



Western Australia's New Electoral Boundaries October 2007



Office of the
ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION COMMISSIONERS



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BE INVOLVED

Setting the Electoral Boundaries for WA

SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

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SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

INTRODUCTION

The *Electoral Act* requires that Western Australia's electoral boundaries be reviewed at regular intervals so that the number of electors within electorates remains within the permitted enrolment variations. This review is undertaken by three Electoral Distribution Commissioners appointed under the *Electoral Act*: the Hon. Wayne Martin, Crt. WA, Chief Justice of Western Australia (Chairman); Mr Warwick Gately AM, Electoral Commissioner; and Mr Michael Tindall, Government Statistician.

The Commissioners' primary function is to determine the boundaries of each electorate and decide which districts will be placed in each region. The process to determine the boundaries commenced on 4 April 2007 with a public notice inviting written suggestions about how the boundaries should be drawn. The submissions received were coherently argued and provided useful information to the Commissioners about how to proceed.

The Commissioners published the proposed electoral boundaries on 29 June 2007 and then followed an opportunity for the public to lodge objections. All responses were assessed individually on their merits against compliance with the legislation, the effect on the boundaries of other districts and compatibility with other suggestions. While this allowed the Commissioners to adopt many suggestions to adjust the proposed electoral boundaries, not all could be accommodated.

The electoral boundaries published in this document give effect to the requirements of the *Electoral Act* and will apply for the next State general election due to be held in 2009.



The Electoral Distribution Commissioners (L to R):
Mr Warwick Gately AM, The Hon. Wayne Martin, Crt. WA
and Mr Michael Tindall.



SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

THE ELECTORAL ACT – DISTRICTS, REGIONS AND REPRESENTATION

Part IIA of the *Electoral Act* establishes the process by which the State's electoral boundaries are set. The *Electoral Act* was amended in May 2005 to introduce 'one vote, one value' principles to the distribution process. This has affected the composition of the Parliament of Western Australia. From the next State general election there will be an increase of two members of Parliament in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly will consist of 59 members, each representing one electoral district. The Legislative Council will consist of 36 members: six members in each of six regions.

Other changes to the distribution process following the introduction of 'one vote, one value' principles include:

- changing the basis for the division of the State into regions and districts. In this distribution, the separate quota figures for the metropolitan and country areas have been replaced with the 'average district enrolment'. The average district enrolment is determined by dividing the total number of electors in the State by the total number of districts;
- achieving an enrolment figure between $\pm 10\%$ of the average district enrolment for all districts (previously $\pm 15\%$), except those where the large district allowance applies;
- introducing a large district allowance for those districts with an area of 100,000 square kilometres or more. In these districts, the enrolment figures are to be between -20% and $+10\%$ of the average district enrolment;
- requiring the consideration of land use patterns when dividing the State into regions and districts; and
- including coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State in the South West Region.

The *Electoral Act* requires the Commissioners to call for public submissions about potential new boundaries. Once these have been considered, the Commissioners' proposals are published and objections to proposed electoral boundaries may then be lodged.

After considering objections, the Commissioners publish their decision regarding the division of the State into electoral regions and districts. The Commissioners' decision (represented by this publication) is final and there is no further review or right of appeal.

The electoral boundaries established by this process will apply for the next State general election. Section 16E of the *Electoral Act* requires the boundaries to be reviewed as soon as practicable two years after polling day following the next State general election.

Sections 16C and 16D of the *Electoral Act* provide that the State shall be divided into 59 electoral districts in six electoral regions. Section 16G provides the basis for the division of the State into districts as follows:

- (1) For the purposes of this section the Commissioners shall divide the number of electors by the number of districts, and the result of that division is referred to as the 'average district enrolment'.
- (2) The Commissioners shall divide the State into districts in accordance with the principle that, for each district, the number of electors that the district would have had at the relevant day must not be more than 10% greater, or more than 10% less, than the average district enrolment at the relevant day.
- (3) If a district has an area of 100,000 square kilometres or more, subsection (2) does not apply but the sum of –
 - (a) the number of electors that the district would have had at the relevant day; and
 - (b) the large district allowance,must not be more than 10% greater, or more than 20% less, than the average district enrolment at the relevant day.
- (4) In subsection (3) –
'large district allowance' means 1.5% of the number of square kilometres in the area of the district.

SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Section 16H governs the division of the State into electoral regions. It provides:

- (1) The Commissioners shall divide the State into regions so that those regions generally reflect the recognised communities of interest and land use patterns in the State and so that –
 - (a) 3 contiguous regions, to be known, respectively, as the North Metropolitan Region (being a region that is generally to the north of the Swan River), the South Metropolitan Region (being a region that is generally to the south of the Swan River) and the East Metropolitan Region (being a region that includes the hills and foothills of the Darling Escarpment) –
 - (i) each consist of approximately the same number of complete and contiguous districts; and
 - (ii) together form an area that is generally coextensive with the metropolitan area of Perth;
 - (b) one region, to be known as the Mining and Pastoral Region, consists of complete and contiguous districts that together form an area that is remote from Perth and in which the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes;
 - (c) one region, to be known as the Agricultural Region, consists of complete and contiguous districts that together form an area that is generally south, or south and west, of and adjacent to the Mining and Pastoral Region and in which the land use is primarily for agricultural purposes; and
 - (d) one region, to be known as the South West Region (being a region that includes coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State), consists of complete and contiguous districts.

- (2) In subsection (1) –

‘metropolitan area of Perth’ means the part of the State that comprises –

- (a) the region that was, as at the relevant day, described in the Third Schedule to the *Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959*; and
- (b) Rottnest Island.

In 2006, the *Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959* was repealed and replaced by the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. It is the third schedule of the latter Act that contains the current definition of the ‘metropolitan area of Perth’.

Section 16I specifies the factors that the Commissioners must take into account when dividing the State into regions and districts. These factors are: community of interest; land use patterns; means of communication and distance from the capital; physical features; existing boundaries of regions and districts; existing local government boundaries; and the trend of demographic changes.



SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

THE 2007 DIVISION OF THE STATE INTO ELECTORAL REGIONS AND DISTRICTS

DATE FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES

The *Electoral Act* sets out a timetable for the process of inviting public submissions, reviewing those submissions and publishing the proposed and final electoral boundaries. In addition, the *Electoral Act* specifies the date to be used as the base for determining the number of electors from which the average district enrolment is calculated.

For the current division, the relevant date is 26 February 2007. Electoral roll figures at that date form the basis of the calculation of the average district enrolment for this distribution.

Calculation of Average District Enrolment

Total State Enrolment	1,259,665
Metropolitan Area Enrolment	935,539
Country Area Enrolment	324,126
Average District Enrolment	$1,259,665 \div 59 = 21,350$

	Permitted Variation	
Metropolitan and Country Areas	-10%	+10%
	19,215	23,485
Large District Areas (i.e. $\geq 100,000$ km ²)	-20%	+10%
	17,080	23,485

PREPARATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Similar to the 2003 distribution, a geographical information system (GIS) was used to assist the Commissioners with their decision-making. The GIS integrates the Western Australian Electoral Commission's enrolment figures with census boundaries from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and data from Landgate and other State agencies.

Information about the process for division of electoral boundaries has been made available to the public through the Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners website: www.boundarieswa.com (the 'boundaries website'). Notices were also placed in regional, community and statewide newspapers and in the *Government Gazette*.

Copies of all media statements, submissions and publications relating to the determination of electoral boundaries were made available on the boundaries website.

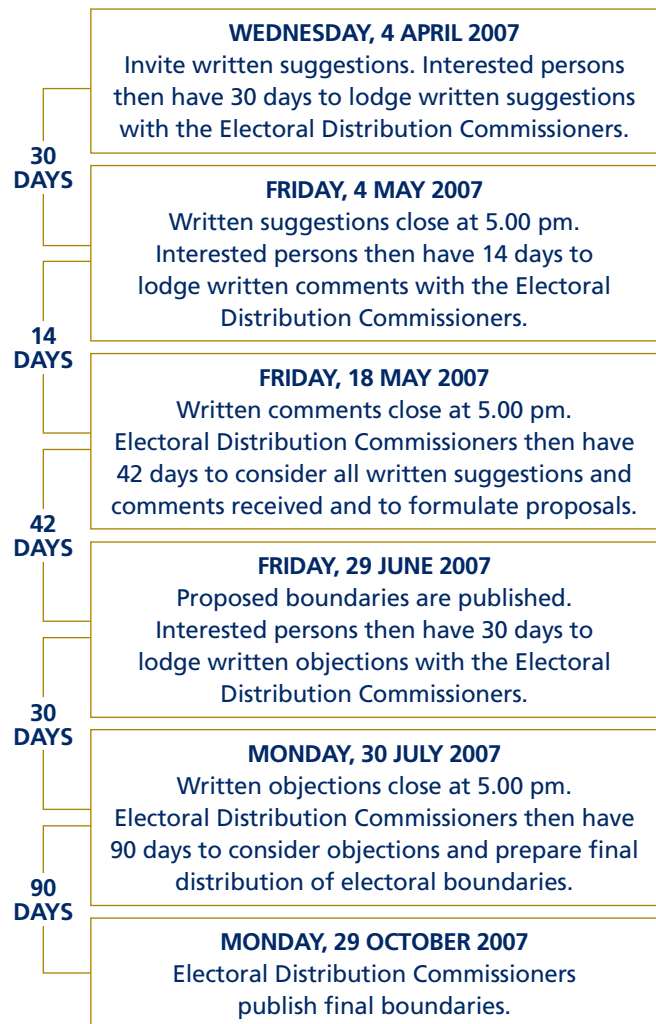
SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

