

Western Australia's New Electoral Boundaries

August 2003



ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS

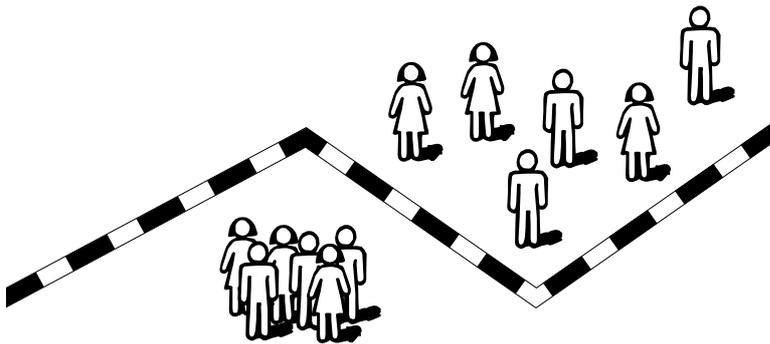


INTRODUCTION

The *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* requires that Western Australia’s electoral boundaries be reviewed at regular intervals so that the size of electorates remains within the established quotients.

Three Electoral Distribution Commissioners are appointed under the Act to divide the State into electoral regions and districts. The Commissioners are:

- The Hon David K Malcolm, AC, CTT. WA, Chief Justice of Western Australia (Chairman);
- Ms Lyn Auld, Electoral Commissioner; and
- Mr Colin Nagle, Government Statistician and Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional Director, Western Australia.



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The Electoral Distribution Commissioners (L to R): Ms Lyn Auld, The Hon David K Malcolm, AC, CTT. WA, Mr Colin Nagle.



OVERVIEW

The Act requires the Commissioners to call for written suggestions about new boundaries, and then call for written comments on these suggestions. Once these have been considered, the Commissioners' proposals are published and objections to these proposals may then be lodged. The Commissioners' proposals and final determination must meet certain defined criteria.

Finally, the Commissioners are required to publish their division of the State into electoral regions and districts. The Commissioners' decisions at this last stage are final and there is no further review or right of appeal against them.

Under the current legislation, the electoral boundaries established by this process will apply for the next two State general elections before they are next reviewed.

THE STATUTORY SCHEME

Section 2A(2) of the *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* provides that if the same division of the State has applied in respect of two successive general elections for the Legislative Assembly, the State shall be divided into regions and districts as soon as practicable after the day that is one year after the polling day for the second of those general elections.

A division of the State was thus due to commence on 11 February 2002 but was delayed pending resolution of the litigation regarding the 'One Vote, One Value' legislation. While this is now the subject of proceedings in the High Court, the current legislation required the Electoral Distribution Commissioners to commence a division of the State so that new boundaries are in place for the next State general election. The division of the State determined by this publication therefore follows the current legislation and not 'One Vote, One Value' principles.

The basis for the division of the State is set out in section 6 of the *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* as follows:

"(1) The Commissioners shall

- (a) divide the Metropolitan Area into 34 districts; and*
- (b) divide the area comprising the remainder of the State into 23 districts.*

(2) The Commissioners shall make the division of an area mentioned in subsection (1) (a) or (b) into districts in accordance with the principle that the number of enrolled electors comprised in any district in the area must not be more than 15% greater, or more than 15% less, than the quotient obtained by dividing the total number of enrolled electors in the area by the number of districts into which the area is to be divided."

The Metropolitan Area is defined as the area that was, at 1 January 1987, described in the Third Schedule to the *Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959*, together with Rottnest Island.

In making the division of the State, the Commissioners are required by section 7 of the Act to consider the following matters:

"(a) community of interest;

(b) means of communication and distance from the capital;

(c) physical features;

(d) existing boundaries of regions and districts;

(e) existing local government boundaries;

(f) the trend of demographic changes;

and where the State is divided for the first time--

(g) boundaries of the electoral provinces and electoral districts into which the State was divided prior to the division."

As the 2003 division of the State follows earlier divisions of the State conducted in 1987/88 and 1994, section 7(g) above did not apply on this occasion.



