

ELECTORAL ENROLMENT

970. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I note that only 61 per cent of the adult population in the seat of North West Central are enrolled to vote and similarly low rates apply to the seats of the Kimberley and the Pilbara, whereas 89 per cent of the adult population in the seats of Joondalup and Cottesloe are enrolled to vote.

- (1) Has the minister sought advice as to the causes of that structural under-enrolment?
- (2) If yes, what was the advice?
- (3) Did the so-called expert working group consider structural under-enrolment in regional districts when it undertook its review of the electoral arrangements for the Legislative Council?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

- (1)–(2) “Structural under-enrolment” is not a term recognised or used by the Western Australian Electoral Commission. In addition, the commission cannot verify —

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Does the member want the answer or not?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Just bring the temperature down a bit.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Thank you, President. Sorry, let me start again.

- (1)–(2) “Structural under-enrolment” is not a term recognised or used by the Western Australian Electoral Commission. In addition, the commission cannot verify the statistics quoted by the member by reference to its own enrolment data. However, ensuring high enrolment levels in all districts is something that the commission is always working towards, noting that not all of the adult population in any area are necessarily eligible to be enrolled. It is recognised that outside of election events it is often difficult to engage eligible individuals who may not be enrolled. Certain regional seats in the north of the state have historically had fluctuating enrolment levels compared with metropolitan districts; however, that does not apply to all regional districts. Recent data provided by the Australian Electoral Commission has identified an improvement in enrolment levels in those districts in the north and east of the state. The minister has engaged with the WA Electoral Commission on the subject of community engagement, which extends to enrolment stimulation as well as ongoing engagement and education with enrolled electors and other community members.
- (3) The minister is not aware of an entity named in those terms.