	65999	
Variation from quota	0.09%	1.03%	

In fact, based solely upon sections 36 (a) and (b) of the Act, this proposal fares slightly better in terms of fitting the required quota for the electorate of Ginninderra (likewise, it improves the distribution for Molonglo).

While the current configuration is within the tolerance levels set by the Act, there is no stipulation that rules out a redistribution (for a further discussion of this point, see below). To determine whether a redistribution should occur, the Commission must consider the items listed in part 36 (c) of the Act.

Communities of Interest

Part 36 (c) (i) of the Act requires the Commission to duly consider “the community of interests within each proposed electorate, including economic, social, and regional interests”. This provision has occasionally been assumed by some to mean solely that suburban clusters (e.g. Belconnen, Woden, Gungahlin, etc.) should not be divided (a fact better indicated by part 36 (c) (v)). Given the fact that there is no distribution of electorates that will retain all

clusters intact, nor is there any cluster that is large enough to be an electorate in its own right, this section clearly has a much wider scope. The phrase “economic, social, and regional interests” plainly invites a consideration of the demographic, spatial, and financial similarities between areas which are to be included in the same electorate, with the aim of placing suburbs with greater similarities in the same electorate.

This submission will repeatedly compare numerous social and economic indicators between the areas proposed to be added and deleted from Ginninderra, and the balance of both Ginninderra and Molonglo.

Social Demographics

The recent 2001 census has provided social statistics that allow up-to-date comparison of various electoral configurations. Table 2 presents some selected data:

Table 2: Selected Social Statistics

		Molonglo (without Gungahlin)	SE Belconnen (including Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera, Hawker)	Ginninderra (without SE Belconnen)	Gungahlin (without Nicholls)
Age Profile	% people aged 0-14	17.4%	16.5%	21.0%	25.2%
	% people aged over 55	21.8%	22.7%	14.9%	8.2%
Level of education (people over 15)	% with university degree	33.0%	36.9%	20.6%	22.3%
	% without non-school qualifications	39.2%	38.1%	49.2%	45.8%
Household structure	% households with 3 or more people	35.3%	39.0%	48.0%	47.3%
Family structure	% families with children under 15	49.0%	45.1%	53.8%	63.4%

The table clearly demonstrates the greater affinity of the remaining suburbs of Gungahlin with Ginninderra than with Molonglo. Ginninderra and Gungahlin have a significantly higher proportion of children under the age of 15 than SE Belconnen or Molonglo, whereas the latter have significantly higher proportions of people over the age of 55.

Equally, the level of university educated people in SE Belconnen is similar to Molonglo, with levels in the mid 30's, whereas both Gungahlin and Ginninderra have lower levels, in the low 20's.

The household and family structures also underlie the theme, with larger numbers of people per household in the outer areas, and smaller households closer to the city. In line with higher numbers of children, a majority of families have children under 15 in Ginninderra and Gungahlin, where this is true for only a minority in Molonglo and SE Belconnen.

Economic Data

A similar pattern emerges if we look at economic indicators in different areas.

Table 3: Selected Economic Statistics		Molonglo	SE Belconnen	Ginninderra	Gungahlin
		(without Gungahlin)	(including Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera, Hawker)	(without SE Belconnen)	(without Nicholls)
Individuals' Incomes	% individuals earning more than \$1000	24.3%	24.0%	16.1%	19.1%
Family Income	% families earning more than \$2000	19.8%	23.5%	14.6%	14.2%
Dwellings being purchased	% dwellings being purchased	25.0%	26.1%	36.5%	52.9%
Land Value	Average Unimproved Value (2002)	\$199,800	\$155,200	\$88,000	\$84,000

The data demonstrates that those individual's and families residing in either Molonglo or SE Belconnen are more similar than those in Gungahlin or Ginninderra.

