

South Australian Electoral Redistribution

August 2012

On 21 August 2012 the South Australian Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission released its report on the electoral redistribution of the 47 electoral districts of the House of Assembly. The changes made by the Commission affect 38 districts.

At the 2010 election Labor won 26 seats, the Liberal Party won 18 seats, and 3 seats were won by Independents.

Key changes

- Using a two-party preferred pendulum based on the 2010 election pattern, Labor is reduced from 27 to 25 seats, whilst the Liberals increase their vote from 20 to 22 seats.
- The districts of Frome and Bright have been redrawn, which consequently moves them from the Labor side to the Liberal side of the pendulum. Frome, however, is held by Independent Geoff Brock. The seat of Bright, currently held by Minister for Transport Services Chloe Fox, was Labor's most marginal seat prior to redistribution. After the redistribution Bright is now a nominal Liberal seat with a 0.1 per cent margin.
- Changes made to the districts of Elder, Hartley and Ashford, currently held by Labor, have resulted in reduced margins.
- A new quota of 24,689 electors per seat has been set.
- The district of Norwood is re-named as Dunstan after former Labor Premier Donald Dunstan.

The Final Redistribution Report is available [here](#).

Background

The Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission is a permanent and independent statutory body whose principal function is to make electoral redistributions between every election, that is, to redraw the boundaries of the 47 electoral districts of the House of Assembly.

The purpose of the redistribution is to ensure that the number of electors within each House of Assembly district is approximately the same, within a threshold of +/-10 per cent. However, in the Final Redistribution Report the Commission has attempted to ensure that no metropolitan district will differ from the projected quota by more than 3.0 per cent. This is to ensure that an individual vote is, in relative terms, worth no more nor less than any other vote, embodying the principle of 'one vote, one value'.

A report of the Commission on its deliberations and any electoral change becomes a formal Order of the Commission published in the Government Gazette. The Commission is not to be called into question, except by an appeal against the Order. The new boundaries become effective at the next election.

The Electoral Quota

The relevant date fixed for the purpose of electoral redistribution was set to 29 February 2012. On that date South Australia's enrolled electoral population was 1,097,676. To account for demographic changes prior to the next House of Assembly general election, the Commission used 30 June 2014 as the date for the projected electoral quota. The elector population at that time is estimated to be 1,160,385. Divided by the number of districts, 47, the final electoral quota is 24,689. The Commission aims to ensure that districts are as near as practicable to the projected quota at the time of the election.

When realigning districts the Commission has attempted to follow suburb or locality boundaries where possible.

Present and projected enrolments (Appendix 12) available [here](#)

New Pendulum

When applying the voter pattern from the 2010 election to the new electoral divisions, the two-party preferred pendulum shows that 25 seats will be held by the Labor Party compared to 22 seats on the Liberal Party.

Furthermore, changes made to the districts of Elder, Hartley and Ashford, currently held by Labor, have reduce the margin from 3.7, 2.4 and 4.9 per cent to 1.7, 0.5 and 1.5 per cent respectively, making them the most marginal Labor seats in South Australia.

Map of all districts available [here](#)

Although Labor has the majority of districts on the two-party preferred pendulum, ten of the seats are held with a margin less than 5 per cent. On the Liberal side of the pendulum 6 seats have a margin less than 5 per cent.

The redistribution has brought the districts of Frome and Bright from the Labor side of the pendulum to the Liberal side. Following the 2010 election Frome and Bright had margins of 0.2 and 0.5 per cent respectively, however after the new redistribution the margins are 1.5 and 0.1 per cent on the liberal side of the pendulum.

In the 2010 election, three independents were elected in the seats of Mount Gambier, Fisher and Frome. Two seats were on the Liberal side of the pendulum, Fisher and Mount Gambier, the latter with more than 15 a per cent margin¹. Following the latest redistribution all three seats are now on the liberal side of the pendulum, Fisher and Frome with the smallest margins, 0.8 and 1.8 per cent, and Mount Gambier with 15.6 per cent respectively.

