

# The 2017 WA Election Continuities and Challenges

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# Menu for Tonight

- Memories of an Election Analyst
- The continuity of geography in electoral contests, and will we see the real impact of one-vote one-value boundaries at the 2017 election
- Malapportionment in the Legislative Council
- Reform of ticket voting for the Legislative Council

### 2008 West Australian Election Pendulum

Electorate	Margin	Electorate	Margin
<b>Labor (38)</b>		<b>Liberal / National (15/3)</b>	
Kingsley	0.1%	Kalamunda	0.2%
Collie-Preston	0.8%	Dawesville	1.7%
Darling Range (*)	0.8%	Albany (*)	2.3%
Bunbury	0.9%	Scarborough	2.6%
Ocean Reef	1.6%	Moore (v NAT)	2.8%
Riverton	2.1%	Geraldton (*)	3.5%
North West	3.1%	Hillarys	3.5%
Jandakot	3.6%	Murray-Wellington	6.0%
Swan Hills	3.6%	Bateman	6.9%
Joondalup	4.3%	Kalgoorlie	7.1%
Forrestfield	4.5%	South Perth	7.4%
Southern River	5.1%	Carine	7.7%
Mount Lawley	5.9%	Vasse	9.6%
Wanneroo	6.1%	Cottesloe	11.5%
Kimberley	6.8%	Eyre	14.9%
Mindarie	6.9%	Blackwood-Stirling (*)	19.3%
Mandurah	8.5%	Central <del>Wheatbelt</del>	26.0%