Regional Interests

As already described, the areas of Gungahlin and Ginninderra have numerous social and economic similarities. They are also commonly characterised as northern outer suburbs of Canberra. The division of the ACT into three electorates is commonly referred to in terms of directionality. Ginninderra is the northern electorate, Brindabella the southern, and Molonglo the central. However, the current position of the bulk of Gungahlin in Molonglo is contrary to this common understanding. The proposed redistribution assists in bringing electorate boundaries into better alignment with expectations, providing a generally east-west boundary to divide the two electorates.

In a similar vein, Canberra is often thought of as comprising three "rings" of suburban development, particularly in terms of real estate. Central Canberra is the "inner ring", Woden, Weston and inner Belconnen are the "middle ring", while Tuggeranong, outer Belconnen and Gungahlin are the "outer ring". The proposed redistribution aligns the interests of these three groupings, with the inner and middle rings being represented by Molonglo, while Ginninderra and Brindabella represent the outer ring in the north and south, respectively.

To complement this thesis, the major areas proposed for new "green fields" development in the near future are in Gungahlin, West Belconnen, and Lawson. This proposal aligns the common issues surrounding green fields development in the single electorate of Ginninderra. Conversely, the current alignment places the developing suburbs of Gungahlin in Molonglo, which elsewhere is primarily concerned with issues of re-development and "brown fields" sites (such as the Kingston foreshore). This proposal more clearly aligns similar regions, and also enables elected representatives to better represent suburbs with similar interests, including issues of development, rather than representing dissimilar interests across a community.

Communications and Transport

Part 36 (c) (ii) of the Act requires the Committee to duly consider “the means of communication and transport within each proposed electorate”. As briefly mentioned earlier, the proximity of suburbs to central Canberra has the greatest impact upon the use and cost of transport for residents. Gungahlin and the outer suburbs of Belconnen are both relatively distant from Civic, while the distance between SE Belconnen to Civic is comparable to that with the southern suburbs of Molonglo.

The census provides additional support in that the pattern of transport use by those in the outer suburbs differ from those in the centre of Canberra:

Table 4: Journey to Work Data	Molonglo <small>(without Gungahlin)</small>	SE Belconnen <small>(including Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera, Hawker)</small>	Ginninderra <small>(without SE Belconnen)</small>	Gungahlin <small>(without Nicholls)</small>
% persons using private transport	77.5%	82.4%	87.2%	91.2%
% using alternative transport (bus, bicycle, foot)	18.2%	14.8%	9.4%	6.1%

There is clear evidence that residents of Ginninderra and Gungahlin are more likely to use private transport than those in Molonglo or SE Belconnen. More residents living closer to the centre of Canberra utilise alternative transport modes (buses, bicycles or walking) than those in more distant suburbs. It is also meaningful to note that under the previous “zonal” bus fare system for ACTION (now abolished), the near suburbs of Belconnen were included in the central zone, whereas Gungahlin suburbs were grouped with west Belconnen in the north zone.

A further point is that people who share common transport routes are more likely to share common transport concerns. This proposed redistribution places SE Belconnen in Molonglo. Many of these SE Belconnen commuters share the western approach to the City via Parkes Way with commuters from Weston Creek and parts of Woden. Equally, Gungahlin traffic shares major road connections with areas of Belconnen, particularly Ginninderra Drive, the Barton Highway, Northbourne Avenue and the proposed Gungahlin Drive Extension. The proposed redistribution shows far greater transport connectivity within the newly formed electorates of Ginninderra and Molonglo, suggesting they also have greater internal mobility and community interaction.

While the means and access to communication might be considered to be reasonably homogenous across the ACT, there is a case for some regional variation. Local debate about access to information technology has often complained that the outer suburbs (where there are fewer business clients) are the last to have access to broadband cable technologies provided by Telstra or TransACT. The census recorded the following data about the use of the internet:

	Molonglo (without Gungahlin)	SE Belconnen (including Aranda, Bruce, Cook, Macquarie, Weetangera, Hawker)	Ginninderra (without SE Belconnen)	Gungahlin (without Nicholls)
Table 5: Internet Usage at Home				
% people using the internet at home	41.7%	44.9%	39.8%	39.5%

While the differences are not very pronounced, there is certainly little reason to argue that SE Belconnen is especially well-placed in Ginninderra on this variable alone.