¹ In the 2010 election five districts did not have a Labor/Liberal final outcome. Ballot papers in these districts were distributed to the Labor and Liberal candidates to obtain the notional two-party preferred figures.

Election 2014

Next election to the House of Assembly will be held on 15 March 2014, and according to the latest Newspoll Labor stands to receive 48 per cent of the popular vote.

The Electoral Commission is bound by the Constitution Act Amendment 1975 (SA) to seek 'electoral fairness' when re-drawing electoral boundaries. This requires the Commission to re-draw the district boundaries for the House of Assembly in a way which will ensure, as far as practicable, that candidates of a major political party would, at the next election, win the majority of seats if it won the majority of the state-wide popular vote. In practice this means reducing the margin in seats most likely to swing.

Seats with margins between:	2010 election	2012 - after redistribution
0-1 per cent	2 (Labor)	3 (1 Labor/ 2 Liberal)
1-2 per cent	0	3 (2 Labor/ 1 Liberal)
2-3 per cent	4 (3 Labor/ 1 Liberal)	3 (2 Labor/ 1 Liberal)
3-4 per cent	2 (Labor)	3 (2 Labor/ 1 Liberal)
4-5 per cent	7 (4 Labor/ 3 Liberal)	4 (3 Labor/ 1 Liberal)

On the previous pendulum, the Liberal Party needed four seats and a uniform swing of 2.3 per cent to gain a majority and form Government at the next election. With the re-drawn boundaries, the Liberals now need only two additional seats and a swing of 1.5 per cent to form Government.

The seat of Ashford, currently held by Labor, has seen its margin cut from 4.9 to 1.5 per cent. At the 2010 election there was a 10.4 per cent swing against Labor in this seat, a 2 per cent larger than the state-wide two-party preferred swing of 8.4 per cent.

In the seat of Hartley, also currently held by Labor, the margin has been reduced from 2.4 to 0.5 per cent. Despite being a marginal seat, the swing towards the Liberal Party was only 3.2 per cent.

The Labor seat of Little Para have seen an increase its margin from 6.7 to 10.9 per cent, and the seat of Morialta, currently held by the Liberals have seen their margin reduced from 4.2 to 2.9 percent.

Submissions

The Labor Party

Following the release of Draft Report on 31 May 2012 the Commission invited stakeholders to submit their comments. To that end Labor emphasized the desirability of retaining the suburb of Woodcroft within a single district, which at the time was wholly within the district of Mawson, rather than splitting it between Mawson and Fisher as proposed in Draft Report. Labor noted that this was based on a distinct community of interest closely formed around Woodcroft Primary School, the biggest primary school in the state.



This request, however, was not met by the Commission in its Final Redistribution Report on the grounds of an increase in the number of electors in the area, which necessitated the split by quota requirements.

Additionally, Labor recommended in their submission that the areas Kudla and Evanson South should be retained in the district of Light on the basis of their community of interest with Gawler. Likewise, this request was not met by the Commission either.

The Labor Party's initial submission is available [here](#).

The Labor Party's submission following the Draft Report is available [here](#).

The Liberal Party

In the Liberal Party's first submission lodged prior to the release of the Commission Draft Report, they recommend that changes were made in all districts but Florey. These changes would have potentially required the movement of approximately 174,000 electors. This was, however, rejected by the Commission.

The Liberal Party's initial Submission is available [here](#).

Following the release of the Draft Report the Liberal Party maintained their original recommendations but, in the alternative, submitted that the districts of Elder, Bright, and Hartley were re-drawn to allow new Liberal seats to come be created. Additionally, the Liberal party submitted that the Commission should re-draw the district of Frome, such that it would become so marginal that it could be won by either party.

Consequently, the district of Frome and Bright have now moved to the Liberal side of the Pendulum, and the districts Elder, Hartley and Ashley have each had their margins reduced.

The Liberal Party's submission following the Draft Report is available [here](#).