Balcatta	9.2%	Wagin	29.7%
Midland	9.7%		
Morley	9.9%	<b>Independents (3)</b>	
Pilbara	10.4%	Alfred Cove (v LIB)	4.0%
West Swan	10.7%	Nedlands (*) (LIB v ALP)	10.1%
Warnbro	11.2%	Churchlands (v ALP)	18.8%
Gosnells	11.3%		
Rockingham	11.4%		
Belmont	11.7%		
Perth	13.2%		

## **A Comment on the Advantage of Incumbency**

The 2008 election was conducted after a major redistribution that abolished six electorates outside of Perth and created eight entirely new electorates in the Perth metropolitan area. This created an unusual feature where many seats notionally held by the Labor government were not defended by sitting Labor MPs.

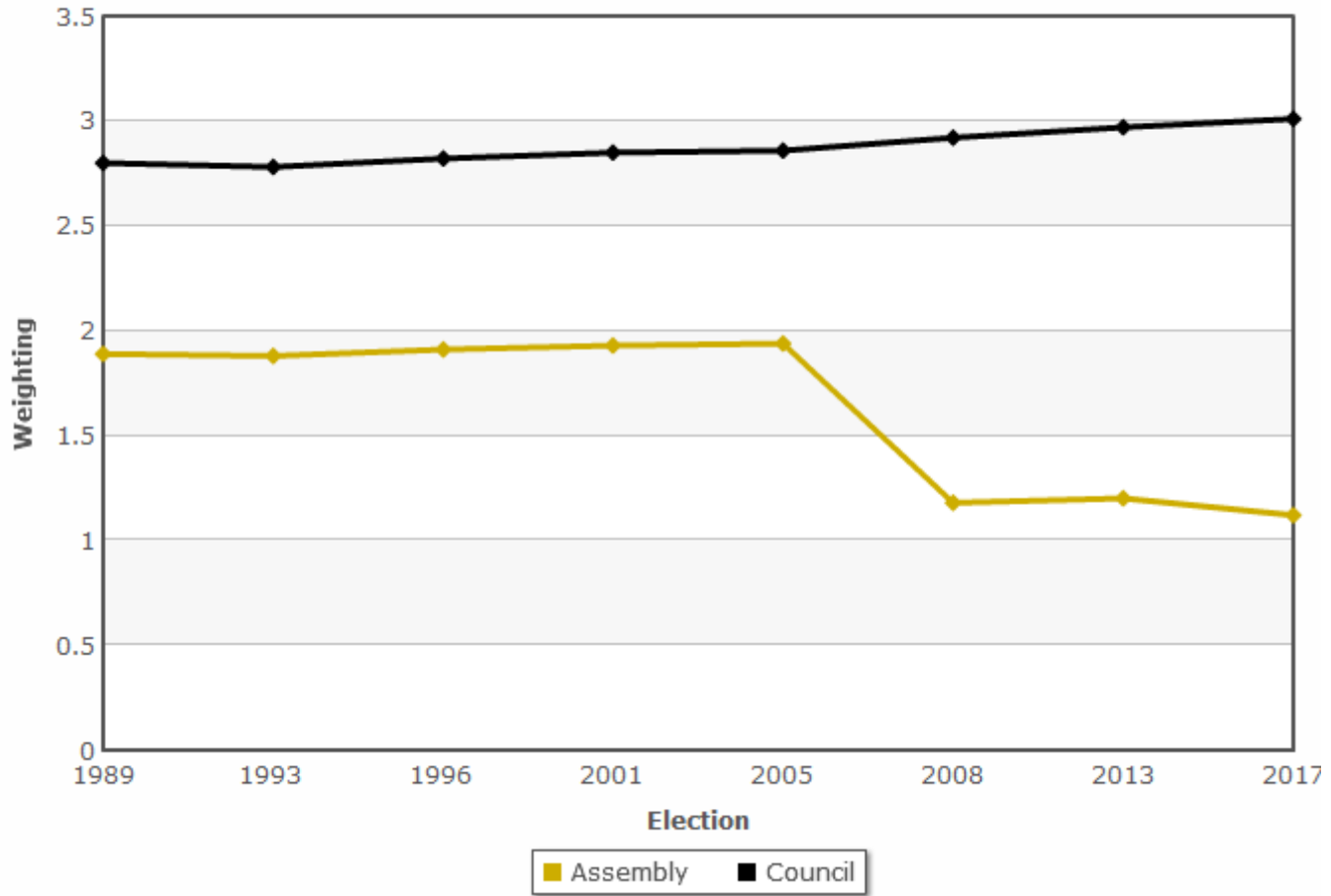
Of Labor's 13 most marginal seats going into the election, only five (Kingsley, Collie-Preston, Riverton, Joondalup, Southern River) were defended by a sitting Labor MP, while two sitting Labor MPs contested notional Liberal seats (Albany, Geraldton). Two of Labor's notionally marginal seats (Bunbury, Darling Range) were contested by sitting Liberal MPs, while Collie-Preston was contested by both a sitting Labor and a sitting Liberal MP.

