

**WHAT HAPPENED TO RURAL WEIGHTAGE? MALAPPORTIONMENT  
AND THE REFORM OF AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEMS UNDER  
LABOR**

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**Abstract**

For all of Australia's electoral history, voter inequality – mainly in the form of malapportionment - has been an integral part of state and national electoral systems. Some of this has been due to constitutional requirements (such as the requirement of equal Senate representation for the original states regardless of voter populations), but the phenomenon of the 'rural weightage' was also a major feature of state and national electoral systems. This practice of allowing rural electoral divisions to be (sometimes quite substantially) unequal in voter population from city divisions derived partly from a conservative view that rural outlooks could and should act to mitigate the radical capacity of the cities, and partly that remoteness had to be considered when evaluating the quality of representation. This form of malapportionment advantaged the Liberal and National (formerly Country) parties. This paper traces how the Labor party has incrementally dismantled much – but not all - of the rural weightage practice across Australia. Although mainly a Labor project, the paper will argue that shifting the basis for voter inequality has also involved the input of the Liberal party. The decline in rural malapportionment in fact reflects the decline of rural politics in Australia and the declining influence of the National party.

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## **WHAT HAPPENED TO RURAL WEIGHTAGE? MALAPPORTIONMENT AND THE REFORM OF AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEMS UNDER LABOR**

Elections have been an integral part of the Australian liberal democratic experience since the emergence of responsible self-government of the Australian colonies in the mid-to-late 1800s. Indeed, some of the reforms and innovations instituted by the various colonies (such as pioneering adult franchise, female suffrage and the secret ballot) have contributed to the notion of Australia leading the way in the development of modern democratic practice (Farrell and McAllister 2006:1). Notwithstanding this, debates about the need to reform important aspects of Australian electoral practice have continued over a long period with a number of controversies still to be completely resolved (see Goot 1985). The matter of inherent inequalities in the voting power of Australian citizens is one controversy that continues to reverberate even after major reforms to the incidence of ‘malapportionment’ in Australia’s various electoral systems.

At one level this matter will never really go away. The Australian constitution guarantees voter inequality in two areas - the minimum House of Representatives representation for the original states that results in the over-representation of Tasmania but presents problems for representation of the territories (Mackerras 2005), and the equal state representation in the Senate regardless of state population. This federalist-based inequality has not been the only matter of controversy under the heading of electoral reform, however. Of arguably greater contention has been the unequal representation between urban and rural voters that could be found in national

and state electoral systems until comparatively recent times (and, as this paper will argue, continues on in at least two state systems to this day).

This paper explores what happened to rural-based voter inequality in Australia. It traces the decline of rural-based inequality commencing with major reforms undertaken particularly in South Australia in the mid-1970s and finds that the eradication of such inequality – still to be completely achieved – was a project undertaken incrementally from the 1970s through to very recent times. It shows that, where it has occurred, the doing away with rural-based voter inequality was included as part of a general reform of the electoral system including administrative reorganisation of the agencies conducting elections and, importantly, the bodies that undertake the complex task of drawing up electoral boundaries. It also finds that this has been primarily (but not exclusively) a Labor project. The data presented here shows that Labor presided over most of the major reforms, although it was the case that the Liberal party reformed the electoral system for Tasmania's Legislative Council. Apart from this, the Liberal party contribution to this reform movement tended to occur as a result of friction between urban and rural/regional interests within the non-Labor side of politics and have had their greatest impact in Victoria and South Australia. Resistance to the reforms came particularly from rural conservatives especially in the Country/National party, and the dismantling of rural inequality reflects the decline of the influence of rural-conservative politics in Australia.

