

Soul Searching

A User's Guide to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly Electoral Rolls 1890-1967



*Photo 221414PD - Courtesy Battye Library
State Library of Western Australia*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The idea for this guide was formed some years ago, however it is because of a grant from The Friends of the Battye Library Inc. that it has finally come to fruition. I am very grateful to the committee and members for their sponsorship. I sincerely hope that the foundations laid by the many dedicated staff over the years, coupled with the support of the Friends, ensure the continuing development of the unique information resource that is the J S Battye Library of West Australian History.

Julie Martin
June 2009

Introduction

What is an electoral roll (or register)?

An electoral roll is a listing of persons registered to vote in a particular electorate or area.

Each roll includes the name, address, gender and occupation of the individual. Any other information provided at the time of registration is confidential and not available for public inspection.

The electoral rolls, one for each electorate, are compiled and published prior to each general election. In addition, they may also be produced for referenda and by-elections.

What electoral rolls are covered by this guide?

In 1890, Western Australia was granted self government and a bicameral parliament (one with two Houses) was established.

The **Legislative Assembly** or Lower House provided the government of the State whilst the **Legislative Council** or Upper House acted as a House of Review.

This guide is only to the Legislative Assembly electoral rolls, as most residents of Western Australia met the voting qualifications for this House. Until 1963, a property qualification was required for those enrolling to vote in Legislative Council elections.



Legislative Assembly,
Parliament House,
Perth,
Western Australia

Provided by
the Parliament of
Western Australia

What period does this guide cover?

The guide commences with the first election of members to the Legislative Assembly in 1890 and concludes with the 1965 state election.

Information about Western Australian electorates after the 1965 election can be found in the publication, *Streets, Towns and Places Directory* compiled by the WA Electoral Commission.

This index gives the particular Legislative Assembly electorate for most streets, towns and localities in Western Australia and copies are held in the Battye Library within the State Library of WA. Current information is available on the website of the Electoral Commission, www.waec.wa.gov.au

Who could vote for Legislative Assembly candidates in elections held between 1890-1967?

Initially, only natural-born or naturalized British men over the age of 21 who met a property qualification and had resided in Western Australia for six months could register to vote. The property qualification was removed after the first general election in 1890.

In 1899, women were granted the right to vote, however compulsory voting for all was not introduced until 1919.

Plural voting, whereby a person who owned property in several electoral districts could register to vote in each of those districts, remained an option for Legislative Assembly voters until 1904.

In 1962, the franchise was granted to Aboriginal people who could choose to enrol and vote. In 1983, voting was made compulsory.

How accurate are the Western Australian electoral rolls?

By 1904, the methods adopted to compile the electoral rolls were causing widespread consternation amongst Parliamentarians, leading to the formation in 1905 of a Select Committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly to inquire into the compilation of the electoral rolls. There were claims of under enrolment but there was also evidence that potential electors exceeded the total population. An article in 1915 in the State's major newspaper, *The West Australian*, indicated that there were 23,000 more names on the rolls than there were adults in the state and that most of the 'roll-stuffing' had taken place in the metropolitan area. By 1920, co-operation between the State and Federal governments with the compilation of the electoral rolls helped deliver more accurate voting lists.

How is the guide organised?

The guide has been divided into two sections:

- The first provides information about the electorates and electoral rolls created for elections held during the period 1890 -1903 inclusive. Evidence indicates that electoral rolls produced during this time were not issued for general distribution and inspection and as a result, few have survived. Those which have been located are housed in the State Records Office of Western Australia.
- The second provides information about the electorates and electoral rolls created for elections held during the period 1904 -1967 inclusive. State Electoral rolls from 1904 were published for general distribution and, in Western Australia, are available on microfiche in the Battye Library.

Section One

Legislative Assembly Electoralates and Electoral Rolls 1890 - 1903

Legislative Assembly Electoralates and Electoral Rolls 1890 - 1903

With the establishment of a bicameral parliament in 1890, Western Australia was divided into thirty (30) electoral districts, the voters in each district electing one member as their representative in the Legislative Assembly.

