

There are 140 District Councils and 32 Municipal Corporations, and there is a large part of the State not included in the district of any local body.

The franchise in districts is limited to ratepayers, each of whom has one vote. In municipalities every person of full age who is seised of or occupies any ratepayable property within the municipality is entitled to be enrolled in the Citizens Roll, and to vote, provided he is not an alien or person in receipt of public alms or charity, and provided also that he has paid any rates due within six months of the poll. A citizen has one vote only, but if he has property in more than one ward he may vote separately for each ward.

No district can be constituted unless the general rate at 1s. in the pound on annual value would produce £200, and no municipality can be set up unless the general rate would produce £300 per annum.

The powers of the District Councils and of the municipalities appear to be otherwise somewhat analogous to those of our counties and boroughs respectively, and do not call for special comment. There is, however, power to join four or more District Councils into a special Board for the purpose of maintaining and controlling a main road that is common to all of them.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

I did not visit this State, but, according to the Official Year-book of the Commonwealth for 1911, there are only two types of local authorities in this State—viz., municipalities and road districts. The former correspond with our boroughs and the latter with the shires in other States of Australia.

The Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, contains the law as to municipalities, and the Roads Act, 1911, the Parks and Reserves Act, the Cattle Trespassing Act, the Width of Tires Act, the Cart and Carriage Licenses Act, and the Dog Act contain the law as to road districts.

The franchise in municipalities is limited to ratepayers.

TASMANIA.

The conditions prevailing, or which have prevailed, in this State are more nearly like those in New Zealand than is the case in any other Australian State.

Prior to 1906 there was a considerable number of local bodies, consisting of rural municipalities, Town Boards, main road districts, road districts, local health districts, fruit districts, rabbit districts, &c. These were all abolished by the Local Government Act, 1906, and in pursuance of the Act the State was divided by Commission into new districts called municipalities, and the functions theretofore vested in the above local bodies were then vested in the new municipalities, and these municipalities, with the addition of Hobart and Launceston, form the only local bodies in Tasmania. There are now fifty-one municipalities, in place of 103 Road Trusts, twenty-three Town Boards, nineteen Rural Municipalities, besides several other minor local authorities. The Minister of Public Works and Lands informed me that this reform has worked very well. He stated that when the new division was made some of the districts objected, but the Government refused to make any alteration until it was seen how the scheme worked. Things soon settled down, and very little alteration has been found to be necessary. There is, however, some difficulty as to the maintenance of roads (see my Report No. 2, on State assistance to local bodies in Tasmania).

The franchise is based on a property qualification, and is as follows: One vote for each person having property of an annual value under £30; two votes for each person having property of an annual value from £30 to £80; three votes for each person having property of an annual value from £80 to £160; four votes for each person having property of an annual value from £160 to £240; five votes for each person having property of an annual value from £240 to £360; six votes for each person having property of an annual value over £360.

The Municipal Councils have similar powers to those vested in our Borough and County Councils. They have, however, power to appoint extraordinary committees for any special purpose, and to whom they may delegate most of their powers. The Councils have also power to appoint local committees for dealing with any matter in any local district, such as a cemetery or recreation-ground. There is also similar provision to what is in force in several other Australian States, whereby adjacent municipalities can form a joint municipality for the purpose of carrying out some work common to all.

GENERAL.

According to the Official Year-book for the Commonwealth for 1911 the number of local authorities in Australasia was as follows:—

New South Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	324
Victoria	...	...	...	...	...	...	206
Queensland	...	...	...	...	...	...	164
South Australia	...	...	...	...	...	...	175
West Australia	...	...	...	...	...	...	147
Tasmania	51
Total	1,067
New Zealand has	629

W. S. SHORT,
Assistant Under-Secretary.

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