### **'One vote, one value' and the politics of malapportionment**

The notion of voter equality is central to perceptions of what constitutes a legitimate democracy. Democratic theorists have argued that an electoral system that does not provide for equality of voter power is not democratic – an approach that resonates in the normative catch-cry that ‘one vote, one value’ constitutes the modern democratic bench-mark (Balinski and Young 1982; Jaensch 1995:62-73; Emy 1974:319; Johnston 1979). As Blau (2004:167) states in relation to discussing the importance of ‘fairness’ to the legitimacy of electoral systems:

The equality conception of fairness requires that each citizen and party should be treated equally, as in the idea of ‘one person, one vote, one value’

It is for this reason, Morrill (1987:241; 1981:1) and Taylor and Johnson (1979:336) have argued that the mechanics of elections - and especially the process by which electoral systems provide for the drawing of electoral boundaries – are important when considering the extent to which a democracy is fair.

The matters of electoral boundary drawing and the consideration of electoral populations within those districts have been matters of some controversy in Australian electoral politics (Goot 1985:219-220). Australia’s debate about the democratic nature of its various electoral systems has been preoccupied less with Taylor and Johnston’s concerns about gerrymandering (on the assumption that it does not exist, notwithstanding the allegations of gerrymandering sometimes levelled at National party government of Queensland under Sir Joh Bejlke-Petersen in the 1980s (Jaensch 1985; but see Mackerras 1990)) and more to do with voter inequality. This is because of the way much of Australia’s electoral history has been associated with deliberate departures from the ‘one vote, one value’ principle (Jaensch 1995:68-69; AEC 2004:5). Voter inequality has – and, in some circumstances, continues – to manifest itself at a number of levels. Arguably the most blatant departure from the ‘one vote,

one value' principle occurs in national elections where quite significant voter inequality exists in the election of the Australian Senate. Here what might be thought of as a 'constitutional inequality' exists whereby a core legal document outlines the basis for a deliberate inequality of voting power in the name of some other pressing political principle – in this case, federalism. Constitutional inequality is arguably the most difficult to reform partly because of the difficulty of the task of reconciling fundamental yet contradictory norms that underpin a system, and partly because of the difficulties associated with the mechanics of constitutional change. This hasn't stopped reformers from attempting change, of course, but the failure rate of challenges to the system via the High Court of Australia (see *Mckinlay's Case* (135 CLR 1) and *McGinty's Case* (186 CLR 140) ) or by way of constitutional referenda has been very high (and see Rydon 1989).

The existence of electoral laws and regulations designed to institute inequality in voting power based on the location of Australian voters has been the more contentious issue in the Australian debate especially where these regulations insinuated the service of party partisan interests (Jackman 1994:331). In Australia, a form of regional and rural-based inequality designed to enhance the voting power of non-metropolitan voters was a major feature common to all Australian jurisdictions - the very basis of 'rural malapportionment'. This would be achieved either by electoral regulations directing that rural divisions be permitted to have enrolments under the state-wide average and known as the 'rural weightage', or by use of a system of zones in which seats falling within rural zones would be guaranteed over-representation. The arguments for rural malapportionment broached three broad themes: first, the argument put up by colonial conservatives that the enhanced enfranchisement of

country regions could act as a conservative bulwark against the radical tendencies associated with massed politics associated with the cities (an argument that persisted up to quite recent times usually in the form of a rural-based defence of restricted or malapportioned franchises for Australian state upper houses); second, the claim that rural Australia deserved enhanced voting power because of the disproportionately large contribution made to Australian economic wealth by primary producers; and, third, that the matter of the quality of representation that can be given to citizens in large and remote electorates needs to be included in any normative debate about democracy and can be a rationale to offset the more usually definitive criterion of ‘one vote, one value’ (see Goot 1985:210-213; Morrill 1981; Verall et.al. 1985; Curtin 2000).

The extensive utilisation of rural and regional malapportionment primarily through the use of zone-based systems for establishing the basis of drawing up electoral districts is clearly evident in Table 1. At various points of time, all three rationales for rural and regional malapportionment were used to justify quite significant voter inequalities. By noting the party political persuasion of the government that can take primary responsibility for doing away with rural malapportionment in each constituency, Table 1 also suggests that the politics of rural and regional malapportionment – including the politics associated with reform of Australian electoral systems to eliminate this practice – have a strong sense of party partisanship. The table clearly indicates that the task of eliminating rural and regional malapportionment has been primarily an Australian Labor Party project.

