

Barton Deakin Brief: Electorate Redistributions by the Australian Electoral Commission

1 September 2017

On Thursday, 31 August 2017, the Australian Electoral Commission (**AEC**) announced a redistribution of Australia's federal electorates based on population changes. The redistribution will create, in net terms, one extra seat in the House of Representatives with the creation of one new seat in Victoria, one extra in the Australian Capital Territory, and the elimination of one seat in South Australia. This Barton Deakin Brief will explain the AEC's decision and the implications of the changes in the 2019 Federal Election.

Background

The AEC is the body responsible for, among other things, ensuring that each State and Territory has proportionate representation in the House of Representatives by reference to its population, and that there are a similar number of electors in each electoral division for a given State or Territory.

Every electoral cycle the AEC determines the number of Members of the House of Representatives each State and Territory is entitled to under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. The State or Territory population is divided by a state's population quota, and the result determines the number of Members assigned to the House of the Representatives.

Implications of the Redistribution

Population changes in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (**ACT**) has led to the determination that they will both gain one seat, while South Australia will lose one seat.

- **Victoria:** Will increase from 37 to 38 seats. Population growth has been strongest in the north-west of Melbourne, and it is expected that the new seat will be sited in this area. A new seat in this largely Labor-voting area would be expected to favour Labor, but boundary changes elsewhere induced by such a change would make further implications less clear.
- **ACT:** Will increase from two to three seats. While the new seat is likely to be sited in the south of the Territory, an area relatively favourable for the Liberal Party, past voting patterns suggest that the net effect is likely to favour the Labor Party.
- **SA:** Will decrease from 11 to 10 seats. It is unclear which seat will be eliminated by the AEC (there are numerous options available), and any subsequent boundary changes in other seats make predicting the implications highly speculative.

As a result of the determination, the total number of members to be elected to the House of Representatives at the next federal election will increase from 150 to 151 members.



The AEC will begin the process of redistribution this week under an appointed Redistribution Committees. The public soon be invited to make suggestions and comments on matters affecting the drawing of federal electoral boundaries and the naming of new electorates.

Further Information

To read analysis from the ABC's Antony Green, click [here](#).

To read the official press release from the Australian Electoral Commission, click [here](#).

To read Barton Deakin's Brief on the Election Outcomes of the 2016 Federal Election, click [here](#).

For further information on the changes, please contact [David Alexander](#) on +614 57 400 524, [Vanessa Findlay](#) on +61 407 895 813 or [Gabby Hedge](#) on +61 402 700 134.