

ROLL DIVERGENCE

Issue

How can electoral rolls diverge?

Headline Statement

- Electoral roll divergence occurs where an elector has a different enrolment status or address for state and federal purposes.

Key Points

- As at 28 February 2015, there were around 117,000 more electors (on a net basis) on the various state electoral rolls than on the Commonwealth electoral roll.
- In NSW alone, there are around 147,000 more electors on the state electoral roll than on the Commonwealth electoral roll.
- Divergence is caused when there is either a difference in legislation or a difference in electoral roll practice between the Commonwealth and a state or territory.
- These differences are predominantly focussed in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. This divergence continues to trend upwards.
- Electoral roll divergence can cause considerable confusion at election time, particularly where enrolments are for different addresses for state and federal purposes. A similar situation occurs where people are eligible but are not enrolled to vote in one jurisdiction but are enrolled in the other jurisdiction.
- The integrity of the electoral roll is critical to our electoral system. I am advised that the Australian Electoral Commission is undertaking a range of investigations on the electoral roll divergence issue, with a view to identifying further strategies to address this matter.

Policy Commitments

- N/A

Date Updated: 23 April 2015

Cleared by Adviser:

Date Last Printed: [14/01/2017 2:41 PM](#) ~~30/04/2015 11:43 AM~~

PDR Number: QB15-000217

Released under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

Date Updated: 23 April 2015

Cleared by Adviser:

Date Last Printed: [14/01/2017 2:41 PM](#)~~30/04/2015~~
~~11:43 AM~~

PDR Number: QB15-000217

Background

The causes of divergence include differences in legislation in relation to the direct enrolment programs run by the Commonwealth and those run by the Victorian and New South Wales Electoral Commissions; differences in witnessing requirements for enrolment (particularly in Victoria and Western Australia); and differing legislation for the enrolment of prisoners, other territories (such as Norfolk Island), British subjects and overseas electors.

As at 28 February 2015, the following numbers of persons were respectively enrolled on the Commonwealth Roll and the relevant State or Territory roll in relation to each of the States and Territories.

| | Commonwealth Roll | State Roll | Who is larger | Difference between Commonwealth over State | % difference - Commonwealth over State |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| NSW | 4,888,252 | 5,035,908 | State | -147,656 | -3.02% |
| VIC | 3,812,803 | 3,820,973 | State | -8,170 | -0.21% |
| Qld | 2,968,519 | 2,966,896 | Federal | 1,623 | 0.05% |
| WA | 1,509,950 | 1,472,393 | Federal | 37,557 | 2.49% |
| SA | 1,150,733 | 1,151,694 | State | -961 | -0.08% |
| Tas | 367,365 | 367,314 | Federal | 51 | 0.01% |
| ACT | 271,928 | 271,465 | Federal | 463 | 0.17% |
| NT | 128,938 | 128,937 | Federal | 1 | 0.00% |
| | | | | | |
| Australia | 15,098,488 | 15,215,580 | State | -117,092 | -0.78% |

Date Updated: 23 April 2015

Cleared by Adviser:

Date Last Printed: [14/01/2017 2:41 PM](#) ~~30/04/2015 11:43 AM~~

PDR Number: QB15-000217