By logical extension this would suggest that the practice of rural malapportionment served the interests of Labor's opponents – the Liberal and National (formerly Country) parties. While this was by and large the case, it is also true that tensions could occur between the Liberal and Country parties, and even within the Liberal party itself over the instituting and/or maintaining regionally based voter inequality. Nor has the Labor record been one of complete innocence to the charge of instituting malapportionment in a bid to entrench partisan electoral advantage. As Jaensch (1985:240) has pointed out, the zonally-based rural malapportionment associated with the Country/National Queensland governments headed by Joh Bjelke-Petersen as premier were in fact put in place by a Labor government in 1949.

The Victorian ALP's policy on electoral reform was based on the 'one vote, one value' principle, but it was prepared to put that to one side in the party's dealings with the Country party over whom should have executive power between the two world wars (Economou et.al. 2003; Holmes 1976:89-90). When the Victorian ALP was able to do something about voter equality after the 1952 election, it was able to do so because the Victorian Liberals had split on the issue of electoral reform and former Liberal premier Tom Hollway formed the Electoral Reform party to contest the election that year and helped split the anti-Labor vote (see Costar 2006). Table 1 in this paper suggests that Don Dunstan's Labor government brought about electoral reform in South Australia to do away with what Jaensch (1981:220) has described as arguably the worst rural malapportionment system in the country, but to do so the fragmentation of the Liberal Country League and the sympathy former LCL premier Steele Hall had for electoral reform as a counter to his former rural conservative colleagues also made a contribution to the politics of change.

On the rare occasions that Labor could do something about voter inequality, the decision would be reversed once non-Labor returned to government, as was the case when Henry Bolte's Liberal party did away with the John Cain Sr Labor's 'two-for-one' reform after the 1952 election where each federal electorate was divided in to two state divisions, and replaced it with a zonal system that persisted until the 1980s (Holmes 1976:89-91). Labor's much weakened state after the 1955 split meant that reforms the party wished to institute tended to languish. Where Labor was in government, however, the pursuit of electoral reform was hampered by another factor also heavily influenced by aspects of the electoral process. In New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia where Labor governments were elected despite the split, pursuit of electoral reform was prevented by a lack of control of the respective Legislative Councils in each state. Failure to control the state upper house would often be due in no small way to the very same problems Labor had with the electoral system at work in the lower house, although the instances of rural malapportionment would be much worse (as in the Tasmanian and South Australian upper houses), and/or other factors such as property qualifications and other restrictions on the franchise (New South Wales and South Australia) were also at play (see Griffith and Srinivasan 2001). As Table 2 indicates, this meant that reform of the lower house electoral system would often have to involve reform of the upper house electoral system or, indeed, of the upper houses themselves.

### **A reform model: 1970s reforms in South Australia and New South Wales**

The quick overview of lower house electoral reform that did away with rural and regional malapportionment in Australian electoral systems contained in Table 1 suggests that the reform project was at its most active in the 1980s. The 1980s were such an important period precisely because this was the first time in the post-split period where the ALP had been successful in state and national elections almost simultaneously. In this decade the Labor prime minister – Bob Hawke – and the Labor premiers of the 1980s (Bannon in South Australia, Cain in Victoria, and, to lesser extents, Burke in Western Australia, and Goss in Queensland) set about the dismantling of rural and regional malapportionment for their lower house elections (see Moon and Campbell 2003; Rydon 1985). It is arguable, however, that this era of reform actually began almost a decade previously in New South Wales and especially South Australia where the rural malapportionment was apparently worse than any other jurisdiction and where the electoral arrangements for the Legislative Council were arguably the most archaic and designed to buttress rural conservative interests.

