

ESTIMATES BRIEF – Back Pocket

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Budget – May 2015

**SUBJECT: DIVERGENCE OF THE ELECTORAL
ROLL**

ISSUE 1: What is Roll divergence?

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- **Divergence occurs where an elector is enrolled on either the federal or state/territory roll and has no enrolment, or an enrolment at a different address, on another roll.**
- Divergence can cause considerable confusion for affected electors with regard to their enrolment status for forthcoming electoral events.

ISSUE 2: What causes Roll divergence?

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- **Divergence is caused when there is either a difference in legislation or a difference in practice between the Commonwealth and a state/territory.**

Direct enrolment – NSW, Victoria and WA

- The **largest cause of divergence** is the parallel running of direct enrolment programs, run by the Commonwealth, NSW and Victoria. The Commonwealth does not recognise NSW and Victorian direct enrolment, while WA legislatively cannot recognise Commonwealth direct enrolment.

Age and witnessing – Victoria and WA

- In Victoria and WA the minimum enrolment age is 17.
- A witness is still required for electors new to the Victorian roll, whereas Federal enrolments have not required a witness since 2006.

Other causes of divergence

- Differences in eligibility for prisoners, other territories (such as Norfolk Island), British subjects and overseas electors.
- Evidence of identity requirements in federal legislation can result in state-only enrolment for first time enrolments and re-enrolments where evidence of identity has not been provided.

- State requirements in some jurisdictions for an elector's signature and a witness mean that voters changing their address details online will be updated for federal purposes where they are currently enrolled and if electronic signatures are not provided. That is, they will be enrolled at their new address for federal purposes and their old address for state/territory purposes.

ISSUE 3: How much divergence is there?

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- **Approximately 658 000 electors have divergent enrolments due to procedural reasons (see Table 1).**
- The **highest numbers** of divergent enrolments are concentrated in NSW, Victoria and WA.
- Victoria and NSW have the **highest levels of divergence**, due mostly to different state direct enrolment processes.
- WA has the next largest divergence, as WA legislation does not recognise changes made via the Commonwealth's direct enrolment and update process.
- The remaining states have comparatively lower levels of divergence which primarily relate to **differing entitlements** for particular groups.
- The number of electors who have divergent enrolments due to entitlement is 19 718 nationally (18 503 federal only and 1 215 state only) and these are shown in Table 2.
- The difference in the size of the Commonwealth and State/Territory rolls is much smaller (see Table 3) because 380 551 electors have **dual enrolments** (see Table 1) where they are enrolled at both Commonwealth and state/territory level, but at different addresses. There will also be some electors who can only vote in Federal elections, while others will only be able to vote in state/territory elections.

Table 1: Approximate procedural divergence as at 31 March 2015 ^(a)

	Single enrolment		Dual enrolment ^(b)		Total
	Federal only	State only	Federal leading	State leading	
NSW	1	140 533	87	120 956	261 577
VIC	48 217	47 800	56 799	127 262	280 078
QLD	0	0	1	0	1
WA	39 069	697	74 702	328	114 796
SA	8	909	69	347	1 333
TAS	0	0	0	0	0
ACT	0	0	0	0	0
NT	1	0	0	0	1
Total	87 296	189 939	131 658	248 893	657 786

^(a) Includes enrolments of 16 and 17 year olds

^(b) Excludes electors who have dual enrolments at the same address

Table 2: Approximate entitlement divergence as at 31 March 2015 ^(a)

	Single enrolment	
	Federal only	State only
NSW	236	125
VIC	9 654	80
QLD	141	529
WA	7 797	241
SA	164	240
TAS	53	0
ACT	458	0
NT	0	0
Total	18 503	1 215

^(a) Includes enrolments of 16 and 17 year olds

Table 3: Commonwealth and State rolls compared as at 31 March 2015 ^(a)

	Commonwealth Roll	State Roll	Difference	Who is larger	% difference
NSW	4 886 803	5 033 203	146 400	State	3.0%
VIC	3 811 049	3 809 826	1 223	Federal	0.0%
Qld	2 956 722	2 955 008	1 714	Federal	0.1%
WA	1 513 263	1 471 896	41 367	Federal	2.7%
SA	1 150 909	1 151 818	909	State	0.1%
Tas	366 283	366 230	53	Federal	0.0%
ACT	272 153	271 688	465	Federal	0.2%
NT	129 445	129 444	1	Federal	0.0%
Australia	15 086 627	15 189 113			

^(a) Does not include enrolments of 16 and 17 year olds

ISSUE 4: What data sources do the direct enrolment programs use?

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

- **Table 2 outlines the data sources currently, previously and considered for use by the three direct enrolment programs in operation in Australia.**

Table 2: Data sources used in direct enrolment and update processes in Australia

	AEC	NSWEC	VEC
<i>Current</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's licence data obtained from NEVDIS • Centrelink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's licence data obtained from NSW Roads and Maritime Services • Board of Studies NSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's licence data obtained from VicRoads • Year 12 students from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority – used once a year
<i>Previously used</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSWEC SmartRoll data • Victorian direct enrolment data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW TAFE • 1st Home Owners grant information 	
<i>Under consideration</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental Bonds 	

Date: April 2015
Cleared by (SES): Tom Rogers
Group/Branch: Roll Management Branch
Contact Officer: Andrew Gately
Telephone No: 6271 4506
Consultation: Nil