



Office of the ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS

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ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS PUBLISH PROPOSALS

The Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commissioners have today (Friday, May 2, 2003) made public their proposals for revisions to electoral boundaries in WA, and these are now open for objections by interested groups and individuals. Booklets fully detailing the proposals will be circulated throughout the State this weekend.

The distribution process is being carried out by the WA Electoral Distribution Commissioners, who are:

The Chief Justice (Chairman)	–	The Hon. David K. Malcolm AC, CIT. WA
The Electoral Commissioner	–	Ms Lyn Auld
The Government Statistician	–	Mr Colin Nagle

WA Electoral Distribution Commissioners' spokesperson, Ms Lyn Auld, said the proposed boundary changes were more extensive than in the previous distribution in 1994, reflecting the fact that eight years had elapsed since the last review.

Distributions are carried out after every two successive State general elections, to ensure that population changes do not create major imbalances in the number of electors in each electorate. The process is prescribed in the *Electoral Distribution Act 1947*, and is based on establishing a "quotient" for metropolitan and country areas, which is calculated by dividing the number of electors in each area by the number of "districts", or seats.

Based on the number of eligible electors, measured by a "snapshot" in February, 2002, the quotient for metropolitan seats is 26,454, and for country seats is 13,735.

In proposing boundaries, the Commissioners take into account a number of factors, primarily the number of eligible electors and the demographic trend information provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to ensure that, as far as possible, the boundaries defined this year will continue to provide an equitable balance for the next two State general elections, despite further population changes during that period.

The Electoral Distribution Commissioners have adopted the objective of achieving, as far as practical, equal elector numbers in each district. This follows the approach taken by the Commissioners in the 1988 and 1994 distributions.

"This approach has enabled us to achieve a high degree of equity in our proposals. In the Metropolitan area, with the exception of Wanneroo, all seats are expected to be within 3% of the quotient in 2007," said Ms Auld.

"Even though the Commissioners have set the numbers in Wanneroo close to the minimum allowed under the Act, the seat is anticipated to be approximately 11% above quotient by 2007," she said.

Ms Auld said a similar difficulty had been encountered in the Kimberley area, where the growth projections indicated that the existing Kimberley District would need to be reduced in size.

"The area covered by the district of Kimberley has been reduced by removing the area around Fitzroy Crossing, which will become part of the seat of Pilbara. This solution, made necessary by the demographics of the area, leaves the seat with an anticipated 11% excess over the quotient in 2007. The centres of Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing are now combined into the one electorate.

"Because the whole Mining and Pastoral Region has insufficient electors to sustain the current six seats, one of these has been transferred to the fast-growing South West Region, reflecting the strong current and projected population growth for the coastal strip from Mandurah to Busselton," she said.

Ms Auld said that variations from the quotient tended to be greater in country areas, because whole local government areas are placed, wherever possible, in the same electorate. Local governments are only split where the circumstances provide no viable alternative.

"Thus the variations are higher in many country districts.

"On balance, I believe our proposals will be seen to be fair and equitable, incorporating elements from the many well-considered suggestions submitted by the political parties and individuals, and comments on those suggestions," she said.

Ms Auld said the process allowed for political parties, other groups and individuals to object to the proposals.

"We welcome constructive submissions that meet the requirements of the Act, and will take them into consideration at the review stage, but it may be difficult for us to accommodate critical comments that do not offer an alternative solution," she said.

Ms Auld said that written objections on the proposals should be made to the Electoral Distribution Commissioners by 5pm on June 3, 2003. Details of the proposals will be contained in a booklet inserted in a newspaper circulating throughout WA this weekend, or can be obtained after 12 noon today from the Commission's website: www.boundarieswa.com.