This created the unusual situation where the Labor Party on paper lost 11 seats, but only four of those seats had sitting Labor MPs. A fifth Labor MP was defeated in notionally Liberal-held Geraldton, while a sitting Labor MP was re-elected in the notionally Liberal held seat of Albany. Two of the biggest swings against Labor occurred in the neighbouring inner-northern electorates of Mount Lawley and Ballajura. Both were lost by Labor, both were without sitting Labor MPs, and both had seen disputes over the non-endorsement of former Labor MP's

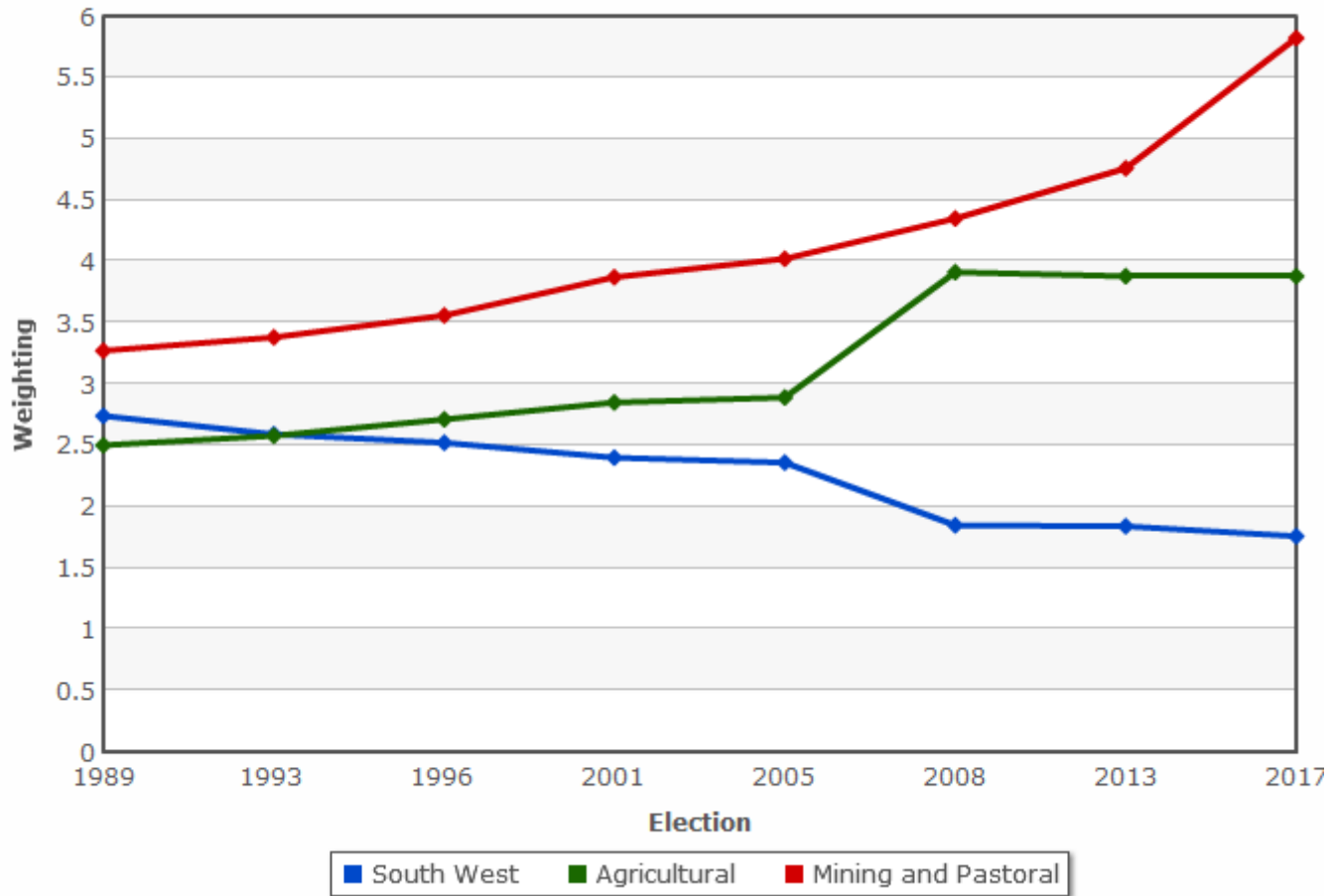
While the Labor Party had the advantage of being an incumbent government, the nature of the redistribution meant that the advantage an incumbent government would normally have had in key marginal electorates was greatly weakened. In the re-drawing of Perth electoral boundaries, MPs of both parties understandably gravitated to electorates encompassing the safer territory of their former electorate, leaving new candidates to contest the more marginal seats.

Given the extremely close nature of the final election outcome, it is likely that changes to electoral boundaries and problems in pre-selecting candidates had a role to play in the eventual defeat of the government.

Vote Weighting - Rest of State versus Perth



Legislative Council Vote Weighting by Region



# PR-STV versus List PR

- While categorised as PR-STV, Australian Upper House electoral system operate like List PR with a highest remainder on the final seats.
- However, preferences mean that the highest remainder does not always win.
- Comparing upper house to possible List PR outcomes explains the need for change. This is best explained using Senate results

# Categorising Senate Seats

- **Filled Quotas** – Senators elected on initial counts.
- **Highest remainder** – Senators elected having started with the highest partial quota.
- **Trailing Wins** – Senators elected who were not highest remainder winners
- **Parties passed** – the number of parties passed by a party with a lower partial quota.



# Comparing PR-STV to List PR

Election	Filled Quotas	Highest Remainder	Trailing Wins	Parties Passed
1984	33	7	2	2
1987	61	7	4	4
1990	28	7	1	1
1993	30	3	3	4
1996	28	7	1	1
1998	24	8	4	4
2001	25	6	5	6
2004	29	6	1	3
2007	27	8	1	2
2010	27	7	2	4
<b>2013</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>
2016	52	17	3	6