Western Australia's population increased dramatically as a result of the gold rushes and consequently, the Legislative Assembly was enlarged to forty four (44) members in 1896 and to fifty (50) members three years later.

There would be no further addition to the number of seats until the 26th Parliament was elected in 1968.

A list of electoralates current during the period 1890-1903 can be found on page 11 of this guide.

The Legislative Assembly rolls, compiled for the general elections of 1890, 1894, 1897 and 1901, were not issued for general distribution, and those few which have survived are located in the State Records Office of Western Australia.

Details of the surviving rolls and the location of the electorates to which they belong are contained in the following table and map. These rolls have been micro-filmed and are available in the Search Room of the State Records Office.

The microfilm containing the rolls printed in **red** on page 9 of this guide is filed at Accession number 63.

The microfilm containing the rolls printed in **black** on page 9 of this guide is filed at Accession number 262.

The State Records Office accession number, shown alongside each roll in the table, is for citation purposes only.

NOTE: During the period 1890-1903, plural voting (whereby a person who owned property in several electoral districts could vote in each of those districts), was an option.

Although the surviving electoral rolls may not cover a district of interest, there is every possibility that the individual for whom details are sought, owned land other than where he/she resided and consequently their details may appear in one or more of the surviving rolls.

SURVIVING ROLLS

Legislative Assembly

1890-1903

ELECTORATE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	STATE RECORDS OFFICE ACCESSION NO.
DE GREY	1890	Handwritten roll (40 names)	Acc 64
DE GREY	1895	Printed roll (39 names)	Acc 64
MOORE	1896	Printed roll (213 names)	Acc 861
MOORE	1897 (April-quarterly)	Printed roll (115 names)	Acc 861
MOORE	1899	Printed roll (356 names)	Acc 861
NORTHAM	1896	Printed roll (474 names)	Acc 860
NORTHAM	1897 (Jan-quarterly)	Printed roll (9 names)	Acc 860
NORTHAM	1897 (April-quarterly)	Printed roll (57 names)	Acc 860
NORTHAM	1899	Printed roll (768 names)	Acc 860
TOODYAY	1891	Handwritten roll (approx. 200 names)	Acc 859
TOODYAY	1896 (Oct-quarterly)	Printed roll (1 name)	Acc 859
TOODYAY	1897	Printed roll (412 names)	Acc 859
TOODYAY	1900 (April-quarterly)	Printed roll (2 names)	Acc 859
TOODYAY	1900	Printed roll (704 names)	Acc 859
WEST PERTH	1900	Printed roll (3948 names)	Acc 527
ALBANY	1900	Printed roll (929 names)	Acc 527



Legislative Assembly Electorates 1890-1903

1890-1893 (30)	1894-1896 (33)	1897-1900 (44)	1901-1903 (50)
Albany	Albany	Albany	Albany
Ashburton	Ashburton	Ashburton	Beverley
Beverley	Beverley	Beverley	Boulder
Bunbury	Bunbury	Bunbury	Bunbury
De Grey	De Grey	Canning	Claremont
Fremantle	Fremantle	Coolgardie	Cockburn Sound
Fremantle North	Fremantle North	Coolgardie East	Coolgardie
Fremantle South	Fremantle South	Coolgardie North	Cue
Gascoyne	Gascoyne	Coolgardie North East	Dundas
Geraldton	Geraldton	De Grey	Fremantle
Greenough	Greenough	Dundas	Fremantle East
Irwin	Irwin	Fremantle	Fremantle North
Kimberley East	Kimberley East	Fremantle East	Fremantle South
Kimberley West	Kimberley West	Fremantle North	Gascoyne
Moore	Moore	Fremantle South	Geraldton
Murchison	Murchison	Gascoyne	Greenough
Murray	Murray	Geraldton	Guildford
Nelson	Nannine	Greenough	Hannans
Northam	Nelson	Irwin	Irwin
Perth	Northam	Kimberley East	Kalgoorlie
Perth East	Perth	Kimberley West	Kanowna
Perth West	Perth East	Moore	Kimberley East
Plantagenet	Perth West	Murchison	Kimberley West
Roebourne	Pilbara	Murchison Central	Menzies
Sussex	Plantagenet	Murchison North	Moore
Swan	Roebourne	Murchison South	Mount Burges
Toodyay	Sussex	Murray	Mount Magnet
Wellington	Swan	Nelson	Mount Margaret
Williams	Toodyay	Northam	Murchison
York	Wellington	Perth	Murchison North
	Williams	Perth East	Murray
	Yilgarn	Perth North	Nelson
	York	Perth West	Northam
		Pilbara	Perth
		Plantagenet	Perth East
		Roebourne	Perth North
		Sussex	Perth South
		Swan	Perth West
		Toodyay	Pilbara
		Wellington	Plantagenet
		Williams	Roebourne
		Yalgoo	South West Mining
		Yilgarn	Subiaco
		York	Sussex
			Swan
			Toodyay
			Wellington
			Williams
			Yilgarn
			York

