

ESTIMATES BRIEF - Hot Issue

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Private hearing JSCEM – 24 February 2016

ROLL DIVERGENCE

Issue:

How can electoral rolls diverge?

Key Facts:

- Electoral roll divergence occurs where an elector has a different enrolment status or address for state and federal purposes, and occurs as a result of differences in legislation or practice between the Commonwealth and states/territories.
- These differences are predominantly focussed in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.
- 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.
- In early February 2016, the Australian Electoral Commission updated the Federal electoral roll following the operation of a direct update and enrolment event that commenced in December 2015. This reduced the number of divergent records by 27 per cent from 785,000 on 31 December 2015 to 571,000 on 7 February 2016.
- The integrity of the electoral roll is critical to our electoral system. I am advised that the Australian Electoral Commission is continuing to actively address this matter.

Background:

- As at 7 February 2016, there were 570,000 enrolments for persons aged 18 and over that were divergent due to procedural reasons.

	Single enrolment		Dual enrolment ^(a)		Total
	Federal only	State only	Federal leading	State leading	
NSW	-	68,325	95	77,361	145,781
VIC	71,163	33,295	96,511	60,378	261,347
QLD	-	-	1	-	1
WA	60,205	593	101,231	275	162,304
SA	6	813	9	284	1,112
TAS	-	-	-	-	-
ACT	-	-	1	-	1
NT	1	-	-	-	1
Total	131,375	103,026	197,848	138,298	570,547

- The difference between the State/Territory rolls and the Commonwealth roll is smaller than the overall divergence because some electors are enrolled at both Commonwealth and State/Territory level, but at different addresses.
- There are also some electors who are only eligible to vote in Federal elections, while others are only eligible to vote in state/territory elections.
- As at 7 February 2016, the following numbers of persons aged 18 and over were respectively enrolled on the Commonwealth electoral 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	
				Number	%
NSW	5,046,265	5,119,342	State	-73,077	-1.4%
VIC	3,920,537	3,871,374	Federal	49,163	1.3%
Qld	3,031,253	3,030,051	Federal	1,202	0.0%
WA	1,555,811	1,487,433	Federal	68,378	4.4%
SA	1,171,068	1,171,969	State	-901	-0.1%
Tas	370,907	370,855	Federal	52	0.0%
ACT	276,727	276,236	Federal	491	0.2%
NT	130,021	130,020	Federal	1	0.0%
Australia	15,502,589	15,457,280	Federal	45,309	0.3%

Date: 8 February 2016
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Consultation: Nil
PDR Number: