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ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION

IN AUSTRALIA:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

BY

MURRAY GOOT

Macquarie University

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NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY
BACKGROUND PAPER
1986/5

ELECTORAL REDISTRIBUTION IN AUSTRALIA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

by

Murray Goot

School of History, Philosophy and Politics
Macquarie University

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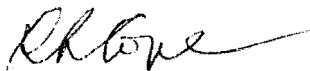MEMBERS OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENT

MAY 1986

FOREWORD

Members have often expressed the need to have information papers and background summaries on topics of current importance prepared for their use in parliamentary debate. The Parliamentary Library already issues a number of publications for the use of Members generally, but the present series of **Background Papers** represents an innovation and experiment. The Joint Library Committee has approved the commissioning of five such papers, to be prepared by persons with expertise in the particular subject area, and conforming with the following broad guidelines:

1. The Papers are to be objective, factual accounts of the subject, presented in a non-partisan, balanced manner so as to be generally useful to Members of both Houses.

2. The Papers are to be written in non-technical language, and are designed to give an account of the broad issues and current state of the subject.

The subjects of the Background Papers have been selected by the Parliamentary Library as being of general interest at the present, but the views expressed are those of the authors of the Papers. If Members find the experiment worthwhile, the Library hopes to have further issues prepared later in 1986. You are invited to forward your comments to the Parliamentary Librarian, and suggestions for future topics of interest to as wide a cross-section of Members as possible will be welcomed.

A list of the five **Background Papers** and of other library publications issued to Members generally will be found on the back page of this publication.

R.L. Cope
Parliamentary Librarian

5th June, 1986.

C O N T E N T S

TABLES

RELEVANT LEGISLATION
(as amended)

Commonwealth	Commonwealth Electoral Act
NSW	Constitution Act Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act
Victoria	Electoral Commission Act
Queensland	Electoral Districts Act
South Australia	Constitution Act Electoral Act
Western Australia	Electoral Act Electoral Districts Act Acts Amendment (Electoral Provinces and Districts) Act
Tasmania	Constitution Act

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

Commonwealth: Three: (a) Judge, selected by the Governor-General from a list of 3 eligible judges submitted by the Chief Judge (Chair)

   (b) The Electoral Commissioner

   (c) a non-judicial appointee: Permanent Head or equivalent

NSW Three to be appointed when distribution becomes necessary:

   (a) Someone who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court, Member of the Industrial Commission of NSW or Judge of the District Court

   (b) The Electoral Commissioner

   (c) a surveyor under the Surveyors Act

Victoria: Three: (a) Chief Judge of the County Court or Judge of the County Court nominated by Chief Judge (Chair)

   (b) Chief Electoral Officer

   (c) Surveyor-General

Queensland Three persons

South Australia Three:

   (a) The most senior Judge of the Supreme Court available (Chair)

   (b) Electoral Commissioner or, if unable to act, a person appointed by the Chief Justice experienced in electoral matters

   (c) Surveyor-General or, if unable to act, someone appointed by the Chief Justice experienced in surveying.

Western Australia   Three: (a) Chief Justice (Chair)
                               (b) Chief Electoral Officer
                               (c) Surveyor General

Tasmania   None

AIM OF THE DISTRIBUTION

Commonwealth   To ensure that, 3 years and 6 months after
the State or Territory has been redistributed, the number of
electors enrolled in each proposed Electoral Division in the
State or Territory will be equal.

NSW   Having regard to demographic trends within
the State, endeavour to ensure on the basis of those trends
that, 4 years from the day of the return of the writs for
choosing the Legislative Assembly that exists at the time the
distribution is carried out, the number of electors in each
electoral district will be equal.

Victoria   To establish and maintain electoral
districts with approximately equal enrolment.

Queensland   To determine electoral boundaries.

South Australia   To distribute electorates within the
permissible tolerance.

Western Australia   To divide the States into electorates.

Tasmania   See Commonwealth (above)

TIMING OF DISTRIBUTION

Commonwealth

Mandatory:

(a) if, during the twelfth month of the life of each Parliament, changes in population have changed the entitlement of any State; or

(b) when more than one-third of the Division in any State are, and have, for a period of 3 consecutive months, been, malapportioned Divisions; or

(c) where 7 years have passed since a state was last redistributed.

Note: re (b) and (c)

House of Representatives must still have at least 12 months to run.

NSW   (a) Forthwith after the enactment of any Act for the alteration of the number of Members of the Legislative Assembly;

(b) forthwith after a general election if the last distribution applied at that election and the election previous to that; and

(c) at such additional times as may be provided by law.

Victoria   When the number of electors enrolled for the electoral districts do not comply 'to a substantial extent' with the requirement of approximate equal enrolment.

Note: The Electoral Commission, in a report of 1983/84, has asked for 'substantial extent' to be defined.

Queensland   when   (a) the number of electors in any electoral district is 'so much above or so much below the applicable quota'; or

(b) the total number of electors within the state or within any locality thereof has changed to such an extent that 'in the opinion of the Governor-in-Council it has become necessary to make either a complete redistribution or a partial redistribution.'

South Australia   (a)   after Act altering size of House of Assembly; or

(b)   within 3 months after a polling day if 5 years or more has intervened between a previous polling day at which the last electoral redistribution was in force and the last polling day

Western Australia   when   (a) both Houses of Parliament pass a resolution to that effect; or

(b) when Chief Electoral Officer advises within 6 months of the last general election, that the number of electors in at least 8 electoral districts exceeds by 20% or more the quota for these districts.

Tasmania   as for Commonwealth (above)

FACTORS FOR DUE CONSIDERATION IN DISTRIBUTION

Commonwealth:

    (i)   community of interests, incl. economic, social and regional interests;

    (ii)   means of communication and travel;

    (iii)   trend of population changes within the State;

    (iv)   physical features and area of the proposed Electoral Division; and

    (v)   boundaries of existing Divisions in the State.

NSW   (i)   community of interests, incl. economic, social and regional interests;

    (ii)   means of communication and travel within the electoral district;

    (iii)   physical features and area of the electoral districts; and

    (iv)   boundaries of the existing electoral districts

Victoria   (i)   community or diversity of interests;

    (ii)   means of travel, traffic arteries, and communications and any special difficulties connected therewith;

    (iii)   likelihood of changes in the number of electors in the various localities;

    (iv)   area and physical features of terrain

Queensland   (i)   community or diversity of interests;

    (ii)   means of communication;

    (iii)   demographic trends;

    (iv)   diversity of population;

    (v)   physical features;

(vi)   distance from the seat of government; and especially,

(vii)   boundaries of areas of local authorities and divisions of local authorities

South Australia

(i)   community of interests, incl. economic, social and regional;

(ii)   demographic trends;

(iii)   population of each proposed electoral district;

(iv)   topography;

(v)   communication between electors and their representatives;

(vi)   boundaries of existing electoral districts, and any other matters that it thinks relevant

Western Australia   Re Zones 1 and 3

(i)   community of interest;

(ii)   means of communication and distance from the capital;

(iii)   physical features;

(iv)   existing boundaries of districts

Tasmania   see Commonwealth (above)

ELECTORAL DIVISIONS (LOWER HOUSES)

Commonwealth

Number: 145

Type: Single member

Zones: Nil

Quota: For each state, number of electors divided by number of Divisions in State

Tolerance: (+)
            (-) 10%

Number of divisions is a function of State's total population (not electors) with a minimum of 5 divisions for each original State.

Note: Number shall be, as near as practicable, twice the number of Senators for the States.

NSW

Number: 109

Type: Single member

Zones: Nil

Quota: Number of electors in State divided by number of electoral districts

Tolerance: (+)
            (-) 10%

Victoria

Number: 88

Type: Single member

Zones: Nil

Quota: Number of electors in State divided by number of electoral districts

Tolerance: (+)
            (-) 10%

Queensland   Number: 89

               Type: Single member

               Zones: 1. South Eastern (51)
                        2. Provincial Cities(13)
                        3. Western & Far Northern (8)
                        4. Country (17)
                        Quota: For Zones 1, 3, 4: Total
number of electors divided by number of
districts.

For Zone 2: Bundaberg, Central
Queensland and Townsville Areas each to
be divided into 3 approximately equal
areas; Cairns and Mackay each to be
divided into 2 approximately equal
areas

             Tolerance: (+)
                      (-) 20% except:
(a) in the Western and Far Northern zone where 'having
regard to distance from the seat of government, means of
communication, density of population, size of those
districts or any of them and the need to absorb the
number of electors within that zone in electoral
districts in that Zone', the tolerance may exceed (+)20%
                                                  (-)

(b) for zones 2:(+) 20% of average enrolment in the
relevant area. (-)

South Australia
                    Number: 47

               Type: Single member

               Zones: Nil

               Quota: Number of electors in State divided by
number of electoral districts
             Tolerance: (+)
                      (-) 10%

Western Australia

Number: 57

Type: Single member

Zones: 1. Metropolitan (30)
            2. North-West- Murchison-Eyre (4)
            3. Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral
            (23)

Quota: Number of electors divided by number of
districts in each zone.

Tolerance: (+)
            (-)   20%

Note: Equal Rights (Referendum) Act 1985

Tasmania:

Number: 5 (seats defined in the Act)

Type: Multi member

Zones: Nil

Quota: as for Federal elections

Tolerance: (+)
            (-)   10%

DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES: SUBMISSIONS AND OBJECTIONS

Commonwealth:
- Commission shall invite by advertisement and allow 30 days for submissions
- These are then made public and 14 days allowed for comment relating to these submissions
- Commission to publish the proposed distribution, giving reasons in writing for its recommendations
- These are then made public and 14 days allowed for the lodging of objections
- Decision of Commission final and conclusive

New South Wales:
- Commission to invite submissions on its appointment and to allow 30 days for submissions from date of advertisement
- These are then made public and 14 days allowed for written comment relating to these submissions
- Comments then made public
- Both submissions and comment to be considered prior to recommending electoral boundaries
- These are then made public and 30 days allowed for the lodging of objections
- Decision of Commission is final

Victoria:
- Commission to invite submissions
- Submissions to be publicly available for 3 months
- Recommendations to be forward to the Minister and published by the Minister within 14 days of receipt
- Within 14 days of the Ministers' publication the statement of the Commission shall be deemed to be law

Queensland:

. Submissions may be lodged not later than one calendar month after the date of the appointment of the Commission

. Commission may consider suggestions so lodged but shall not open submissions to public scrutiny

. Decisions (maps, descriptions of boundaries, etc) to be displayed for 1 calendar month

. Objections can be lodged within one calendar month and commission shall consider all objections before making final distribution

. Decision of Commission is final and conclusive

South Australia:

. Commission to invite submission in writing

. Within 1 month of Commission's gazetting a redistribution any elector may appeal to the Full Court of the Supreme Court, to be held as a matter of urgency

Western Australia:

. Submissions to be lodged within 30 days

. Comments on submissions to be lodged with a further 14 days

. Commission to consider all submissions and comments

. Within 42 days thereafter, commission to formulate proposals for divisions, and publish names and maps

. Objections may then be made within 30 days

. Commission to report to Governor within 60 days thereafter

. Report to have force of law

Tasmania:

See Commonwealth above

CHANGES IN THE SIZE OF THE LOWER HOUSES OF AUSTRALIAN
PARLIAMENTS

At Federation there were 509 MPs in the Commonwealth and
States Lower Houses: 75 in the House of Representatives, 125
in NSW, 95 in Victoria, 72 in Queensland, 54 in South
Australia, 50 in Western Australia and 38 in Tasmania
(Table 1 on page 27).

By 1904 this number had dropped to 432. The Legislative
Assembly in NSW was reduced to 90, in Victoria to 68, in South
Australia to 42, and in Tasmania the House of Assembly was
reduced to 35. Pledges to reduce the size of State Parliament
had been made during the campaign for Federation.

The immediate post-Federation years were not the last
occasions on which Parliaments have seen fit to reduce their
size. In 1907, the Victoria Legislative Assembly was reduced
further, from 68 to 65 members. In 1909, the Tasmanian House
of Assembly was cut again, from 35 to 30. In 1913, the South
Australian Legislative Assembly went from 42 to 40 MPs with a
more substantial cut (from 46 to 39) being made in 1938. In
1932, Queensland's Legislative Assembly was reduced by 10 to
62; the Legislative Council had been abolished in 1921.

Indeed prior to World War Two there was only one occasion
(South Australia, in 1915) when the size of any Australian
Lower House was increased. Since the War, this pattern has
been reversed.

The first of the post-War increases came in 1948 when the
Commonwealth Parliament lifted the number of Representatives
from 74 to 121; in 1984 it was again increased by a
substantial number. NSW went from 90 (1904) to 94 in 1950, 96
in 1971, 99 in 1973 and 109 for the election due by 1988.
Victoria increased its numbers from 65 (1907) to 66 in 1955,
73 in 1967 and 88 in 1985. In Queensland there was a
substantial increase from 62 (1932) to 75 in 1950, 78 in 1960,

82 in 1972 and 89 for the election to be held in 1986. In South Australia it was not until 1,970 that the 1938 number of 39 became 47 and there has been no change since. Again, in Western Australia, the number of MLAs remained at 50 (1900) until 1968. Even then the number was increased by only one. In 1977 WA had 55 MLAs and 57 in 1983. Tasmania went from 30 (1909) to 35 in 1959 and has stayed with that number ever since.

Only the largest increases, however, have succeeded in winding back the ratio of electors to MPs; few have wound back the ratio for more than one election or two.

In 1949, and again in 1984, increases in the size of the House of Representatives cut the ratio: in 1949, by an unparelleled one-third or more (on average, 64,050 voters elected each MHR in 1946, 40,460 doing so in 1949) and in 1984 by about 10 per cent (74,980 in 1983, 68,040 in 1984).

An effect similar to the one that flowed from the Commonwealth increase of 1984 is likely when the electors of NSW next go to the polls. Earlier increases in NSW either failed to cut back the ratio at all (1971, 1973) or, only cut it by an insignificant amount (1950).

In Victoria, the most recent increase (from 73 to 88) will have reduced the average constituency by about 15 per cent. The one seat increase of 1955 was not felt at all. That of 1967, which boosted the number of MLAs by 7 (66 to 73) cut the average constituency by about 5 per cent - an effect which disappeared after one election.

Queensland's most recent increase, taking the Legislative Assembly from 82 to 89 Members, is likely to reduce the average constituency by about 5 per cent, but again may not last for more than one election. Neither the 3 seat increase in 1960 nor the 4 seat increase of 1972 reduced the average constituency size. Only the hefty increase of 1950 (when the

number of MLAs jumped from 62 to 75) managed that. And it lasted: not until the mid-1960s did the average constituency hold as many electors as it did in the late 1940s.

In South Australia the 6 seat increase of 1915 did not reduce the ratio of voters to MPs. That of 1970, when 39 electorates became 47, managed to do so but for two elections only.

Western Australia's three increases (1 seat in 1968, 4 in 1977 and 2 in 1983) produced a slight reduction once, in 1977. In Tasmania, the one increase (5 MHAs in 1959) reduced the ratio by about 10 per cent, but after two elections that had disappeared entirely.

The ratio of electors to MPS to all parliaments combined not only grew in the pre-War years (when it more than doubled), but has continued to grow even since and at very much the same pace. The number of electors represented by the average MP is now over four times the corresponding figure for 1904 (Table 2 on page 32).

The broad picture, however, reveals some striking differences (Table 1). Members of the House of Representatives now represent about 3 times the number of electors they represented in 1904. In NSW the overall figure is about 4; in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania about 5; in Victoria, between 6 and 7; and in Queensland about 10.

The larger the number of voters covered by any one Parliament, the greater the average number of electors represented by any one MP. Commonwealth MPs have always represented on average, more voters than State MPs. Until the post-War years, the average Commonwealth MP represented about three times as many electors as were represented by the average NSW or Victorian MLA. This figure would be even greater if one's comparison were with other states. Since then, the average Member of the House of Representatives has

represented upwards of twice the number represented by the
average NSW or Victorian MLA. In turn, State MPs are likely
to represent more voters than are represented by councillors
or aldermen elected to local government.

What is true as between the different tiers of government
(Federal, State and Local) is generally - though not
invariably - true when the States are themselves compared.
Though the margins are small, members of the NSW Parliament
have generally had more constituents than their Victorian
counterparts; 1910-21 and 1943-67 were the exceptions.
Similarly NSW and Victorian MLAs have had, on average, as many
as twice the number of constituents than either the Queensland
or South Australian parliamentarians. Tasmania, in turn, has
had almost half that ratio of electors to MHAs. For Western
Australia the ratio has been lower than Queenland's or South
Australia's but higher than Tasmania's.

ARGUMENTS FOR ELECTORAL WEIGHTINGS OR ZONES

1.   Departures from the principle of 'one vote one value' are features (e.g. the UK) or were features (e.g. NSW, Victoria) of a number of democratically based elections. They are not incompatible with a State's status as a democracy.

2.   It is something that voters themselves, at various times, have thought proper. And if voters themselves want something it cannot be undemocratic to grant it.

3.   There have been times when the idea has had wide support among the political parties. So arguments in favour of it cannot be dismissed as merely partisan.

4.   Special consideration may need to be given to remote areas or areas where the population is thinly spread, notably in rural areas.

With an electorate spread over a vast area a Member of Parliament may have difficulty keeping in contact with his constituents and adequately representing them. Distance disadvantages constituents.

5.   Special consideration may need to be given to areas with a high proportion of non-English speaking residents or where the Member's workload is made onerous for other reasons.

6.   Areas or groups:
(a)   important to the 'balanced' development of a country or State (e.g. rural areas) or to the generation of its export income (e.g. farmers, miners) or the quality of the decisions that government needs to make (e.g. academics or the university educated).

(b)   whose importance is likely to be accorded less than their 'due weight' under a system of electoral equality need to have their votes specially weighted in the final count.

7.   In a real democracy, quality is not an attribute of voting arrangements but of substantive outcomes.   In a proper electoral system individuals' votes should be weighted so as to compensate for disadvantages.

A system in which, say, every industrialist, rural resident working man, working woman, social welfare recipient and Aboriginal has one vote and one vote only is a system which reproduces inequality or exacerbates it.   For equality of outcomes it is necessary for the Aboriginals to have something like 100 votes, welfare recipents 30, working women 15, working men 10, rural residents 5 and industrialists 1.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST ELECTORAL WEIGHTINGS OR ZONES

1. The principle of 'one vote one value' is fundamental to the very meaning of democracy.

2. Where voters themselves support arrangements which subvert the principle this only shows that there are times when democracy itself has to be saved from 'the people'; a better informed electorate might realise its error.

3. Bipartisan support for arrangements which contradict the principle, or the fact that different parties at different times have indulged in such practices, merely shows that parties sometimes see advantages in doing things that are undemocratic.

4. Special considerations can be given to remote areas or areas where the population is thinly spread without overturning the principle of 'one vote one value'.
   Such considerations might include:
   (a) special travel and postal allowances, and extra offices;
   (b) toll-free telephones for constituents

5. Special considerations can be given to Members with large numbers of non-English speaking constituents.
   Such considerations might include additional staff.

