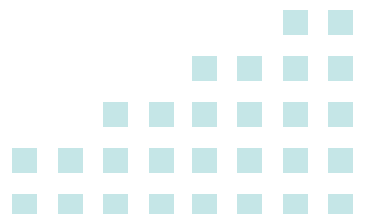




2015 Proposed Boundaries and Reasons by District and Region

**Western Australia
July 2015**



Introduction

The *Electoral Act 1907* (WA) ('the Act') requires that Western Australia's electoral region and district boundaries be reviewed as soon as practicable after the date (defined in the Act as the 'relevant day') that is two years after a general election. The relevant day was 9 March 2015. A distribution may require alterations to particular district boundaries and may also affect the positioning of districts within regions.

The formal review process commenced on 30 March 2015 and, in accordance with their obligations under the Act, the Commissioners now publish proposals for the distribution of the State into electoral regions and districts to apply for the next general election, due in March 2017.

The distribution has been undertaken by three independent Electoral Distribution Commissioners ('the Commissioners') appointed under the Act: the Hon Neville Owen, a retired judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia; Mr David Kerlake, Electoral Commissioner; and Mr Tom Joseph, Government Statistician.

The Commissioners have published several Fact Sheets that are available on the Electoral Boundaries WA website (www.boundaries.wa.gov.au). Of particular relevance are the Fact Sheets entitled:

- [Electoral Boundaries and Democracy](#)
- [Preliminary Observations](#)
- [Statistics](#)

To the extent it is not repeated here, the information in those Fact Sheets, where it is relevant and applicable, should be taken as having been incorporated into these proposals.



