



## **2023 REVIEW OF STATE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

The Western Australian Parliament is made up of two houses. The Legislative Assembly, or Lower House, has 59 members, each member representing a single district. The Legislative Council, or Upper House, has one statewide electorate with 37 Members.

The *Electoral Act 1907* requires that an independent Distribution Commission undertake a review of all district boundaries once during each electoral cycle.

The Commissioners who will conduct the 2023 Distribution are:

- The Hon. Eric Heenan, KC, a former Judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia;
- Mr Robert Kennedy, the Western Australian Electoral Commissioner; and
- Mr Tom Joseph, Government Statistician

The formal process for the 2023 Distribution is now underway. At the conclusion of the process, the number of enrolled electors in each district generally must not vary by more than 10% above or below the overall Average District Enrolment (ADE). In the case of geographic districts equal to or greater in size than 100,000 square kilometres, the number of enrolled electors in that district generally must not vary by more than 10% above or 20% below the overall Average District Enrolment (ADE).

### **Legislative Assembly districts**

The first step in the Distribution process is to determine the Average District Enrolment (ADE) across all Legislative Assembly districts. In accordance with the Electoral Act this is required to be calculated on a date as near as practicable to the mid-point between the previous and next general election (the 'relevant day'). The Commissioners determined 13 March 2023 to be the relevant day for the purposes of this Distribution.

As at that date the ADE was 30,432. Applying the 10% variation rule, this means that at the completion of the Distribution, as a general rule Legislative Assembly districts must have at least 27,389 enrolled electors but no more than 33,475.

There is one exception to this rule. This relates to districts that have an area of 100,000 square kilometres or more, in which cases a notional Large District Allowance (LDA) must be applied. The LDA is calculated by multiplying the number of square kilometres in the district by a factor of 1.5%. This number is added to the number of actual electors in the district to arrive at a 'notional' enrolment figure. Under the legislation, the total in these particular districts must be set so that the total of the number of actual electors when added to the LDA does not vary more than 20% below or 10% above the ADE.

Enrolment levels in Legislative Assembly districts as at 13 March 2023 (the ‘relevant day’) are set out at the end of this document. It should be noted that enrolment levels in 10 of the State’s 59 Legislative Assembly districts fall outside of the permissible limits and therefore must have their boundaries adjusted. It is also important to note the ‘domino effect’ that almost invariably occurs when the boundaries of a given district are adjusted. That is, required adjustments to District ‘A’ may not simply be a matter of adding electors to or taking them from the adjoining district ‘B’. There may be flow on effects for ‘C’, ‘D’, and so on. There are also a number of districts where the enrolment level is only marginally within the permissible limits and where it may be prudent to make some adjustment.

Setting aside the districts with an LDA (where variance from the ADA is prescribed in the legislation), it is also instructive to compare the overall average enrolment in metropolitan districts with the overall average in those country districts that do not have an LDA.<sup>1</sup> The average number of electors across the metropolitan districts is 31,625 which is not exceptionally different from the average of 31,087 for country districts excluding those with a special allowance.

### **Legislative Council**

For the Legislative Council, recent amendments to the *Electoral Act 1907* mean that there is now only one statewide electorate. Therefore the Commissioners are no longer required to make any determination in relation to the Legislative Council.

Previous requirements relating to the number of Legislative Assembly districts within each Legislative Council region also no longer apply nor does the distinction between metropolitan regions and non-metropolitan regions. When considering Legislative Assembly district boundaries the Commissioners are no longer governed by the distinction between a non-metropolitan and metropolitan population area that may be only hundreds of metres apart.

### **Factors to be taken into account in the review of boundaries**

In setting the boundaries for districts the Commissioners are required to take into account:

- (a) community of interest; and
- (b) land use patterns; and
- (c) means of communication, means of travel and distance from the capital; and
- (d) physical features; and
- (e) existing boundaries of districts; and
- (f) existing local government boundaries; and

---

<sup>1</sup> Actual elector numbers in districts with an LDA could be expected to differ from the overall average, given the special considerations laid down by the Parliament.

(g) the trend of demographic changes.

Although any of these considerations may assume a level of importance in particular instances, the overriding determinant in all cases must be elector numbers. Regardless of anything else, the total enrolment in each district (inclusive of the LDA in large districts) must be within the permissible limits. Anyone wishing to make a public submission should therefore give close consideration to the tables of elector numbers set out below.

Although the Commissioners are not bound by future demographic change, it is often sensible to take projected changes into account. For example in areas of continued substantial growth it may be wise where practicable to set the total enrolment towards the lower permissible limit, to minimise the impact of future adjustments.

### **Determining the draft and final boundaries**

The comprehensive public consultation process required under the Electoral Act will be undertaken in three main phases:

#### *Public suggestions*

On 1 April 2023 the Commissioners will advertise inviting public suggestions for the revised boundaries. Submissions may relate to the whole state or particular areas including a single district. The deadline for the receipt of submissions will be 5.00 pm, Monday, 1 May 2023.