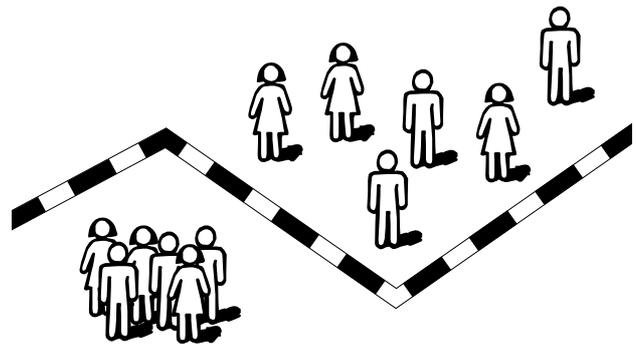
Section 9 of the Act prescribes that the Commissioners shall divide the State into six regions so that:

- “(a) 3 regions, to be known, respectively, as the North Metropolitan Region, the South Metropolitan Region and the East Metropolitan Region, each consist of complete and contiguous districts that together form the Metropolitan Area;
- (b) one region, to be known as the Mining and Pastoral Region, consists of complete and contiguous districts that are remote from the capital and where the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes;
- (c) one region, known as the Agricultural Region, consists of complete and contiguous districts that together form an area that is generally south, or south and west, of and adjacent to the Mining and Pastoral Region; and
- (d) the remaining region, to be known as the South West Region, consists of complete and contiguous districts.”

THE PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* provisions follow on from section 5 of the *Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899* which provides that the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia consists of thirty-four elected members who shall be returned and sit for electoral regions defined under section 6 of that Act. Section 6 provides that the North Metropolitan Region and the South West Region shall each be represented by 7 members in the Council and that the other four regions shall each be represented by 5 members.

Sections 18 and 19 of the *Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899* establish that the Legislative Assembly consists of fifty-seven members, each of whom represents one electoral district. It is one of the functions of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners to decide which districts will be placed in each region.





DATE FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

The *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* sets out a timetable for the process of calling for written suggestions and written comments, reviewing these and for the Commissioners' proposals to be published.

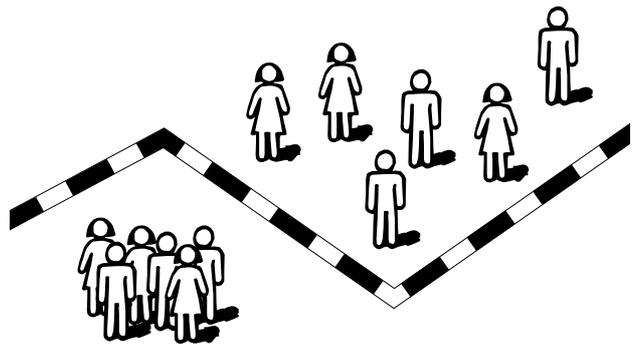
In addition, the Act also sets the date which is used as the base for determining the number of electors, from which quotients are calculated. The number of electors on the State electoral roll on the day that is one year and one day after the polling day of the last State general election must be used as a base for the purpose of making a division of the State.

For the 2003 division of the State, the relevant date was 11 February 2002, that being the day that was one year and one day after the polling day for the 2001 State general election. Accordingly, electoral roll figures as of 11 February 2002 form the basis of this division of the State.

CALCULATION OF QUOTIENTS

On 11 February 2002, the following statistics applied:

Total State Enrolment	1,215,377	
Metropolitan Area Enrolment	899,450	
Country Area Enrolment	315,927	
Number of Metropolitan Area Districts	34	
Number of Country Area Districts	23	
Metropolitan Area Quotient	899,450 ÷ 34 = 26,454	
Country Area Quotient	315,927 ÷ 23 = 13,735	
Permitted Variation from Quotient ± 15%		
	-15%	+15%
Metropolitan Area	22,486	30,422
Country Area	11,675	15,795





PREPARATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Despite some initial uncertainty about the division of the State because of a proposal to amend the legislation and later, the litigation concerning that proposed legislation, preparations for conducting the division of the State proceeded.

The Electoral Distribution Commissioners had the benefit of a geographical information system to assist their decision-making. This system integrated the Electoral Commission's enrolment records with census and other data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and data from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the Department of Land Information and other State agencies. All of the information was the best available at the time.

