FACT SHEET

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission

History of democratic government in Western Australia

History timeline

1829 — Arrival of British settlers. Swan River Colony proclaimed. Brings British law and government to Western Australia. Captain James Stirling appointed Lieutenant-Governor in **May 1829**.

1832 — The first sitting of the Legislative Council was held on **7 February 1832**. The first constituted Legislative Council consisted of five official members nominated by, and including, the Governor.

1870 — Under the terms of the Australian Colonies Government Act, 12 elected Councillors, together with six nominated by the Governor formed the Legislative Council.

1887 — Introduction of the secret ballot.

1890 — Responsible Government granted with the election of the Legislative Assembly (30 elected members) and Legislative Council (15 members) nominated by the Governor.

1901 — **Federation:** Western Australia joins with other states to form the Commonwealth of Australia.

1920 — Women became eligible to stand for election to WA Parliament.

1921 — Edith Cowan becomes Australia's first elected female Member of Parliament.

1962 — Aboriginal people given the right to vote in Legislative Assembly elections.

1970 — Voting age lowered from 21 to 18 years

2011 — Legislation passed for fixed state election dates in Western Australia to be held on the second Saturday in March every four years.