NOTE: Shaded electorates are those whose electoral rolls have survived and are located in the State Records Office of Western Australia.

Section Two

Legislative Assembly Electoral Districts and Electoral Rolls 1904 - 1967

Legislative Assembly Electorates and Electoral Rolls 1904 - 1967

As Western Australia prepared for the 1904 election, the first State election following Federation, electoral districts underwent changes as a result of the *Redistribution of Seats Act 1903*, and a set of electoral rolls was prepared for publication and general distribution.

The number of electorates remained unchanged at fifty, a situation which would continue until the 26th General Election was contested in 1968.

Nevertheless, in 1904 and the years following on to 1967, new electorates were created, some electorates were amalgamated, some abolished and most underwent changes to their boundaries. In total, six redistributions took place reflecting the ebb and flow of Western Australia's population.

A list of electorates current during the period 1904-1967 can be found on page 26 of this guide.

Electoral rolls yield valuable information and clues for researchers, however negotiating the rolls and finding the information and clues they provide have proved very difficult, especially for those unfamiliar with the State's electoral history and geographical names.

The purpose of this section of the guide is to provide a simple method to enable researchers to use the electoral rolls efficiently and effectively when seeking the whereabouts of an individual at some point in time. The system only requires knowledge of the general location of the person of interest and approximately when they resided in that location.

How does it work?

For the purposes of this guide, Western Australia has been divided into five zones which generally mirror the land use and population density of Western Australia during the first part of the 20th Century.

The boundaries of these zones were devised to best accommodate the changes to electorates over the period 1904-1967 and are not the boundaries of any past or current electoral regions.

Using the map on page 16 of this guide, researchers should select their zone of interest.

- The section dealing with that zone contains a data table as well as general information about the zone.
- The left hand column of the data table lists the names of all the electorates contained within the zone.
- The vertical columns record the years in which general elections were held and therefore the years in which full sets of updated electoral rolls were issued.
- The years printed in **red** are those in which electoral redistributions took place.
- A shaded cell indicates the existence of an electorate in a particular election year.

There will be some instances where an electorate straddles the boundaries of zones. Where possible, these have been identified and should be considered to be in both regions to assist a more accurate search.

By selecting a year to begin a search and scanning down the respective column, it can be determined from the shaded cells which electorates were current at the time. *(It may be helpful to print a copy of the data table and use it as a checklist).*

Zones 1904 - 1967



Zone 1

The Metropolitan Region

Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, was settled on the northern bank of the Swan River, its suburbs originally extending west to Fremantle and east to Guildford with small advances to the north and south. Post war migration midway through the 20th century saw an expansion of the northern suburbs while the opening of the Narrows Bridge in 1959 helped increase settlement in the suburbs on the southern side of the Swan River.

NOTE: In the period 1904-1949, suburbs to the far north, far south and east of Perth were not considered to be part of the Perth metropolitan area and therefore were included in electorates in the Agricultural and Southern zones. The electorates which contain these suburbs have been identified within their respective zones.