A comprehensive overview of the shifting political dynamics that allowed Don Dunstan's Labor government to institute reform of electoral arrangements for both houses that did away with the previously instituted malapportionment can be found elsewhere (Jaensch 1981). The importance of the South Australian example for this paper rests on how the reform pursued by the Dunstan administration set what was to be a template for reform for other jurisdictions. That this was something of an insight to the Labor approach to these matters (as distinct from being associated with Dunstan himself) was verified by the similarity of the reforms undertaken in New South Wales by the recently elected Wran Labor government in 1976. The Whitlam Labor government also sought to reform the system at this time (and succeeded in changing

the rural weightage from 20 to 10 percent) but was not to be as successful in this endeavour as the two Labor states (see Whitlam 1985:671-686).

The reforms achieved in South Australia and New South Wales in the mid 1970s included the following: first, rural malapportionment was to be eliminated as electoral acts were changed to do away with the practice of creating metropolitan and non-metropolitan zones and weighting the rural and regional vote accordingly. The normative cry of 'one vote, one value' accompanied the rationale for this reform, but allowance for electoral inequality on a criterion other than deliberate over-representation of the bush was allowed. The practice of allowing small degrees of inequality to accommodate future demographic trends is seen as legitimate in a 'fair' system (Morrill 1987; AEC 2004). The South Australian reforms allowed for electoral districts to be given some leeway on what would otherwise be considered the base voter population that each district should contain in order to achieve voter equality. Voter inequality based on attempts by authorities to address or forecast population shifts might be considered as examples of 'demographic inequality'. The South Australian reform instituted a 10 percent variation either way on the quota per district in order to allow those responsible for districting to accommodate population shifts. This has become the standard in Australian districting in all jurisdictions even in Western Australia and Queensland where some form of zoning has been maintained. The exception to all of this, however, is the Northern Territory where a 20 percent tolerance is allowed.

Secondly, the 1970s reform also addressed administrative reorganisation of the electoral process. Conversion of the administrative infrastructure for conducting

elections was also central to electoral reform in South Australian and New South Wales. This reform centred on taking administrative responsibility out of the realm of ministerial departments in preference for creating statutory authorities with greater independence from government. This was reflected in changes in nomenclature; whereas Electoral Offices used to run elections these functions would now be discharged by Electoral Commissions. A review of the current status of electoral authorities operating in the states and nationally and the year in which the status of the authorities were converted to statutory authorities (see table 3) shows the extent to which this reform has impacted across Australian electoral management. Once again the table shows how closely linked to Labor policy this reorganisation has been.

The reasons for this change are fairly straightforward: under Australian administrative practice a statutory authority is guaranteed much greater autonomy from ministerial direction than a ministerial department (Fenna 1998:108). Reformers were clearly of the view that the integrity of the electoral process depends in no small way on the independence of those undertaking important administrative work relating to the conduct of elections. The commonality of the way electoral authorities have been recast as commissions across Australia's jurisdictions is a major feature of Australian electoral reform (see table 3). The recasting of electoral offices as electoral commissions was not the only important administrative reorganisation pioneered in the 1970s. The issue of how electoral boundaries are drawn constitutes as important a matter in the management of the electoral process as determining the voter populations of such districts, and the Labor suspicion of the electoral process during the era of almost universal zone-based rural malapportionment extended to the process by which boundaries were drawn.

The South Australian debate was illustrative of this, given, as Jaensch (1981:233) has pointed out, the great controversies that arose over determining just where the metropolis ended and the country began for the purpose of drawing electoral maps. The solution lay in the formation of an auxiliary statutory authority to undertake the delicate task of determining where electoral boundaries would be drawn. Most of these have been established as statutory authorities as well, and have been given clear guidelines in law as to how boundaries are to be drawn, how the demographic malapportionment is to be administered, and the frequency with which redistributions will occur (see table 4). Interestingly, a number of jurisdictions have included a formula for calculating the rate at which demographic inequality might be so great as to warrant redistricting intervention ahead of the set time frame.