In addition to media releases and advertisements, the Internet was utilised as a means by which information was made available to the public and those interested in making submissions. A website was established for the division of the State at www.boundarieswa.com. This website can also be accessed via www.waec.wa.gov.au. Information and details of the proposals and the final determination were posted to the website as the process unfolded.

TIMETABLE

The Commissioners determined that the 2003 division of the State should commence on 5 February 2003 when a notice appeared in the *Government Gazette* and *The West Australian* inviting written suggestions and written comments on those suggestions. This then brought into operation the provisions of section 3(2) of the Act which determined the timing of the various phases.

As a consequence, the timetable for the 2003 division of the State into electoral regions and districts was as follows:





SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AND CONSIDERED

By the closing date for the written suggestions on 7 March 2003, 20 suggestions were received from a variety of individuals, organisations and political parties. These were then made available on the website and at the Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners for perusal by interested persons. A further 29 written comments were received about these suggestions.

The Commissioners then set about the task of reviewing all of the available material and formulating their own proposals. These were published, in accordance with the requirements of the Act, in both the *Government Gazette* and *The West Australian*. In addition, they were also available on the website.

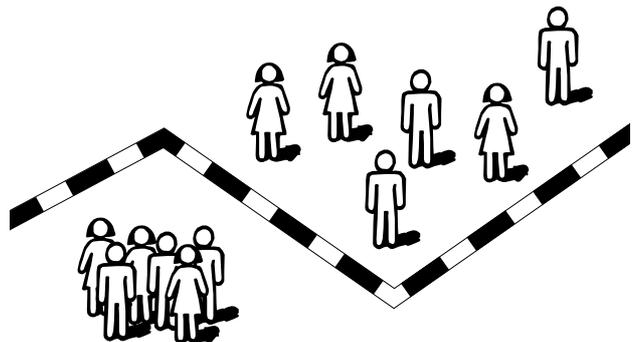
Following the publication of the Commissioners' proposals, 171 objections were received. In addition, two petitions were received; one with 664 signatures concerned Bridgetown and the other with 37 signatures concerned East Victoria Park.

The Commissioners carefully considered the objections received and their wider impact, for example, on adjoining areas. Those who could be affected by the adoption of the objections were identified and comments were sought so that the Commissioners were informed about wider consequences. Discussions were held with a number of objectors and others. The use of video conferences for some of this was much appreciated by those invited to participate, as it was an effective means of consultation with a wider audience in the limited time available.

The Commissioners noted in their proposals that many of those making suggestions considered that the legislation allowed the Commissioners to set boundaries such that at the mid-point of the period for which the distribution applies, elector numbers in districts could span across the full $\pm 15\%$ range and more.

In 1988, the then Electoral Distribution Commissioners determined that the initial elector populations should be set such that, having regard for the trend of demographic change, there would be approximate equality of numbers in each district in four years time, except where special or exceptional circumstances require otherwise. This same principle was applied in 1994 and has been adhered to in this division of the State, which is based on the proposition that there should be equity, as between elector numbers within the metropolitan area and within the country area, at the mid-point of the period with which this division of the State is concerned, except where special or exceptional circumstances require otherwise.

The electoral boundaries determined in this publication apply at the next State general election to be held by early 2005 and will also apply for the State general election due by 2009. Any by-elections which are required before the 2005 State general election will be held on the basis of districts as established by the 1994 division of the State.





COUNTRY REGIONS

The *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* prescribes that the State be divided into three country regions, as follows:

- **Agricultural Region**
- **Mining and Pastoral Region**
- **South West Region**

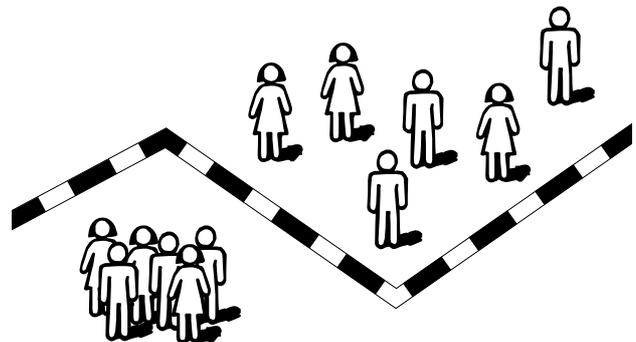
The legislation specifies that the Mining and Pastoral Region must encompass an area that is remote from Perth and where the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes. The Agricultural Region must encompass an area that is south, or south and west, of the Mining and Pastoral Region, while the South West Region is the remaining country area. The legislation leaves for the Commissioners the task of determining where the region boundaries should be established and the number of districts within each region.

