

Where will you be in 2009?

An explanation of changes to electoral boundary legislation in Western Australia

New legislation makes significant changes to how electors are represented within the Parliament of Western Australia. The new legislation, based on 'one vote one value' principles, also requires a review of electoral boundaries before each State general election so that, broadly, all Legislative Assembly electorates will have approximately the same number of electors. This brochure takes a look at what the changes mean but cannot provide conclusive information on electoral boundaries. These changes will be undertaken in 2007.

Districts, Regions and Representation

- The number of members in the Legislative Assembly will increase from 57 to 59.
- The number of members in the Legislative Council will increase from 34 to 36.
- Each Legislative Council region will now have six members. See the table below for changes.

Region	Current MLCs	New MLCs	Overall Change
East Metropolitan	5	6	+1
North Metropolitan	7	6	-1
South Metropolitan	5	6	+1
Agricultural	5	6	+1
Mining and Pastoral	5	6	+1
South West	7	6	-1
TOTAL	34	36	+2

- Changes to electoral boundaries will now happen after every State general election in the Legislative Assembly.
- Any by-election or re-count required before the 2009 State general election will be held using the current boundaries.

Enrolment

- The 'average district enrolment' now forms the main basis for dividing the State into districts. This figure is calculated by dividing the number of electors in the State by the number of districts.
- The enrolment for each district now needs to fall within $\pm 10\%$ of the average district enrolment.

- If the changes had been in place for the 2005 State general election, the ‘average district enrolment’ in each LA district would have been:

Number of electors	1,259,262
Number of districts	59
Average district enrolment	21,343

- Based on the enrolment at the 2005 State general election and the **current** region boundaries, the changes to the districts and regions would be:

Region	MLA	MLC	Change
East Metropolitan	+4	+1	+5
North Metropolitan	0	-1	-1
South Metropolitan	+4	+1	+5
Agricultural	-3	+1	-2
Mining and Pastoral	0	+1	+1
South West	-3	-1	-4
TOTAL	+2	+2	+4

Note: The enrolment figures will be different in 2007, when the boundary distribution is undertaken, and any changes to the region boundaries will be a matter for the Electoral Distribution Commissioners at the time.

Metropolitan Districts and Regions

- Boundaries of metropolitan districts and regions may now span what is currently known as the ‘metropolitan area’ if the Commissioners consider it necessary to meet the other requirements of the new legislation. Current metropolitan boundaries must fit completely within the ‘metropolitan area’.
- The North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan Regions will be ‘generally north’ and ‘generally south’ of the Swan River respectively. The East Metropolitan Region will now be a region ‘that includes the hills and foothills of the Darling Escarpment’.

Country Districts and Regions

- The Agricultural Region will now be required to comprise an area ‘in which the land use is primarily for agricultural purposes’. The South West Region will now be required to be a region ‘that includes coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State’. The Mining and Pastoral Region will remain as a region that is primarily mining and pastoral in land use.

Large District Allowance (LDA)

- Some large districts (100,000 km² or greater) with smaller populations will qualify for a large district allowance. This allowance is calculated by multiplying 1.5% by the square kilometres of the district and adding the number of electors in the district. The final number must be within a range of 20% less or 10% greater than the average district enrolment.

For example: the Central Kimberley-Pilbara district has 12,601 electors and an area of 600,038 km².

$$1.5\% \times 600,038 = 9,000 \text{ LDA} + 12,601$$

$$= 21,601$$

If the average district enrolment is 21,343, the lower limit would be 17,074 and the upper limit would be 23,477. Therefore the current district of Central Kimberley-Pilbara would be within the permissible range.

Matters to be Considered

- Particular matters to be considered by the Electoral Distribution Commissioners in 2007 include:
 - (a) community of interest
 - (b) land use patterns **NEW INCLUSION**
 - (c) means of communication and distance from the capital
 - (d) physical features
 - (e) existing boundaries of regions and districts
 - (f) existing local government boundaries
 - (g) the trend of demographic changes
- A distribution can only occur once after every election. There is no longer an option for the Governor to direct that a distribution be conducted in other circumstances.

Next Distribution - 2007

- The next distribution of electoral boundaries should commence in early 2007 and the new boundaries will apply to the next State general election, due in early 2009.
- The following office holders make up the three member Electoral Distribution Commissioner panel. They are:
 - Chief Justice (Chairman)
 - Electoral Commissioner
 - Government Statistician
- The Electoral Distribution Commissioners have now been given an extra 30 days during which to consult with electors and finalise their decisions, giving them seven months to determine the new boundaries to apply at the next State general election in 2009.
- As with every distribution, the public will be invited to submit written suggestions, comments and objections when the Electoral Distribution Commissioners start the boundary distribution process in 2007.

Current Boundaries

- The current boundaries apply to all Members of Parliament elected at the 2005 State general election and to any Member elected at a by-election or re-count before the 2009 State general election.
- The current boundaries may be viewed at www.boundarieswa.com. Copies of maps of current boundaries are also available from the Western Australian Electoral Commission.

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