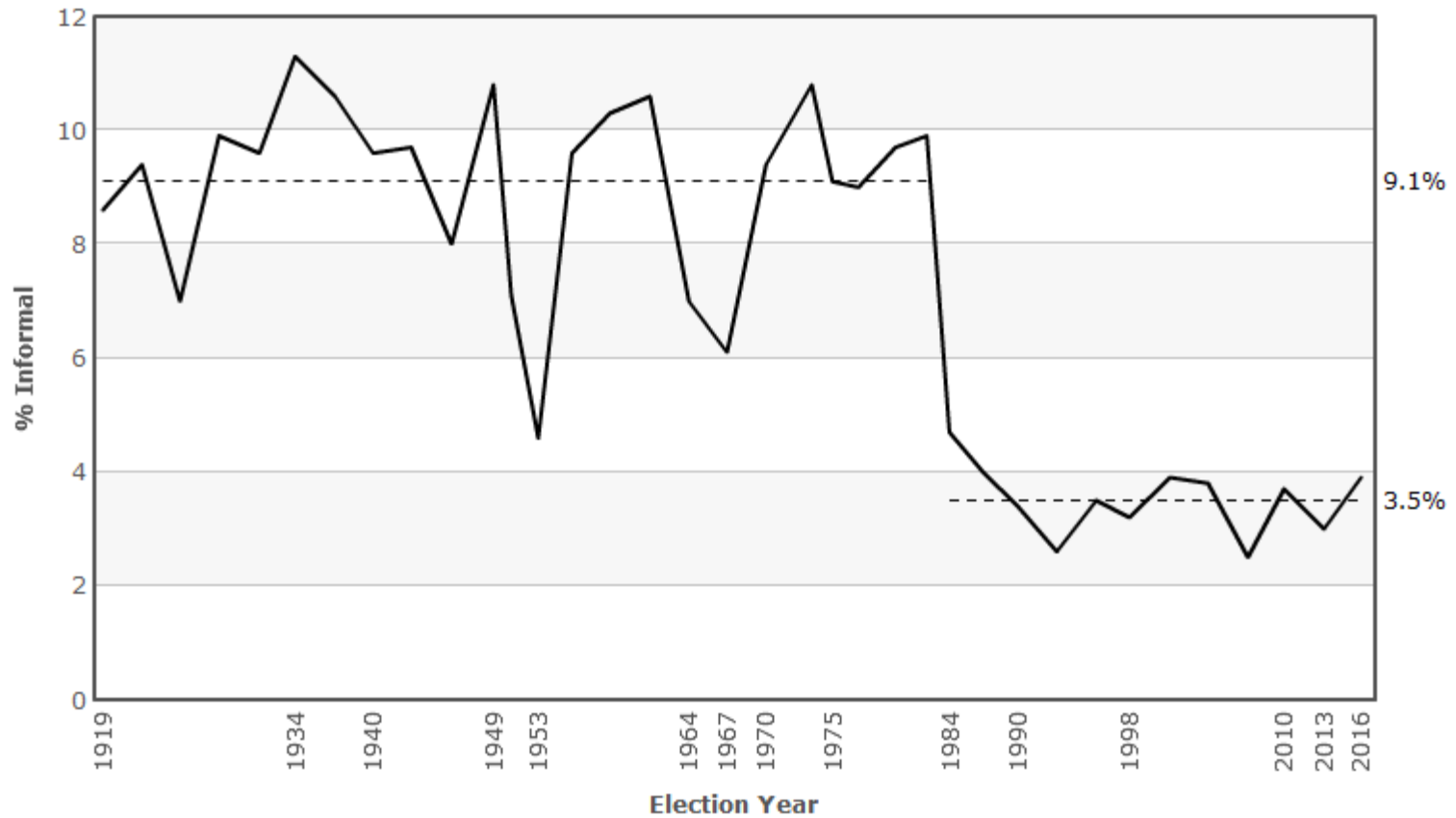
# Why so Many Parties Passed in 2013

- Ricky Muir (VIC) – 0.5% of vote but received 100% of ticket votes from 19 parties, only 6% from same parties below the line.
- Wayne Dropulich (WA) – 0.2% of the vote but received 100% of preferences from 18 parties but only 13% from same parties below the line.

# The 2016 changes

- Divided ballot paper retained, above the line votes for parties, below the line for candidates.
- Group ticket votes abolished and full preferential voting BTL ended.
- Ballot paper suggested up to 6 preferences above the line and 12 below.
- Very generous savings provisions.

**Informal Vote at Senate Elections 1919-2017**  
(Dashed lines indicates averages before and after the introduction of 'above the line' voting)



Preference Category of Ballot Papers by State						
% of Ballot Papers with number of preferences						
State	1	2-5	6	7-12	>12	BTL
NSW	<b>4.7</b>	4.1	<b>80.9</b>	4.3	0.6	5.4
VIC	2.4	3.6	<b>83.5</b>	4.5	0.8	5.3
QLD	2.0	3.3	<b>83.2</b>	4.5	0.8	6.1
WA	2.2	3.4	<b>83.5</b>	4.2	1.2	5.5
SA	2.3	3.0	<b>79.2</b>	5.2	1.7	8.5
TAS	1.1	2.2	<b>61.1</b>	5.0	2.5	<b>28.1</b>
ACT	1.3	1.8	<b>70.6</b>	11.1	..	<b>15.2</b>
NT	2.3	2.8	<b>50.8</b>	35.5	..	8.6
Australia	3.0	3.6	<b>81.2</b>	4.8	0.8	6.5

Use of Above the Line (ATL) Group Voting Squares 1984-2016  
Mainland States (solid line) versus Tasmania (dashed line)

