

Conclusion

Final boundaries – a summary

The 2015 division presented the Commissioners with many challenges. The rapid population growth in the Perth metropolitan area made it extremely difficult to create an acceptable electoral map using the same number of metropolitan districts as at present. This, coupled with the slower rate of population increases in country areas, compelled the decision to create a new district in the metropolitan area and to abolish a district in the country. The changes brought about in this division are wide-ranging. Only nine of the 59 districts (seven in the country and two in the metropolitan area) remain unchanged. Over the whole State, 87.5 per cent of electors reside in districts whose boundaries have been altered.

All districts that, as at 9 March 2015, had enrolments outside the permitted range have been brought within the legislative tolerance. In some instances, the reality of having to keep districts within the permitted tolerance range has led to decisions that might not otherwise have been necessary given other relevant factors that the Commissioners are required to consider.

Communities of interest are important factors and were accommodated where possible. The determination that the Shires of Koorda, Dowerin, Goomalling and Wongan-Ballidu should remain in the district of Central Wheatbelt is an example. But, again, sometimes, community of interest considerations (even strong ones) must give way to numbers. The decision to include the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku in the district of North West Central, notwithstanding its affiliation with the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, is an illustration of this difficulty. The fact that the Kwinana Town Centre has been split between two districts and that Hazelmere

has been included in Belmont (despite objections suggesting a closer affinity with the Midland area), are other examples.

Attention was given to land use patterns in, for example, the decision that the high density localities of Harrisdale and Piara Waters should be removed from the district of Darling Range, which is predominantly semi-rural in character. The determination not to split the Shire of Esperance was made after taking into account (among other things) land use patterns. In some instances, (and again due to the need to keep all districts within the permitted tolerance range) district boundaries cannot always cover similar land use areas. The fact that part of Caversham linked to the Swan Valley is in the district of Midland, not the district of West Swan, is an example.

Means of communication, means of travel and distance from the capital are significant factors when it comes to considering boundaries for regions and districts, especially in country regions. The Commissioners always took these matters into consideration in making decisions about country districts. However the difficulty of doing so in a place as vast as Western Australia and with an uneven spread of population growth is demonstrated by the decision to create two districts in the Agricultural Region which are of such size that they attract Large District Allowances. This is the first time that districts outside the Mining and Pastoral Region have had these allowances.

In relation to physical features, greater use has been made of major roads, such as the Mitchell and Kwinana Freeways in Girrawheen and Darling Range respectively, and Tonkin Highway in Maylands and Bassendean, to create more easily recognisable boundaries.

The requirement to give consideration to existing boundaries of regions and districts is acknowledged but was difficult to accommodate in the face of rapid and uneven population growth. However, the decision to maintain the existing boundaries of the district of Pilbara, rather than to shift some population centres into the district of North West Central, is an example of the application of this consideration as is the decision not to change the outer perimeter of the Perth metropolitan area. Although the Commissioners had considered moving the district of Mount Lawley to the North Metropolitan Region and the district of Girrawheen to the East Metropolitan Region, they were persuaded that there were stronger arguments in favour of maintaining the status quo.

The Commissioners have tried to avoid splitting localities and local government areas where that was feasible, bearing in mind elector numbers, the consequences for surrounding districts and the impact of other relevant considerations. One of the reasons for this is the impact of communities of interest. It should be noted that there are now no new splits of local government areas in the Mining and Pastoral Region. The broad objective in relation to localities is illustrated by the decisions to reunite the town of Margaret River, City of Kalgoorlie, and the localities of Ellenbrook and Madeley so they are located in single districts. But sometimes the numbers and spread of population mean that such splits were unavoidable. The determination in relation to the locality of Ballajura (which remains split between districts) is an example.

Demographic trends have been noted and efforts made to leave districts with the potential for high population growth with lower numbers and more stable districts with higher numbers. The districts of Balcatta (+ 7.89 per cent) and Butler (- 7.19 per cent) are examples of those respective propositions. It was not always possible to achieve this objective: the districts of Swan Hills (+ 8.28 per cent) and Belmont (- 3.08 per cent) are examples. The negative VFADE in the district of Belmont would have been even greater had part of the locality of Hazelmere not been included in Belmont.

The process of dividing the State into electoral regions and districts is a vital part of the democratic process. The Commissioners are grateful for the large number of suggestions, comments and objections that were lodged by members of the general public (in addition to those provided by entities directly engaged in the political system). This indicates the seriousness with which the public view matters affecting electoral representation.

Final boundaries – formal decision

Acting under the provisions of the *Electoral Act 1907* we, the undersigned Electoral Distribution Commissioners, publish our division of the State into electoral regions and districts. The division of the State determined in this report applies for the next State general election.

In accordance with section 16K of the Act, the Commissioners' determinations are final.

This report will be available from the Western Australian Electoral Commission and can also be downloaded from the Electoral Boundaries WA website: www.boundaries.wa.gov.au.

The printed versions of maps contained in this Report, and on the website, are generated from electronic forms which describe the boundaries for each electoral region and electoral district, created under the authority of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners and lodged as Deposited Plans Nos 407655-407719 with Landgate.

To view the maps in greater detail, or download the maps and Commissioners' reasons in printable form, visit the Electoral Boundaries WA website: www.boundaries.wa.gov.au.

The Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners was established as a temporary office to manage the 2015 electoral division process and will close after the process is completed. All enquiries relating to electoral matters, including the application of electoral boundaries, should be directed to:

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