Mr Tom Joseph
Government Statistician

The Hon. Neville Owen
Chairman

Mr David Kerlake
Electoral Commissioner

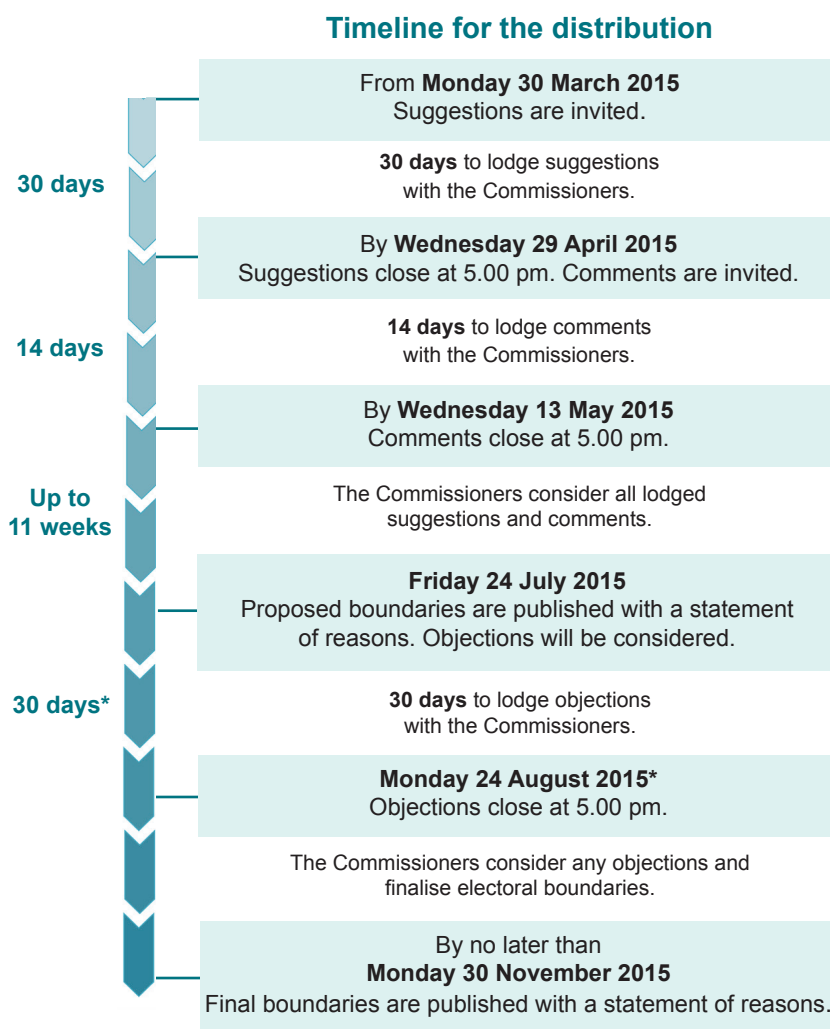
Procedure for the distribution

Timetable

The Commissioners determined that the 2015 distribution would commence on 30 March 2015. Advertisements were subsequently published in the *Government Gazette* and in print media circulating throughout the State, on radio, online and in community newspapers, inviting written suggestions and written comments on suggestions received.

All [suggestions and comments](#) received were taken into account by the Commissioners in their formulation of proposed boundaries.

The timeline for the distribution is set out below.



* This deadline is extended to the next business day as prescribed by the *Interpretations Act 1984*.

Anyone wishing to comment on, or object to, the proposals must do so in writing by the deadline of 24 August 2015. The Commissioners will take all objections into account before arriving at their final determination. Once made, that determination is binding.



Factors to be considered

In developing their proposals, the Commissioners are required to weigh up a range of relevant factors set out in section 16I:

- community of interest
- land use patterns
- means of communication, means of travel and distance from the capital
- physical features
- existing local government boundaries
- the trend of demographic changes.

Those factors are described in detail in the [Preliminary Observations](#) fact sheet.

The task of weighing up competing factors is not easy. For one thing, the Act provides no guidance as to the relative importance of these factors. Some can also apply in different ways depending upon the particular circumstances. For example, major communication routes can divide communities in some situations but unite them in others. Land use patterns can be quite distinctive but may also be mixed. Suburban boundaries – often cited in submissions as an indicator of community of interest – may lose their historical significance as vast contiguous residential corridors develop over time. Even the current State electoral boundaries become less reliable where there has been substantial population growth since the previous distribution, which is the case in this instance.

In developing their proposals the Commissioners tried wherever possible to keep suggested electoral boundaries consistent with local government

boundaries and to keep whole suburbs within electoral districts in the metropolitan area. However, this was not always feasible when balanced against other, competing factors. This explains why splitting of localities and local government areas has sometimes been necessary.

It is important to note also that, even though the influence of one or other of the criteria set down in section 16I may seem obvious, the overriding consideration must always be compliance with the legislative prescription of the maximum deviation from the average district enrolment: see section 16G. In a report of this nature it is not possible to describe how the competing factors were weighed and considered in relation to each and every decision made in relation to all 59 districts and six regions. Rather, the Commissioners have attempted to provide examples of the consideration process to assist readers to understand the approach that has been taken.

One of the other difficulties encountered in electoral distributions is that boundary adjustments in one district will almost always have flow on consequences, not just on an adjoining district that is directly affected but on other (and usually many) districts in the same region. The ‘domino effect’ can also have ramifications for the positioning of regional boundaries.

One factor which the Commissioners stress that they do *not* take into account is the possible political ramifications of any changes they propose. They are guided at all times by the relevant factors prescribed in the Act.



Electoral units and elector numbers

Districts and regions

Because the Commissioners cannot increase or reduce the total number of districts or regions, the State must be divided into 59 electoral districts in six electoral regions. Three of the regions are to be situated in what is generally described as ‘the country’ while the other three are located in an area generally coextensive with the Perth metropolitan area.