#### *Comments on suggestions*

Suggestions received will then be published on the Distribution website with an invitation for public comment on the suggestions.

#### *Comment on draft proposals*

There will be a further opportunity for the public to comment on the Commissioners' draft proposals once they are formulated. Under the *Electoral Act 1907* there is no set date for publication, but the proposals will be completed as soon as practicable.

Before drafting proposed boundaries the Commissioners will carefully consider every suggestion and comment which is submitted. Any additional information or explanatory comment will be published from time to time on the Distribution website.

Trained cartographers will assist the Commissioners with the mapping of different scenarios, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software in addition to a MapInfo application called Boundary Maker (developed and kindly made available by the Victorian Electoral Commission). This system is loaded with spatial data sourced from the State Agencies and Departments, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and supplemented by Electoral Commission enrolment data. Available information also allows the overlay of features such as existing State, Local and Federal Government boundaries, rivers and roads, property boundaries and aerial views.

The new boundaries will be known by the end of 2023 and are not subject to appeal. They will only apply from the next State general election. Any by-election which may be held

prior to the March 2025 State general election must be conducted in accordance with the current boundaries.

Individuals or organisations contemplating [lodging a submission](#) with the Commission are referred to the [Distribution Review Timetable](#). The following tables will also be of assistance.

### Enrolment levels as at 13 March 2023

Metropolitan Districts		
District	No. of Electors	Variation from Average District Enrolment <sup>^</sup>
Armadale	34,151	12.22%
Balcatta	30,155	-0.91%
Baldivis	35,906	17.99%
Bassendean	30,340	-0.30%
Bateman	31,019	1.93%
Belmont	31,397	3.17%
Bicton	29,041	-4.57%
Burns Beach	31,343	3.00%
Butler	36,484	19.89%
Cannington	30,409	-0.07%
Carine	31,241	2.66%
Churchlands	29,646	-2.58%
Cockburn	32,392	6.44%
Cottesloe	32,248	5.97%
Darling Range	33,161	8.97%
Forrestfield	28,857	-5.17%
Fremantle	32,955	8.29%
Hillarys	30,655	0.73%
Jandakot	34,756	14.21%
Joondalup	29,724	-2.33%
Kalamunda	30,059	-1.22%
Kingsley	30,826	1.30%
Kwinana	31,420	3.25%
Landsdale	32,725	7.54%
Maylands	30,711	0.92%
Midland	33,629	10.51%
Mirrabooka	31,027	1.96%
Morley	30,921	1.61%
Mount Lawley	30,263	-0.55%
Nedlands	31,557	3.70%
Perth	33,489	10.05%
Riverton	29,596	-2.75%
Rockingham	30,299	-0.44%
Scarborough	32,078	5.41%
South Perth	30,035	-1.30%
Southern River	31,387	3.14%
Swan Hills	32,081	5.42%
Thornlie	31,197	2.52%
Victoria Park	29,679	-2.47%
Wanneroo	33,152	8.94%
Warnbro	32,891	8.08%
West Swan	35,412	16.37%
Willagee	29,565	-2.85%
	<b>1,359,879</b>	

<sup>^</sup> Average District Enrolment for the whole of Western Australia is 30,432

## Country Districts

District	No. of Electors	LDA*	Variation from Average District Enrolment^
Albany	28,540		-6.22%
Bunbury	31,873		4.74%
Central Wheatbelt	26,652	1,532	-7.39%
Collie-Preston	32,331		6.24%
Dawesville	33,362		9.63%
Geraldton	27,893		-8.34%
Kalgoorlie	20,268	8,332	-6.02%
Kimberley	16,514	8,032	-19.34%
Mandurah	33,736		10.86%
Moore	26,976		-11.36%
Murray-Wellington	32,237		5.93%
North West Central	11,021	12,275	-23.45%
Pilbara	23,716	4,383	-7.66%
Roe	25,387	1,575	-11.39%
Vasse	33,254		9.27%
Warren-Blackwood	31,822		4.57%
	<b>435,582</b>	<b>36,129</b>	

\*Large District Allowance

Listed below are the Legislative Assembly districts whose enrolment level is outside of the limits permitted by the Electoral Act.

#### Districts Outside Permissible Limits

District	No. of Electors	Variation from Average District Enrolment <sup>^</sup>
Armadale	34,151	12.22%
Baldivis	35,906	17.99%
Butler	36,484	19.89%
Jandakot	34,756	14.21%
Mandurah	33,736	10.86%
Midland	33,629	10.51%
Moore	26,976	-11.36%
North West Central <sup>1</sup>	23,296	-23.45%
Perth	33,489	10.05%
West Swan	35,412	16.37%
	<b>327,835</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Includes Large District Allowance of 12,275

Maps of all Legislative Assembly districts including enrolment levels for each may be found [here](#) for metropolitan and country.

To access enrolment data tables separately click [here](#).

Further information will be available on the Distribution website at [Boundaries WA](#) .