Tables 3 and 4 show that, with the exception of Tasmania, the Commonwealth and the two territories, each state now has a statutory authority with responsibility for determining where electoral boundaries will fall. Those that do not have a boundary-drawing commission utilise a re-districting committee convened under the auspices of their statutory electoral authority. South Australia is a little odd here: the electoral authority is still considered to be an electoral office (under the direction of a Chief Electoral Commissioner) but the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission is a statutory authority that is also mentioned in the state constitution. All of this contrasts with the previous era in which boundaries were subject to parliamentary approval and/or where districts were left unchanged for long periods of time because of a lack of regular redistributions notwithstanding the onset of sometimes quite significant demographic changes.

Finally, the story of recent electoral reform in the Australian states is inextricably linked with reform of the state upper houses – another Labor reform project that commenced with the changes to the electoral process for the Legislative Councils of New South Wales and South Australia in the 1970s (the 1922 abolition of the Queensland Legislative Council notwithstanding). The reasons for reforming the upper houses were straightforward enough; first, the malapportionment and other forms of mechanical and structural methods of trying to enhance the voting power of rural land-owners was anathema to Labor’s commitment to ‘one vote, one value’; and, secondly, these very same rural malapportioned upper chambers were often the defenders of the rural malapportionment and consistently rejecting any reform legislation coming before it (Stone 2002; Strangio 2007). Once again, the story told by Jaensch (1981:236) of the role played by the South Australian Legislative Council in attempting to thwart attempts at electoral reform serves to remind how difficult – but, obviously, not insurmountable - the task of reforming lower house electoral systems was when confronted with a hostile upper house.

Table 2 outlines the reform situation in the nation’s upper houses. Two important features are immediately apparent: first, it is clear that upper house electoral reform has sometimes been a necessary precursor to general electoral reform although this has not always been the case in all instances. Secondly, Table 2 shows that whereas reform of the lower houses to eliminate rural malapportionment was mainly based on the ‘one vote, one value’ ethos and involve districting, reform of the upper houses has involved changing the electoral system completely. The table shows that the reform agenda in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and, most recently,

Victoria has involved resolving the various structural manifestations of rural malapportionment by instituting a change to the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation. In the case of New South Wales and South Australia, this involved the dismantling of previous upper house electoral districts to opt instead for a state-wide multimember electorate. Victoria's system utilises eight districts each comprising of 11 lower house divisions where the 10 percent tolerance applies. Western Australia, meanwhile, also has a number of multi-member districts whose voter populations are determined by the regional zone system still in place.

### **Incomplete reform? The special cases of Western Australia and Queensland**

At first blush, a review of the parameters for lower house districting (Table 1) appears to show that the reform project outlined in this paper has not yet been completed thanks to the apparent persistence of zoning in Queensland and Western Australia. The Queensland system as it stands makes provision for the existence of five electoral divisions covering what the electoral act flags as remote and isolated districts. As a result of this classification the laws allow for voter populations to be under the state-wide quota considered to be necessary to achieve equality, although the way this is done involves a complicated mathematical assessment that offsets the physical area of these divisions by assuming the existence of 'phantom' voters (see Stevens 1993:124). Stevens points out, however, that this zoning – adopted by the Goss Labor government following an inquiry into the state's electoral system by the Fitzgerald Inquiry – is of a much smaller scale than the four-zone system that applied during the Bjelke-Petersen years. Of the rest of the state's electoral divisions that do not qualify

as 'remote', the usual 10 percent demographic tolerance of variation on the state-wide quota applies – a product indeed of the Goss government reforms.

In Western Australia, meanwhile, the state was, until very recent times, subject to a zoning system differentiating a Metropolitan Area (to be allocated 34 districts) and the rest of the state. The non-metropolitan area was then divided in to Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral, and South-West regions in which the quota for divisional voter equality would vary (with Mining and Pastoral having the lowest voter populations). As Kelly has revealed (2006), however, very recent changes to the state's electoral act will significantly modify the zoning system. Kelly argues that changes in the rate at which the metropolitan areas will return representatives combined with a reduction in the number of seats covering non-metropolitan areas will come closer to achieving the state Labor government's stated aim of a 'one vote, one value' system. The exception will be the declaration of a handful of very large area seats where lower quotas will prevail (an outcome not dissimilar to the Queensland practice of recognising a small number of remote districts). Again like Queensland, the 10 percent demographic variation will apply to districting.