6. In a liberal democracy, elections allow individuals to make choices. They are not about the representation of areas, communities or groups - however deserving or undeserving.

   A judgement about how important any group or area might be to the general good is one that can only be made by the electorate itself. If, in the course of coming to

its decision, the electorate is persuaded that certain
interests need special treatment that is one thing. But
it is quite another to give such interests a formal
advantage in the voting process itself.

7.   Even if the attempt to use the electoral system as a
      compensatory mechanism did not invert the tenets of
      liberal democracy, it would still raise difficulties.
      Who would determine (and how) which were the
      disadvantaged or deserving groups? Who would determine
      (and how) the weights to be attached to each vote?

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INCREASING THE NUMBER OF MPs

1. Growth of population and/or number of electors is not a
    sufficient reason to expand the Parliament.

        The number of extra members normally sought
    for an expanded Parliament does not fully compensate for
    growth in the electorate since the last increase, much less
    does it compensate for ground lost prior to that. Indeed,
    some proposals for extra members make no 'real' dent at all in
    the ratio of electors to MPs.

2(A) The Parliament already enjoys a higher ratio of MPs to
     population/electors than that enjoyed by other,
     comparable, legislatures and in that sense we are already
     overgoverned.

         Basis of comparison may be with:
     (a) other (select) Australian legislatures - States with
          lower ratios; and/or
     (b) other (select) overseas legislature; e.g. the U.S.
          Congress.

 (B) Where the ratio of MPs to population/electors is lower in
     other, comparable, legislatures this does not of itself
     justify an expansion.

3. If tasks undertaken by government have increased we
    should treat this as the problem not a 'shortage' of MPs
    as the problem.
    The government should not involve itself as widely or as
    minutely in the life of the community as it does (The
    call for 'smaller' government).

4. If demands made on MPs have increased they can be met by
    other means:

        (a) reducing these demands (see 3 above); or

        (b) sharing the burden more equitably within the Parliament (e.g. by spreading the work with Members of the other House); or

        (c) rechannelling these demands e.g. by employing more social workers; by embarking on information campaigns so that constituents try other avenues of redress before contacting the local MP

More MPs may actually <u>increase</u> the demands place on Members.

5.   Where there is a need to give constituents better access to their MPs, enlarging the Parliament will not help very much (see 1 above).

6.   The money would be better spent on extra staff, research and other aids (e.g. travel, postage and telepone) for present Members.

       Too much of the Members' time is spent as 'social workers' or as middle persons (connecting constituents to the people that can address their grievance or interest directly) and, as a result not enough time is spent on overseeing legislation, working on (party) policy committees, etc. Members need someone to help with the first and to help then through research attend properly to the second.

7.   The money would be better:

        (a) not spent, especially at a time when people are being asked to tighten their belts; or

        (b) spent on things of greater priority (e.g. nurses, schools, etc.)

8.   Any increases in the number of MPs can be justified only if mandated by the people. This condition is not satisfied if:

(a) no mention of the proposal was made during the preceding election campaign; or

(b) a referendum is not held; or

(c) surveys (or other evidence of public opinion) indicate that an expanded Parliament is not what the people want.

9. Any proposal to increase the number of MPs is likely to be:

(a) partisan, aimed at winning a disportionate share of the new seats for the party proposing it; or

(b) done so as to satisfy factional or other demands within the party proposing it.

ARGUMENTS FOR INCREASING THE NUMBER OF MPs

1. Growth of population and/or number of electors.
    Compounding factors might include:
    (a) Growth in size (area) of rural electorates;
    (b) growth in ratio of non-voters to voters within urban electorates

2. A lower ratio of MPs to population/electors than in other, comparable, legislatures.
    Basis of comparison might be with:
    (a) Other (select) Australian legislatures e.g. the Commonwealth ratio compares unfavourably with that of any of the States;
    (b) Other (select) overseas legislatures, though here questions of comparability become more problematic.