A broader definition of “communication” may include the means that communities use for community representation, and here there is a noticeable difference between Belconnen and Gungahlin. It is far more common for subsections or individual suburbs of Belconnen to form local representative organisations of residents’ groups or trading organisations (eg Aranda Residents Group, Bruce Precinct Association, Kippax Traders), where this phenomenon is nowhere near as prevalent in Gungahlin. Belconnen is also divided between two Local Area Planning Advisory Committees (West Belconnen and Ginninderra). Thus, it is arguable that Belconnen has a far greater natural tendency to be able to represent different segments of the suburb cluster than Gungahlin, which has no such tradition.

Physical Features and Area

Subsection 36 (c) (iii) of the Act specifies that the Committee must duly consider “the physical features and area of each proposed electorate”.

The major physical feature of both Molonglo and Ginninderra are the water systems after which the electorates are named. However, there is an anomaly in this naming system as the bulk of the upper catchment of Ginninderra Creek is currently within the electorate of Molonglo, whilst the northern bank of the lower Molonglo River is currently in the electorate of Ginninderra. This reinforces the physical relationship between Gungahlin and Belconnen, which comprise a completely different river system to the Molonglo River.

There has been much political analysis about the appropriateness of placing political boundaries on the edges of water catchments so that politicians are forced to balance the needs of both upstream and downstream residents. The obvious Australian example is of the Murray-Darling Basin, which is currently spread across five jurisdictions, causing enormous problems in environmental management. While ACT electoral boundaries are not an issue of the same order, it remains a sensible decision to align electoral boundaries as closely to watersheds as possible. This proposed redistribution improves this aim considerably, placing the Coppins sub-catchment wholly within Molonglo, and placing all of Ginninderra Creek’s headwaters in Ginninderra. The only deviations are the southern segment of Ginninderra (virtually unpopulated) that is part of the Sullivans Creek sub-catchment, and the area of SE Belconnen to be included in Molonglo.

A further consideration is the similarities of flora and environmental management issues that connect Belconnen and Gungahlin. While the pre-European environment of most of urban Canberra is quite similar, the management of ecologically sensitive environments adjacent to the urban fringe is a key issue in both areas. Both Gungahlin and Belconnen contain substantial temperate grassland nature reserves, some of which adjoin proposed development sites (e.g. Dunlop and Gungahlin Town Centre).

Another issue confronting Molonglo is the co-management of lands by both the ACT Government and the National Capital Authority. The NCA has jurisdiction over much of the hills and buffer zones that surround Woden, Weston Creek, and Central Canberra. Note that this also applies to SE Belconnen. The long-term co-management of NCA lands is an issue that unites Molonglo, but has little relevance for north or western Belconnen, or for Gungahlin.

Existing Electoral Boundaries

Obviously, this proposed redistribution is less in line with current electoral boundaries than the option of leaving them unchanged. However, this submission argues that the Committee should not rely too heavily on subsection 36 (c) (iv) of the Act if a proposal shows obvious improvements on other criteria, as the ACT Democrats' previous submission argued. This issue will be elaborated further below. It should also be noted that if our proposed redistribution occurred, the redrawn electorate of Ginninderra would still retain around 80% of current Ginninderra electors (the figure is even higher for Molonglo).

Boundaries under the Districts Act 1966

In terms of evaluating this proposal against the status quo, both require the division of one official district, being either Belconnen or Gungahlin. While subsection 36 (c) (v) of the Act requires the due consideration of divisions and sections fixed under the Districts Act 1996, this does not appear to be of use in choosing between these two options.