Parliament House,
Perth,
Western Australia

Provided by
the Parliament of
Western Australia

Zone 2

The Southern Region

This zone is known in Western Australia as the South West. In the early 20th century, the timber industry flourished with the opening of the first State owned mill at Dwellingup. In addition, some settlers established small fruit and vegetable farms, others raised livestock. In the early 1920s, this area was chosen for an experiment in group settlement and thousands of settlers moved into the area to clear the land and establish dairy farms. The settlers were beset by problems and by 1927 the project was permanently halted. Those who stayed saw the railway system gradually extended and the roads improved.

NOTE: From 1904-1910, the electorate of Murray contained the areas situated to the south east of Perth as well as the Cockburn Sound area, south of Fremantle. From 1911-1961, the south east areas were included in the Murray-Wellington electorate and the Cockburn Sound region was included in the metropolitan electorate of Fremantle South. From 1962-1967 all were included in the metropolitan electorate of Dale.

Zone 2 - The Southern Region

ELECTORATE	1904	1905	1908	1911	1914	1917	1921	1924	1927	1930	1933	1936	1939	1943	1947	1950	1953	1956	1959	1962	1965
Murray (see note on p19)																					
Wellington																					
Forrest																					
Nelson																					
Sussex																					
Bunbury																					
Collie																					
Murray-Wellington (see note on p19)																					
Harvey																					
Blackwood																					
Vasse																					
Warren																					

NOTE: Shaded electorates are those which straddle the boundaries of the Southern and Agricultural Regions.

Zone 3

The Agricultural Region

Between 1904 and 1915, the governments of the day gave vital support to the expansion of the wheat industry. As a result, the wheatbelt, which stretched from Geraldton (north of Perth) to Albany on the southern coastline was established. Cheap land was made available, railways constructed and financial aid and technical advice offered. After the Second World War, virgin land in the southern part of this zone was developed under the War Service Settlement Scheme.

NOTE: From 1904-1929, the electorate of Swan contained the outlying areas of Perth to the north (Wanneroo), to the east (Swan Hills and Darling Range) and to the south east (Armadale).

From 1930-1949, the areas to the east and south east of Perth remained in the electorate of Swan, however the area to the north was redistributed into the electorate of Toodyay.

Zone 4

The Mining Region

Although gold was originally found in the Kimberley and Pilbara areas of the North, it was the rich discoveries in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie in the 1890s which brought about Western Australia's unprecedented prosperity and a doubling of its population.

Gold production waned in the early part of the 20th century and then resurged in the 1950s ahead of the nickel boom in the 1960s.

Zone 4 - The Mining Region

ELECTORATE	1904	1905	1908	1911	1914	1917	1921	1924	1927	1930	1933	1936	1939	1943	1947	1950	1953	1956	1959	1962	1965	
Brownhill																						
Dundas																						
Ivanhoe																						
Coolgardie																						
Cue																						
Menzies																						
Mount Leonora																						
Mount Margaret																						
Yilgarn																						
Kanowna																						
Mount Magnet																						
Hannans																						
Boulder																						
Kalgoorlie																						
Murchison																						
Brownhill - Ivanhoe																						
Yilgarn-Coolgardie																						
Eyre																						
Merredin-Yilgarn																						
Roe																						
Boulder-Eyre																						

NOTE: Shaded electorates are those which straddle the boundaries of the Mining and Agricultural Regions.

