

MERGER SPEECH – QUEANBEYAN

My name is Jenny Richards. I live in Wamboin which puts me in the local government area of Palerang and I am the President of the Wamboin Community Association.

Mr Delegate, my Association will be forwarding a detailed written submission to you but tonight I wish to show you **who** we are.

The Wamboin Community Association represents the people of Wamboin specifically, and other rural residential areas like ourselves in Palerang.

We are a body through which the people can make their thoughts and wishes known. And during 2015 the thoughts and wishes of Palerang were very clear. The majority of the residents of Palerang clearly indicated that they wished Palerang to *stand alone*. The reason is axiomatic.

Wamboin, like a number of communities in Palerang is both designated as *rural residential* and moreover **dedicated** to upholding the ideals and mindset that make it so! I emphasize this point, Mr Turner because it is of prime importance! ***Rural residential!*** We are not a satellite community of either Canberra, which is our major economic, employment, educational and health service hub; nor yet of Queanbeyan which is by your own

document described succinctly as a *city council*. Our needs, wants and priorities differ **so** drastically from a city or urban council you simply **cannot** successfully join the two without one losing out completely and that, Mr Turner, will be the people of Wamboin and other rural residential areas.

We represent approximately 2,500 people or if you prefer, 20% of the population of Palerang. 20% of people and at **no stage** during the State Government's decisions have we been consulted by that Government, asked to voice an opinion, or even asked to explain to someone such as yourself prior to this week, all that we stand to lose if this merger document goes ahead.

What do we stand to lose? We lose financially for a start. I have read the Proposal Document thoroughly, Mr Turner, and throughout that entire document I have found absolutely nothing that would be of a benefit either financial or infrastructure to the people of Wamboin for whom I speak! There are lots of benefits for Queanbeyan mentioned, and a couple of minor improvements for Bungendore, but we apparently **do not** merit any because they certainly haven't been mentioned in the Proposal Document!

Secondly we lose representation! Currently the people of Palerang enjoy a decent and effective ratio of Councillors to people. However if this Proposal goes ahead our representative goes from 9 to 1. How can going from 9 to 1 be seen as a benefit to my community? This Proposal robs us of our voice in Local Government. It undemocratically but very effectively silences 20% of the people involved!

Mr Turner, not only does this Proposal offer **no** benefit, it's effects will be **detrimental!** It will be detrimental to Queanbeyan and the State Government and it will certainly be detrimental and destructive to the people of Wamboin! Therefore I must **urge** you to reject this Proposal completely!

Thank you.