The Southern Electoral Boundary

The ACT Democrats proposed redistribution

The southern electoral boundary has generally attracted less attention than the northern. This submission proposes two general options for redistribution:

- no change to the electoral boundary; or
- add the suburb of Farrer to the electorate of Brindabella.

The only other option would be to transfer Chifley, Pearce, and Torrens into Molonglo, and transfer parts of southern Weston Creek into Brindabella (e.g. Chapman, Fisher, and Waramanga). While this would also bring the

populations closer to fitting the required quota, there are few additional communities of interests to be created by this redistribution. Worse, it would result in the division of a small and cohesive group of suburbs (like Gungahlin) and this is not supported by the ACT Democrats.

Further Discussion

The major attraction of including the suburb of Farrer in the electorate of Brindabella is that it brings the number of electors closer to the optimum level. It would also indicate the Committee's intention to continue to place the southern suburbs of Woden into Brindabella as necessary. Finally, as the population of Brindabella is projected to grow at a slower rate than the remainder of Canberra, it would probably result in the number of electors remaining, on average, closer to the optimal level over the term of the next Assembly.

The same level of analysis has not been done for the southern electoral boundary as the northern in this submission, due to considerations of timeliness and brevity. The ACT Democrats encourage the further analysis of similarities between Farrer and Brindabella. Such an analysis will assist the Committee in determining whether Farrer more closely resembles Molonglo or Brindabella. It is very likely to resemble the nearby suburbs of Chifley, Pearce, and Torrens, but the link with the more recently developed suburbs further south is more tenuous. Some level of statistical investigation may give the Committee more clarity as to which of the options presented here is more applicable.

The Electoral Act – Some Broader Considerations

The Argument for No Redistribution

The ACT Democrats are aware that other submissions may urge the Committee to decide that no redistribution is necessary, citing the fact that the current projections supplied by the Commission indicate that the population of electorates under their current configuration is not beyond the limits set by subsections 36 (a) and (b) of the Act.

However, such a decision would not give proper effect to the Act, which states that a redistribution process will begin "After each ordinary election" (s37), and nowhere states that a redistribution should occur if and only if the number of electors is beyond the limits set by subsections 36 (a) and (b) of the Act. In fact, after ensuring that a proposal complies with 36 (a), and 36 (b) as far as possible, competing proposals should be assessed by duly considering those items listed in subsection 36 (c). Thus, the argument that the current electorates meet the requirements of subsections 36 (a) and (b) is not, in and of itself, a reason to determine that no redistribution is required. This is particularly the case if the Committee is persuaded that an alternative

proposal provides a more optimal configuration based on the criteria in subsection 36 (c).

The Boundaries of Existing Electorates

A second argument that might be advanced against this proposal (as it was during the last redistribution) is based upon section 36 (c) (iv) of the Act, which states that the Committee must duly consider “the boundaries of existing electorates”. This proposal does not meet this criterion to the same extent as retaining the current electoral boundaries intact.

Yet, as the 2000 Redistribution Committee noted, “This criterion has equal weight with the other criteria listed in paragraph 36 (c)” (para 59, p 13). That is to say, no more emphasis should be placed on 36 (c) (iv) than on the other four criteria listed – for example, the consideration of communication and transport within an electorate. However, particular emphasis was placed on 36 (c) (iv) in the 2000 Committee’s report – both selectively highlighting it in both the redistribution criteria (para 16, p 5), and the conclusion (para 59, p13). No other criterion was referred to by its assigned subsection in the document, other than by reprinting all criteria in the Act (para 7, p 3).

The 2000 Redistribution Committee goes so far to say that the presence of subsection 36 (c) (iv) “was an indication that the legislature placed considerable weight upon stability of electoral boundaries” (para 59, p 13). It is interesting that upon tabling the Electoral Bill in 1992, the then Attorney-General, Rosemary Follett, said:

“I would now like to return to one of the crucial parts of the Bill which I adverted to earlier. In preparing a proposed redistribution, both the Redistribution Committee and the Electoral Commission must have regard to the following matters: Community of interests within the proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests; means of communication and travel within the proposed electorate; the physical features and area of the proposed electorate; the boundaries of any existing electoral boundaries; and the boundaries established under the Districts Act 1966.”