3. Tasks of government have increased:
    Relevant criteria might include:
    (a) greater volume of legislation;
    (b) wider range of matters on which legislation is passed;
    (c) increase in size of executive

4. Growth in demands made of individual MPs.
    Evidence might include
    (a) Pressures from within Parliament e.g. growth in the number of Parliamentary (or Party) Committees, or growth in the demands that existing Committees make on members' time, or a shrinking pool of backbenchers available to serve on them.
    (b) Pressures from without
        e.g. as a result of unemployment, poverty or the needs of migrants.
        Note: Though 4 is a corollary of 3 (above), it may be true even when 3 is not.

5.   Need to give electors more direct access to
their MP. It is better to have their views listened
to and represented not only in the Parliament but
beyond.

Note: Though 5 is related to both 3 and 4
(above), it may still be a relevant argument even
when 3 and 4 are not.

6.   Extra staff for MPs might help but would not
be sufficient.

Staff alone won't make Members more
accountable or accessible in any direct way.
Electors may simply encounter another level of
bureaucracy.

7.   Need to act not just because of present needs
but with a view to future needs.

Compounding considerations would include
situations where expanding the size of Parliament is
difficult for other, technical, reasons; e.g. The
Constitutional nature governing the relationship
between the size of the House of Representatives and
the size of the Senate.

8.   Increasing the number of MPs may be unpopular
(at least in the short term) but this is not an
overwhelming objection.

Members should do what they think is right
even if it is not popular. Indeed, Members may have
a duty to do so.

9.   Need to act in a non-partisan manner.
The party proposing the increase does not stand to
gain a disproportionate number of the new members.

TABLE 1

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE LOWER HOUSES, 1900-1986
(No. of MPs in brackets: R=reduction; I=increase)

Year of Election	C'wealth	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania
1900			(95) 2,960			(50) 1,830	(38) 1,030
1901	(75)13,170	(125) 2,390					
1902			3,060	(72) 1,510	(42R) 3,550		
1903	25,250						(35R) 1,280
1904		(90R) 7,660	(68R) 4,070	1,440		3,280	
1905					4,460	2,430	
1906	28,130				4,530		2,540
1907		8,290	(65R) 4,020	3,060			
1908			4,060	2,860		2,720	
1909				3,370			(30R) 3,190
1910	30,110	9,640			4,370		
1911			10,790			3,050	
1912				4,300	(40R) 5,340		3,450
1913	36,800	11,530					3,510
1914	37,490		12,462			4,290	
1915				4,660	(46I) 5,510		

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE LOWER HOUSES, 1900-1986

(No. of MPs in brackets: R=reduction;I=increase)

Year of Election	C'wealth	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania
1916							3,580
1917	37,800	12,330	12,740			3,340	
1918				5,890	5,630		
1919	38,000						3,580
1920		12,830	13,370	6,420			
1921			13,410		5,910	3,290	
1922	39,740	13,900					3,680
1923				6,610			
1924			13,850		6,300	3,800	
1925	44,030	14,880					3,830
1926				6,730			
1927		15,660	14,360		6,730	4,220	
1928	45,930						3,730
1929	47,190		15,830	7,190			
1930		16,010			7,070	4,600	
1931	48,670						3,960
1932		16,280	16,240	(62R) 8,480			
1933					7,360	4,740	
1934	(74R)52,740						4,260

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE LOWER HOUSES, 1900-1986

(No. of MPs in brackets: R=reduction; I=increase)