Section 16H contains a general description of the six Legislative Council regions as follows:

- three contiguous regions (together generally co-extensive with the metropolitan area of Perth) called the North Metropolitan Region (an area generally to the north of the Swan River), the South Metropolitan Region (an area generally to the south of the Swan River) and the East Metropolitan Region (an area that includes the hills and foothills of the Darling Escarpment);
- the Mining and Pastoral Region, consisting of complete and contiguous districts that together form an area that is remote from Perth and in which the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes;
- the Agricultural Region, consisting 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 in which the land use is primarily for agricultural purposes; and

- the South West Region (a region that includes coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State).

Except for the general descriptions set out above, the Act does not prescribe where the boundaries between the six electoral regions must be set nor does it prescribe how many districts are to be located in each region. This is up to the Commissioners to determine. However, the Act does specify that each of the three metropolitan regions ought to have ‘approximately’ the same number of districts and that each electoral district must be wholly situated within the boundaries of a given region.

At present there are 17 districts in the three country regions and 42 districts in the three metropolitan regions.

Electoral numbers

Except as set out in the next paragraph, the number of electors in each district must be between minus 10 per cent and plus 10 per cent of the ‘average district enrolment’ (ADE). The percentage by which the total number of electors in a district differs from the ADE is called the ‘variation from average district enrolment’ (VFADE).

Districts that have a geographical area of 100,000 square kilometres or more are subject to a ‘large district allowance’ (LDA), calculated by multiplying the number of square kilometres in the district by a factor of 1.5. In these districts, the boundaries must be set so that the sum of the electors actually enrolled and the LDA is between minus 20 per cent and plus 10 per cent of the ADE.

It should be noted that the spatial mapping technology that measures the area of districts, for the purpose of calculating the LDA, provides more precise measurement in 2015 than in the 2011 distribution.

This may account for some differences in the LDA even though the boundaries of a district (eligible for an LDA) are unchanged.

On the relevant day (9 March 2015) there were 1,470,451 enrolled electors across the 59 districts. When the LDAs for the relevant districts are added, the total number increases to 1,504,700. Based on the number of electors (before taking into account LDAs) the ADE is 24,923.

Currently, there are 12 districts that have a VFADE outside the permitted tolerance range and which, therefore, must be the subject of boundary changes. They are identified in the following table.

Table 1: Districts with VFADEs outside the permitted tolerance range

Region	District	VFADE ¹ (as at 9/3/2015)
Agricultural	Wagin	- 12.49%
Mining and Pastoral	North West Central	- 22.03%
East Metropolitan	Darling Range	+ 23.80%
	Swan Hills	+ 11.91%
	West Swan	+ 17.48%
North Metropolitan	Butler	+ 33.58%
	Girrawheen	+ 14.35%
	Perth	+ 11.40%
South Metropolitan	Cockburn	+ 11.34%
	Kwinana	+ 24.98%
	Southern River	+ 12.37%
	Warnbro	+ 23.50%

¹ Variation from the average district enrolment at 9 March 2015, includes large district allowance for districts in Mining & Pastoral Region.

There are several other districts (some of which are set out in Table 2 in the [Preliminary Observations](#) fact sheet) that are close to the limit, with additional districts affected by the ‘domino effect’.



Public participation in the 2015 distribution

Two opportunities were initially provided for public consultation. The Commissioners invited written suggestions from interested individuals or organisations in regard to electoral boundaries. In all, nineteen suggestions were received: four from political parties, six from other organisations (predominantly local governments) and nine from individual members of the public. Twelve covered the whole state while seven dealt with particular areas only. Some of the twelve that covered the whole state included detail concerning the exact boundaries of districts and regions. Others were of a more general nature.

Twenty-nine responses were received to the Commissioners' invitation for comments on suggestions received.

The Commissioners have given careful consideration to the contributions of individuals and organisations and have been greatly assisted by them.

From time to time in this report reference is made to the Commissioners having 'decided' something. Decisions had to be made for the purpose of publishing proposals and the Commissioners reiterate that they will take into consideration matters raised in objections lodged by interested parties before deciding the final boundaries.