(-Attorney-General, Ms Follett, LA Hansard, 14 October 1992, p 2631)

It is clear that she deliberately mentioned all five criteria for redistribution, in the order printed in the Act, with no particular reference to or elevation of electoral stability.

In contrast, note Helen Szuty’s comments in an earlier Matter of Public Importance:

“One of the most important tasks that will need to be undertaken by the Australian Electoral Commission is the division of Canberra into a number of regional electorates. This task needs to be approached sensitively so that arbitrary boundaries are not imposed which would unnecessarily separate cohesive communities. Geographically defined areas of Canberra need to be seen as such within electoral boundaries. Weston Creek is a good example.

The Weston Creek community, although smaller than other geographical centres in Canberra, has considerable interest in the planning, health and education issues which affect it. It would be inappropriate for the electors of Weston Creek to elect some members, for example, to the electorate of central Canberra and other members, for example, to the electorate of Tuggeranong.”

(-Ms Szuty, LA Hansard, 19 May 1992, p 545)

Ms Szuty referred again to this section of her speech in her reply to the Electoral Bill 1992 (LA Hansard, 24 November 1992, p 3351). These comments are just as applicable and relevant to Gungahlin.

A further comment upon the reliance upon subsection 36 (c) (iv) is that elevating this criterion above others will have the effect of creating piecemeal changes to electoral boundaries. Thus, if this subsection is interpreted too strictly, electoral boundaries will tend to “creep” in response to changes in population growth, eventually bearing little resemblance to the initial communities of interest that created them.

It is also informative to note the 2000 Redistribution Committee’s reference to the 1993 Redistribution Committee’s statement that “the Committee was of the view that the boundaries proposed by the Committee ought to provide a useful foundation for future redistributions” (para 16, p 5). The corollary of this is that boundaries that no longer provide a useful foundation for future distributions require more drastic changes.

The current boundary dividing the district of Gungahlin provides no clear path for future distributions. The suggestion in the 2000 Redistribution Committee’s Report is that Palmerston may be a potential candidate for transfer to Ginninderra in the future. However, it appears odd to place the Gungahlin suburb nearest to the city in Ginninderra, while those furthest away remain in Molonglo. The wisdom of placing electoral boundaries so near to areas of new development, with their unpredictable growth rates and directions, is also questionable.

In contrast, the proposal outlined here leads to a more predictable movement of electoral boundaries in the future, with an easily viewed progression of inclusion of additional Belconnen suburbs to the west and north.

In summary, the Committee needs to ensure it is, in fact, weighting all five criteria in the Act equally.

Electoral Boundaries on Roads fronted by houses

It should be noted that this proposal would result in an electoral boundary that is fronted by houses along a section of its length. This occurs along Belconnen Way at the northern border of Weetangera and Hawker. It should also be noted that these houses would fall in different electorates but would also be in different suburbs, and that Belconnen Way remains a major arterial road. There is also road access to blocks along Eastern Valley Way, but these are not zoned residential. Houses on either side of Beasley Street also front the northern border of the suburb of Farrer.

The 2000 Committee's Report stated "Roads fronted by houses are not ideal as electoral boundaries as they can result in confusion for residents in those streets" (para 48 p.11). While it is undoubtedly true that boundaries not fronted by houses are preferable as electoral boundaries, a proposed redistribution should not be ruled out on this basis alone. In fact, it is not immediately obvious which criterion in the Act this statement refers to. A case could be made that it could be a consideration in line with subsection 36 (c) (iii), but "physical features and area" encompasses many more considerations than the presence of houses on electoral boundaries.

It is also relevant to note that the current border between the federal electorates of Fraser and Canberra includes roads that are fronted by houses. It appears that this type of electoral boundary is not without precedent in the ACT.