Legislative Assembly Electorates 1904 - 1967

1904-1910	1911-1929	1930-1949	1950-1955	1956-1961	1962-1967
Albany	Albany	Albany	Albany	Albany	Albany
Balkatta	Avon	Avon	Avon Valley	Avon Valley	Avon Valley
Beverley	Beverley	Beverley	Blackwood	Blackwood	Balcatta
Boulder	Boulder	Boulder	Boulder	Beeloo	Bayswater
Brown Hill	BrownHill-Ivanhoe	Brown Hill - Ivanhoe	Bunbury	Boulder	Beeloo
Bunbury	Bunbury	Bunbury	Canning	Bunbury	Belmont
Canning	Canning	Canning	Claremont	Canning	Blackwood
Claremont	Claremont	Claremont	Collie	Claremont	Boulder-Eyre
Collie	Collie	Collie	Cottesloe	Collie	Bunbury
Coolgardie	Coolgardie	Forrest	Dale	Cottesloe	Canning
Cue	Cue	Fremantle	Darling Range	Dale	Claremont
Dundas	Forrest	Fremantle North East	Eyre	Darling Range	Cockburn
Forrest	Fremantle	Fremantle South	Fremantle	Eyre	Collie
Fremantle	Fremantle North East	Gascoyne	Fremantle South	Fremantle	Cottesloe
Fremantle East	Fremantle South	Geraldton	Gascoyne	Fremantle South	Dale
Fremantle North	Gascoyne	Greenough	Geraldton	Gascoyne	Darling Range
Fremantle South	Geraldton	Guildford - Midland	Greenough	Geraldton	East Melville
Gascoyne	Greenough	Hannans	Guildford-Midland	Greenough	Fremantle
Geraldton	Guildford	Irwin-Moore	Hannans	Guildford-Midland	Gascoyne
Greenough	Hannans	Kalgoorlie	Harvey	Harvey	Geraldton
Guildford	Irwin	Kanowna	Kalgoorlie	Kalgoorlie	Greenough
Hannans	Kalgoorlie	Katanning	Katanning	Katanning	Kalgoorlie
Irwin	Kanowna	Kimberley	Kimberley	Kimberley	Karrinyup
Ivanhoe	Katanning	Leederville	Leederville	Leederville	Katanning
Kalgoorlie	Kimberley	Maylands	Maylands	Maylands	Kimberley
Kanowna	Leederville	Middle Swan	Melville	Melville	Maylands
Katanning	Menzies	Mount Hawthorn	Merredin-Yilgarn	Merredin-Yilgarn	Melville
Kimberley	Moore	Mt Magnet	Middle Swan	Middle Swan	Merredin-Yilgarn
Menzies	Mt Leonora	Mt Marshall	Moore	Moore	Moore
Mount Leonora	Mt Magnet	Murchison	Mount Hawthorn	Mount Hawthorn	Mount Hawthorn
Mount Magnet	Mt Margaret	Murray-Wellington	Mount Lawley	Mount Lawley	Mount Lawley
Mount Margaret	Murchison	Nedlands	Mount Marshall	Mount Marshall	Mount Marshall
Murchison	Murray-Wellington	Nelson	Murchison	Murchison	Murchison
Murray	Nelson	Northam	Murray	Murray	Murray
Nelson	Northam	Perth	Narrogin	Narrogin	Narrogin
Northam	Perth	Perth East	Nedlands	Nedlands	Nedlands
Perth	Perth East	Perth North	Northam	Northam	Northam
Perth East	Perth North	Perth West	Perth East	Perth East	Perth
Perth North	Perth West	Pilbara	Perth North	Perth North	Pilbara
Perth West	Pilbara	Pingelly	Perth South	Perth South	Roe
Pilbara	Pingelly	Roebourne	Perth West	Perth West	South Perth
Roebourne	Roebourne	Subiaco	Pilbara	Pilbara	Stirling
Subiaco	Subiaco	Sussex	Roe	Roe	Subiaco
Sussex	Sussex	Swan	Stirling	Stirling	Swan
Swan	Swan	Toodyay	Subiaco	Subiaco	Toodyay
Toodyay	Toodyay	Victoria Park	Toodyay	Toodyay	Vasse
Wellington	Wagin	Wagin	Vasse	Vasse	Victoria Park
Williams	Williams-Narrogin	Williams-Narrogin	Victoria Park	Victoria Park	Warren
Yilgarn	Yilgarn	Yilgarn-Coolgardie	Warren	Warren	Wellington
York	York	York	Wembley Beaches	Wembley Beaches	Wembley