Year of Election	C'wealth	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania
1935		16,990	16,910	9,280			
1936						4,950	
1937	55,140		17,490				4,400
1938		17,865		9,780	(39R) 9,360		
1939						5,320	
1940	57,290		17,890				
1941		18,720		10,240	9,700		4,640
1942							
1943	60,360		19,410			5,500	
1944		19,250		10,580	10,300		
1945			19,650				
1946	64,050						5,260
1947		20,590	20,700	11,250	10,730	5,940	
1948							5,370
1949	(121I)40,460						
1950		(94I) 20,420	20,970	(75I) 9,580	11,230	6,210	5,390
1951	41,010						
1952			21,580				
1953		20,380		9,830	11,530	6,400	
1954	42,120						

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE LOWER HOUSES, 1900-1986

(No. of MPs in brackets: R=reduction; I=increase)

Year of Election	C'wealth	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania
1955	(122I)42,400		(66I)21,890				5,770
1956		21,400		10,340	12,010	6,840	5,820
1957				10,560			
1958	44,140		22,390				
1959		22,080			12,760	7,230	(35I) 5,150
1960				(78I)10,660			
1961	46,320		23,560				
1962		23,130			13,620	7,640	
1963	47,750			10,760			
1964			24,780				5,530
1965		24,010			14,430	8,170	
1966	(124I)49,950			11,370			
1967			(73I)23,620				
1968		25,070			15,630	(51I) 8,810	
1969	(125I)52,850			12,120			6,010
1970			25,040		(47I)13,520		
1971		(96I) 26,010				10,530	
1972	56,590			(82I)12,160			6,200
1973		(99I) 28,170	28,620		14,810		
1974	(127I) 62,180			14,470		11,850	

AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE LOWER HOUSES, 1900-1986

(No. of MPs in brackets: R=reduction; I=increase)

Year of Election	C'wealth	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania
1975	65,060				16,410		
1976		30,200	28,000				7,390
1977	(124R) 68,980			14,750	17,410	(55I)11,510	
1978		31,170					
1979			29,020		17,590		7,580
1980	(125I) 72,120			16,360		12,990	
1981		32,450					
1982			30,290		18,540		8,100
1983	74,980			17,780		(57I)13,230	
1984	(145I) 68,040	33,640					
1985			(88I)29,533	(89I)17,116	19,270		
1986		(109I) 31,122				15,500	8,290

* Rounded to nearest ten.

Sources: Colin A. Hughes and B.D. Graham A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1890-1964, Canberra, ANU Press, 1968; Colin A. Hughes A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1965-1974 Canberra, ANU Press, 1977; 1977-83 Supplement to A Handbook of Australian Government and Politics 1965-1974 Working Papers in Political Science, Dept. of Political Science RSSS-ANU, 1984; and parliamentary libraries.

TABLE 2

TOTAL NUMBER OF MPs AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF ELECTORS PER MP, AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTS, SELECTED YEARS 1904-1986

Year	Nearest Election	Electors*	MPs	Average
1904	Dec. 1903	1,894,000	432	4,380
1914	Sep. 1914	2,812,000	422	6,660
1929	Oct. 1929	3,539,000	428	8,270
1938	Oct. 1937	4,080,000	418	9,760
1949	Dec. 1949	4,895,000	457	10,710
1959	Nov. 1958	5,385,000	463	11,630
1969	Oct. 1969	6,606,000	474	13,940
1978	Dec. 1977	8,554,000	513	16,674
1986	Dec. 1984	9,866,000	563	17,524

* Enrolled for Commonwealth Elections, as at closest election date.

Background Papers Commissioned by the

Parliamentary Library (as at June 1986)

1. Current Housing Problems by
   Joan Vipond, Social Welfare Research Centre,

   University of N.S.W.

2. Privatisation by
   Barbara Page, Sydney University

3. Welfare Services by
   Rodney Smith, Sydney University

4. Deregulation by
   Bob Castles, Wollongong University

5. Electoral Re-distribution in Australia by
   Murray Goot, Macquarie University

Other Library Publications:

Issued periodically throughout the year:

1. New Legislation Review

2. Current Political Press Comment

3. Current Awareness Bulletin

4. New Books: A Select List

5. Current Issues Reading List