

JSCEM – Back Pocket Brief

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Private briefing 25 November 2015

SUBJECT: DIVERGENCE OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL

WHAT IS ROLL DIVERGENCE?

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

WHAT CAUSES ROLL DIVERGENCE?

- **Divergence is caused when there is a difference in the recognition of processes (procedural divergence) or in the qualifications for enrolment (entitlement divergence) between the Commonwealth and a state/territory.**
- 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.

HOW MUCH DIVERGENCE IS THERE?

- **Approximately 750 000 electors have divergent enrolments due to procedural reasons (see Table 1).**
- 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 **entitlement divergence** for particular groups.

- The number of electors who have divergent enrolments due to entitlement is 22 548 nationally (21 421 federal only and 1 127 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 435 229 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.

Released under the Freedom of Information Act 2009

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

	Single enrolment		Dual enrolment ^(b)		Total
	Federal only	State only	Federal leading	State leading	
NSW	-	138 786	89	130 216	269 091
VIC	63 716	55 068	70 176	138 752	327 712
QLD	-	-	1	-	1
WA	55 402	625	95 388	290	151 705
SA	8	895	70	316	1 289
TAS	-	-	-	-	-
ACT	-	-	1	-	1
NT	1	-	-	-	1
Total	119 127	195 374	165 725	269 574	749 800

^(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 October 2015 ^(a)

	Single enrolment	
	Federal only	State only
NSW	208	112
VIC	11 180	67
QLD	147	512
WA	9 195	212
SA	157	224
TAS	52	-
ACT	482	-
NT	-	-
Total	21 421	1 127

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

As at 31 October 2015, the following numbers of persons aged 18 and over were respectively enrolled on the Commonwealth roll and the relevant State or Territory roll in relation to each of the States and Territories.

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

	Commonwealth Roll	State Roll	Who is larger	Difference between Commonwealth over State	% difference - Commonwealth over State
NSW	4,941,213	5,086,193	State	-144,980	-2.9%
VIC	3,868,951	3,856,904	Federal	12,047	0.3%
Qld	2,997,014	2,995,013	Federal	2,001	0.1%
WA	1,541,269	1,482,496	Federal	58,773	4.0%
SA	1,163,183	1,164,011	State	-828	-0.1%
Tas	368,423	368,371	Federal	52	0%
ACT	274,609	274,121	Federal	488	0.2%
NT	129,311	129,310	Federal	1	0%
Australia	15,283,973	15,356,419	State	-72,446	-0.5%

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

WHAT DATA SOURCES ARE USED FOR THE DIRECT ENROLMENT PROGRAMS?

- Table 2 outlines the data sources currently, previously and those being 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 	

Background:

- The causes of divergence include:
 - differences in legislation in relation to the direct enrolment programs in the Commonwealth and Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia;
 - differences in witnessing requirements for enrolment (particularly in Victoria);
 - differences in the age for enrolment (17 in Victoria and Western Australia, 16 for Commonwealth and other states).
 - differing legislation for the enrolment of:
 - prisoners,
 - other territories (such as Norfolk Island),
 - British subjects, and
 - overseas electors.

Date: 17/11/2015

Cleared by (SES): Tom Rogers

Telephone No: 02 6271 4400

Group/Branch: Roll Management Branch

Contact Officer: Andrew Gately

Telephone No: 02 6271 4506