In broad terms, elector populations are in relative decline in both the Mining and Pastoral Region and the Agricultural Region, while the South West Region is growing strongly. The major change made as part of this division of the State is the reduction from six to five in the number of districts within the Mining and Pastoral Region and the increase in the number of districts in the South West Region from ten to eleven.

In addition to these changes, it has been necessary to adjust the respective region boundaries to better balance the elector numbers between the regions and maintain community of interest by keeping entire local governments intact, wherever possible.

Country Area Summary

Country Regions	Legislative Council Members	Legislative Assembly Districts	No. of Electors		Average No. of Electors per District	
			2002	2007	2002	2007
Agricultural	5	7	94,877	100,170	13,554	14,310
Mining and Pastoral	5	5	68,556	74,089	13,711	14,818
South West	7	11	152,494	178,649	13,863	16,241
Total	17	23	315,927	352,908	13,735	15,343





ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS

ELECTORAL REGIONS FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Determined on 4 August 2003

REGION

Electoral Region Boundary

DISTRICT

Electoral District Boundary

0 100 200 300 400km



Department of Land Information
Government of Western Australia

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TIMOR SEA

KUNUNURRA

DERBY

BROOME

INDIAN OCEAN

PORT HEDLAND

KARRATHA

CARNARVON

MINING AND PASTORAL REGION

GERALDTON

INDIAN

OCEAN

NORTHERN TERRITORY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

METROPOLITAN REGIONS
See Metropolitan Area
Electoral Regions Map

PERTH

KALGOORLIE - BOULDER

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

BUNBURY

AGRICULTURAL REGION

ESPERANCE

SOUTHERN OCEAN

SOUTH WEST REGION

ALBANY



METROPOLITAN REGIONS

The *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* prescribes that the State be divided into three metropolitan regions, as follows:

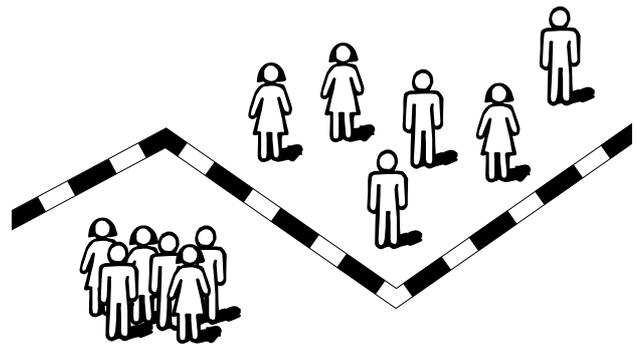
- **East Metropolitan Region**
- **North Metropolitan Region**
- **South Metropolitan Region**

The elector population in the East Metropolitan Region has grown more rapidly than in the North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan Regions, with this trend expected to continue. Accordingly, an adjustment to region boundaries has been made with the North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan Regions taking some of the territory formerly part of East Metropolitan Region.

Because of the requirement to keep districts in balance at the mid-point of the period to which the division of the State applies, the Commissioners have set high growth districts at near to the minimum level permitted and districts with static or moderate growth projections at the higher end of the permitted range at the start point.

Metropolitan Area Summary

Metropolitan Regions	Legislative Council Members	Legislative Assembly Districts	No. of Electors		Average No. of Electors per District	
			2002	2007	2002	2007
East Metropolitan	5	10	261,662	289,460	26,166	28,946
North Metropolitan	7	14	374,168	407,725	26,726	29,123
South Metropolitan	5	10	263,620	291,965	26,362	29,197
Total	17	34	899,450	989,150	26,454	29,092





ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS

ELECTORAL REGIONS FOR THE METROPOLITAN AREA

Determined on 4 August 2003

REGION	Electoral Region Boundary
DISTRICT	Electoral District Boundary

0 5 10 15km



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AGRICULTURAL REGION

NORTH METROPOLITAN REGION

INDIAN OCEAN

EAST METROPOLITAN REGION

SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGION

AGRICULTURAL REGION

SOUTH WEST REGION