The persistent use of zone-based voter inequality in these two states is interesting, even given the fact that these systems have substantially watered down the malapportionment that applied in previous times, and reflects the difference in the nature of the malapportionment debate in those two states. In particular, a sense that the previous systems were not as disadvantageous to Labor in Queensland and Western Australia compared with elsewhere is discernible. Mackerras (1990) has argued that the partisan consequences of Queensland's old zone system were harsher

on the Liberals than Labor, while Moon and Sharman (2003) have noted that, thanks to Western Australia's mining industry, a significant Labor-voting constituency could be found especially in the Mining and Pastoral region.

### **Electoral reform: normative reform or partisan advantage?**

Taking administrative reform and changes to the electoral arrangements for both upper and lower houses in to account, the period commencing with the reforms instituted in New South Wales and South Australia since 1976 have seen a major reduction in the applicability of rural over-representation – a feature of the Australian electoral scene that had been in place since colonial times. This has constituted a major reform (or, a set of major reforms) undertaken in the name of achieving 'one vote, one value'. As the four tables show, this project has taken some time to be implemented with changes to the electoral system for Victoria's Legislative Council and reform of the malapportionment that used to apply to Tasmania's Legislative Council being achieved in very recent times. Indeed, if the maintenance of zone-based regional and rural malapportionment in Western Australia in particular is taken into account, the project has not yet been fully implemented.

The comprehensive (but still incomplete) shift away from rural and regional over-representation and the accompanying administrative reorganisation of districting has been overwhelmingly a project pursued by the Labor party, raising the question as to whether reform has been driven by normative considerations or has simply been another manifestation of a political party being in a position to change electoral laws to obtain partisan advantage (see Colomer 2005). It is certainly the case that the Labor

party tended to be the most disadvantaged by the enhanced voting power of rural and regional electors particularly with regards to electoral systems for the state upper houses. However, this paper has identified instances where non-Labor support for equality-based electoral reform could be found sometimes with important consequences, and it is also the case that many of the changes brought about in the 1980s and thereafter – the federal reforms, the administrative reforms and the reform of districting in a number of the states – occurred with little opposition from the Liberal party. Labor may have enacted reform, but the Liberals have not gone out of their way to dismantle these changes. Indeed, by 1995 the Liberal government in Tasmania reformed the redistribution arrangements for the Legislative Council squarely within the parameters of the reforms undertaken in the other jurisdictions under Labor.

The defence of rural malapportionment tended to be most vigorous amongst the Country/National party, for obvious reasons. There is a sense that the gradual trend to institutionalising voter equality and providing the framework for politically independent districting reflects in no small way the gradual decline of rural politics in Australia in which the decline of the National party is also discernible. The nation's electoral systems have by and large caught up with the demographic reality that Australia is an urbanised nation and that the previous arguments about the special needs of rural Australia no longer appear to have the moral or political force they once had. The diminishment of this rural bias has taken some time to achieve, although where it has occurred it has been noticeable that something of an implicit consensus has existed between the two major parties over the worth of electoral

reform that has contributed to the sense that the National party has been marginalised in this debate.

