

## CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

On 30 March 1995, the Senate referred the matter of the Eastlink High Voltage Power Line to the Economics References Committee. The Terms of Reference were then advertised in national newspapers and submissions called for by 2 June 1995. The Committee received 274 submissions from a range of individuals and organisations (Appendix 1). Many of the submissions were from areas most affected by the proposed line. Almost all of the submissions received from private individuals and community groups opposed Eastlink. Those few submissions in favour of Eastlink were from the two power authorities and from several individuals.

The vast majority of submissions came from private individuals (21 of whom 131 identified themselves as rural property owners). The next largest group of submissions came from community organisations and associations (31). Submissions also came from shire councils and members of parliament (9), scientists and medical practitioners (7), schools (6) and government departments or corporations (3). Of the submissions from private individuals, only 2 were in favour of **Eastlink**.

As well as formal submissions, the Committee received 1032 form letters, 91 survey forms, 143 questionnaires and a number of different petitions with a total of 2658 signatures. All form letters, questionnaires and petitions expressed a view opposing Eastlink.

The Committee held public hearings in Toowoomba, Armidale, Melbourne and Canberra. Inspections were carried out in the Toowoomba/Warwick region and in the Armidale/Guyra region (Appendix 11). Oral contributions were taken from 27 witnesses or groups of witnesses (Appendix 111) and 826 pages of evidence were taken. In addition to the formal proceedings at the public hearings in Toowoomba and Armidale, the Committee took the unusual step of allowing any member of the public who wished to put a point of view to the Committee to speak for a period of five minutes. This evidence was also recorded by Hansard.

## INSPECTIONS AT ALLORA

On 11 October 1995, during inspections of the Eastlink corridor from Toowoomba to Warwick, the Allora community made special efforts to welcome the Committee and to provide briefing information about their area. **Representatives of** the community groups South East Queensland Against Eastlink and Warwick Allora Karara Action Group travelled with Committee members from Toowoomba to Springdale, then to Ma Ma Creek, Allora and Massie. When the Committee arrived for lunch at Allora, members were greeted by the whole town and rural community, the main street being lined with banners and people. There followed a parade of some 50 trucks and tractors, all bearing posters demonstrating against Eastlink.

However, in addition to making their views against Eastlink known, the Allora community also made a special effort to thank the Committee for visiting their area and listening to their concerns. As well as proclaiming 'No Eastlink', banners stated 'We thank you Senators' and 'Welcome Senators to Allora'. Before lunch, Committee members and staff were each presented with a bouquet of flowers from the local region by schoolchildren, and during lunch the Committee was joined by many people from the Allora community.