Obviously, the smooth operation of elections and avoiding confusion in the electorate will inform the decisions of the Committee. However, these should not override the declared criteria in the Act. It remains uncertain whether the criteria given in section 36 should be considered exhaustive or not.

Holistic Decision-Making

The final criticism of the ACT Democrats previous submission was that "the Committee was of the view that the communities of interest between the suggested suburbs and the remainder of Belconnen are greater than between those between these suburbs and North Canberra". While this submission may raise some doubts about the generality of this claim, there are obviously going to be continuing communities of interest between suburbs in the same cluster.

However, it would be just as easy to argue, for similar reasons, that Nicholls has a greater community of interest with Gungahlin than with Belconnen, or that Gungahlin has a greater community of interests with Belconnen than with Central Canberra. However, it is not possible to create an electorate of five members covering all of Belconnen and Gungahlin. This means that part of either Gungahlin or Belconnen must be included in Molonglo.

Thus the argument is not whether SE Belconnen has a greater community of interest with Central Canberra or the remainder of Belconnen. It is that SE Belconnen has a greater affinity with Central Canberra than does Gungahlin. This submission has gathered much evidence to support the claim that SE Belconnen is a better candidate for inclusion in Molonglo than is Gungahlin, on at least three of the criteria in the Act. The reverse argument needs to be made if the Committee is to support maintenance of the current boundary, which is that Gungahlin (excluding Nicholls) somehow has a natural community of interests with Central Canberra, Woden, and Weston (but not Belconnen),

Appendix A

Notes on Statistics

Table 1: Projected Ginninderra Population

This has been generated using the population data supplied by the Electoral Commission in the Guidelines for Submissions, ACT Legislative Assembly Electoral Boundaries Redistribution 2003.

Table 2: Selected Social Statistics

Generated from current ABS Statistics for the 2001 Census.

- Age profile (spreadsheet B03)
 - Expresses no. of people in age category as a percentage of total population (less overseas visitors)
- Level of education (spreadsheet B23)
 - “University degree” means bachelor degree or higher, expressed as a proportion of total people over 15 (excluding overseas visitors)
 - “Without non-school qualifications” includes people who have a qualification out of scope with the Australian Standard Classification of Education
- Household structure (spreadsheet B32)
 - Expressed the number of households with 3 or more people as a percentage of all households
- Family Structure (spreadsheet B17)
 - Expresses no. of families with children under 15 (including single-parent families) as a percentage of all families

Table 3: Selected Economic Characteristics

Generated from current ABS Statistics for the 2001 Census (except land values)

- Individual’s Incomes (spreadsheet B13)
 - Expresses the no. of individuals earning over \$1000 per week as a percentage of all person’s aged over 15 (excluding “not stated” and overseas visitors)
- Family income (spreadsheet B31)
 - Expresses the percentage of families earning over \$2000 per week as a proportion of all families (excluding those where no income or a partial income was stated)
- Dwellings being purchased (spreadsheet B19)
 - Expresses the percentage of dwellings being purchased (including through a rent/buy scheme) as a proportion of total dwellings (excluding “not stated”)
- Land Values
 - Expresses Unimproved Land Value (2002) as the average of all assessed residential properties (ACT Treasury statistics)

Table 4: Journey to work data

Generated from current ABS Statistics for the 2001 Census (B28)

- Private transport
 - Expresses the number of people who used a private vehicle (car, motorcycle or truck) as their only means of transport to work, as a percentage of total employed people (excluding “not stated”, “did not go to work” and “worked at home”)
- Alternative Transport
 - Expresses the number of people who used bus, bicycle or walking as their only means of transport to work, as a percentage of total employed people (excluding “not stated”, “did not go to work” and “worked at home”)

Table 5: Internet Usage at Home

Generated from current ABS Statistics for the 2001 Census (B16). Expresses the total number of people who used the internet at home as a percentage of total people (excluding “not stated” and overseas visitors).