

Electoral Commissioner

EC19-000006

Ms Ann Palmer
Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Palmer

Additional Estimates 2019-20

I wish to clarify information provided to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee at the Additional Estimates hearing on 3 March 2019.

1. Western Australia electoral divisions

Senator Farrell asked about the number of electoral divisions in Western Australia:

Senator FARRELL: So it's possible, for instance, that one outcome is that every state does meet the requirement. So: the NT has enough for two seats; WA has enough for whatever they have—what have they got? 16 is it?—

Mr Pope: Fifteen.

The number of electoral divisions in Western Australia currently stands at 16, not 15.

2. Electoral redistributions

Senator Farrell asked about the seven-year trigger for redistributions:

Senator FARRELL: Sorry—just remind me: what is the seven-year trigger?

Mr Rogers: Mr Johnson just might read out the relevant section.

Mr Johnson: The relevant section is section 59, the grounds for redistribution, in section 59 subsection (2), which is basically saying: the grounds for redistribution are either under subsection (2)(a), a determination that's made by the Electoral Commissioner, based on that evidence that's provided by the Bureau of Statistics. Paragraph (b) reads: ...

whenever it appears to the Electoral Commission, from statements published under subsection 58(1), that more than one third of the Divisions in the State are, and have, for a period of more than 2 months, been, malapportioned Divisions—

So that's a kind of technical one. Then the third one is: if there hasn't been a redistribution under either of those first two paragraphs for a period of seven years, then that's a trigger for a redistribution.

The third way a redistribution can be triggered under subsection 59(2) is if seven years have passed after the day on which the state or territory was last redistributed into electoral divisions. Unless that date is within one year before the date of the expiry of a House of Representatives by effluxion of time, in which case the redistribution must occur within 30 days after the day of the first meeting of the next following House of Representatives.

I would appreciate you drawing these matters to the Committee's attention.

Yours sincerely

Tom Rogers

14 April 2020