**Table 1: Malapportionment and administrative electoral reform:  
Lower houses**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Previous weightage</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Reform Agenda</b>	<b>Major Reform</b>	<b>Currently</b>	<b>Reforming Party Government</b>
Commonwealth	Yes	Rural Weightage + - 20%	'one vote, One value'	1974 – rural weigh reduced to 10%	Demographic +, - 10%	Whitlam (ALP) Hawke (ALP)
New South Wales	Yes	Zonal	Modify zones	1984 – rural weight abolished 1976 – zones abolished	Demographic +, - 10%	Wran (ALP)
Victoria	Yes	Zonal	'one vote, One value'	1982 – zones abolished	Demographic +, - 10%	Cain (ALP)
Queensland	Yes	Zonal	'one vote, One value'	1992 – zonal system reformed	Demographic +, - 10%	Goss (ALP)
Western Australia	Yes	Zonal	Reduce rural Malapportion	1989 – zonal system reformed	Five remote divisions Zonal system	Burke (ALP)
South Australia	Yes	Zonal	'one vote, One value'	1975 – rural weight abolished 1991 – fairness test	Demographic +, - 10%	Dunstan (ALP) Bannon (ALP)
Northern Territory	Yes	Rural Weightage	Reduce rural weightage		Demographic +, - 20%	Martin (ALP)

**Table 2: Malapportionment and administrative electoral reform:  
Upper houses**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Previous weightage</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Reform Agenda</b>	<b>Major Reform</b>	<b>Currently</b>	<b>Reforming Party Government</b>
Commonwealth	Yes	constitutional	electoral	1949 – STV PR	Constitutional malapportionment	Chifley (ALP)
New South Wales	Yes	rural bias	‘one vote, One value’	1976 - shift to statewide STV-PR	statewide STV-PR	Wran (ALP)
Victoria	Yes	rural weightage	upper house reform	2003 – shift to equal districts STV-PR	STV-PR; demographic +/- 10%	Bracks (ALP)
Queensland	Yes	rural weightage	upper house reform	1922 – upper house Abolished		Theodore (ALP)
Western Australia	Yes	Zonal	upper house reform	1989 – shift to STV PR, zones retained	STV-PR rural zoning	Burke (ALP)
South Australia	Yes	rural weightage	upper house reform	1975 – state-wide electorate	statewide STV-PR	Dunstan (ALP)
Tasmania	Yes	Rural Weightage	Electoral reform	1995 – electoral reform	Demographic +, - 10%	Groom (Liberal)

**Table 3: Malapportionment and administrative electoral reform:  
Reform of electoral and districting administration**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Body now responsible</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Previously</b>	<b>Districting</b>	<b>Year Reformed</b>	<b>Reforming Government</b>
Commonwealth	AEC	Statutory corporation	AEO	AEC	1984	Hawke (ALP)
New South Wales	NSWEC	Statutory corporation	SEO	Electoral Districts	1977	Wran (ALP)
Victoria	VEC	Statutory corporation	VEO	Commission Electoral Boundaries Commission	1982	Cain (ALP)
Queensland	ECQ	Statutory corporation	QEO	Queensland Redistribution Commission	1992	Goss (ALP)
Western Australia	WAEC	Statutory corporation	Electoral Office	Electoral Redistributions Commission	1987	Burke (ALP)
South Australia	SEO	Office of the Chief Electoral Commissioner	Electoral Department	Electoral Boundaries Commission	1975	Dunstan (ALP)
Tasmania	TEC	Statutory corporation	TEO	TEC	2005	Lennon (ALP)

**Table 4: Redistribution requirements and infrastructure**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>authority</b>	<b>committee</b>	<b>when redistributions are required</b>
Commonwealth	AEC	Redistribution Committee	3 to 5 year rule, or variation to state entitlements
New South Wales	Electoral Districts Commission		after every second election, or district inequality formula
Victoria	Electoral Boundaries Commission		after two state elections, or district inequality formula
Queensland	Queensland Redistribution Commission		7.5 years after last redistribution, or 1 year after third election, or district inequality formula
Western Australia	Electoral Districts Commission		2 years after each election
South Australia	Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission		after each election, and 'fairness test' applies
Tasmania	TEC	Redistribution Committee	9 years after last redistribution, or district inequality formula
ACT	ACTEC	Redistribution Committee	2 years after election
NT	NTEC	Redistribution Committee	2.5 years after election

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