TIMETABLE

The Commissioners determined that the 2007 division of the State into electoral regions and districts would commence on 4 April 2007. On this date, a notice appeared in the *Government Gazette* and *The West Australian* inviting written suggestions and written comments on those suggestions. This activated the provisions of section 16F(2) of the *Electoral Act*, which determines the timing of the various phases of the division.

Section 16F of the *Electoral Act* requires the Commissioners to complete the division of the State within a fixed timeframe. Western Australia is the only Australian State that fixes a legislative date for determination of boundaries referenced to the commencement date of the distribution process. While it is acknowledged that the distribution process should be concluded in a timely manner, the statutory schemes elsewhere allow for some discretionary extension of legislative timeframes. This enables appropriate consultation with those who have expressed an interest in the distribution process and thorough consideration of the ramifications of proposed boundary changes.

During the current distribution process, the Commissioners were acutely conscious of the limited time for consultation and decision-making. The Commissioners reiterate the comments expressed in the 2003 electoral boundaries publication that the statutory timeframe for the distribution process would benefit from further review. It would be preferable for the legislation to direct that the distribution process be undertaken with all speed, but allow the Commissioners some discretion to extend the timeframe where required to accommodate expanded public consultation and consideration of submissions.



SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AND CONSIDERED

The Commissioners received 33 suggestions from individuals, organisations and political parties by the closing date (a further eight submissions were received after the closing date). These were made available for public inspection at the Office of the Electoral Distribution Commissioners, the Western Australian Electoral Commission and on the boundaries website. A further 17 written comments were received about these suggestions by the closing date (two submissions were received after the closing date).

In accordance with the requirements of the *Electoral Act*, the Commissioners published the proposed boundaries in both the *Government Gazette* and *The West Australian*. In addition, the proposed boundaries were also published on the boundaries website. The Commissioners received 59 written objections by the closing date (a further 11 submissions were received after the closing date). The submissions received by the closing date included 12 identical letters relating to the proposal to include more electors from the locality of Kelmscott in the Armadale district. A petition, signed by 109 people, against the division of the suburb of Woodlands was among the submissions received after the closing date. All late submissions were considered.

While the *Electoral Act* requires only those written suggestions received at the first stage of the division process to be made publicly available, the Commissioners determined that this should extend to written public input at all stages of the process. The accessibility of written suggestions, comments and objections is considered an important factor in improving the transparency of the distribution process. This procedure was generally supported. A minor amendment to the *Electoral Act* would be required to entrench this action.

The Commissioners carefully considered the objections to the proposed boundaries and the potential impact of suggested boundary adjustments on nearby districts. Alternative options were accommodated in many areas and affected local government authorities and members of Parliament were contacted for comment, where appropriate. Discussions were also held with the parliamentary political parties that had submitted written objections.

Some submissions suggested there should be different strategies for naming electoral districts to avoid confusion with federal electorate names, or names of geographical features or places. Names representing the geography of districts and regions have historically been used for electorates in Western Australia and any proposal to depart from this convention would need to be carefully considered. The current strict statutory deadlines do not allow sufficient time for consideration of such matters once the distribution process has commenced.

The electoral boundaries determined in this publication will apply at the next State general election, which is due to be held in 2009. Any by-elections that are required before the 2009 State general election will be held on the basis of districts established by the 2003 division of the State.

SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSALS

The *Electoral Act* prescribes that the State be divided into six regions:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS

- East Metropolitan Region
- North Metropolitan Region
- South Metropolitan Region

COUNTRY REGIONS

- Agricultural Region
- Mining and Pastoral Region
- South West Region

Amendments to the *Electoral Act* introducing 'one vote, one value' principles have had a profound effect in this division of the State. The average district enrolment (as calculated on 26 February 2007) requires that metropolitan districts be reduced by about 6,000 electors and country districts be increased by about 7,000 electors. The result has been the removal of six districts from country regions and the creation of eight new districts in the metropolitan area. The introduction of the large district allowance combined with current elector numbers has resulted in the retention of five districts in the Mining and Pastoral Region. With regard to the other regions, the Commissioners have determined that there will be four districts in the Agricultural Region, eight in the South West Region and 14 districts in each of the metropolitan regions.

A number of submissions reinforced the desirability of maintaining existing district boundaries where possible and adopting local government and locality boundaries as indicators of local communities of interest. The Commissioners acknowledge the significance of these factors for elector awareness.

The Commissioners determined the boundaries of the country regions having regard to the land use descriptors and other factors specified in sections 16H and 16I of the *Electoral Act*. In contrast to the provisions relating to the metropolitan regions, neither of these sections requires the Commissioners to balance the number of electors or districts in country regions. The legislation, therefore, has the effect that members of the Legislative Council representing country regions will represent different numbers of electors.

Following this division of the State, subsequent divisions will generally occur every four years. Previously, where this interval was eight years, the Commissioners sought to achieve equality of elector numbers in each district at the mid-point, taking into account projected demographic changes in subsequent years. With distributions occurring after each Legislative Assembly general election, projected demographic changes are not required to be considered under the *Electoral Act*. The Commissioners have taken into account all factors specified in section 16I, including the trend of demographic changes, to produce districts with enrolments that fall within the permitted range.



SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

METROPOLITAN REGIONS

In assessing objections to the boundaries proposed for districts in the metropolitan area, the Commissioners focused on changes that would provide better representation and more recognisable boundaries for electors. The boundaries of 19 proposed metropolitan districts were amended in response to the objections and having regard to the requirements of the legislation. There were changes to nine districts in the East Metropolitan Region, three districts in the North Metropolitan Region and seven districts in the South Metropolitan Region. The change to the boundary between the Perth and Mount Lawley districts consequently adjusted the boundary between the East Metropolitan Region and the North Metropolitan Region.

During the 2003 Electoral Distribution, the Commissioners noted that the elector population in the East Metropolitan Region had grown more rapidly than in the North Metropolitan Region and the South Metropolitan Region. This trend has persisted and is expected to continue, particularly in areas such as Ellenbrook, Canning Vale and Forrestdale. In order to reflect this growth and accommodate the changes in the average district enrolment, an adjustment to the boundaries between each of the metropolitan regions was made during the proposal stage of the current distribution process.

While changes to the legislation mean that boundaries are now permitted to be 'generally coextensive' with the Perth metropolitan area (rather than adhering strictly to that boundary), the Commissioners have not considered it necessary to determine any district boundaries that span the Perth metropolitan area boundary. As shown in the metropolitan area summary, the Commissioners have determined that there shall be 42 districts in the metropolitan area, each with an effective average enrolment of 22,274. Most districts in the metropolitan area have enrolments above the average district enrolment of 21,350. This is in large part due to the need to increase elector numbers in districts which are not subject to the large district allowance, as a result of lower elector numbers in those large area electorates. Nonetheless, the number of electors enrolled in each district falls within the limits prescribed by the *Electoral Act*.

Further adjustments have been made to the existing region boundaries to take account of the additional eight districts included in the metropolitan area as a result of the 2005 legislative changes. These adjustments have also factored in the legislative requirement that each region in the metropolitan area has an approximately equal number of districts.

Metropolitan Area Summary

Metropolitan Regions	Legislative Council Members	Legislative Assembly Districts	No. of Electors 2007
East Metropolitan	6	14	311,378
North Metropolitan	6	14	312,578
South Metropolitan	6	14	311,583
Total	18	42	935,539



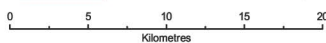
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ELECTORAL REGIONS FOR METROPOLITAN AREA

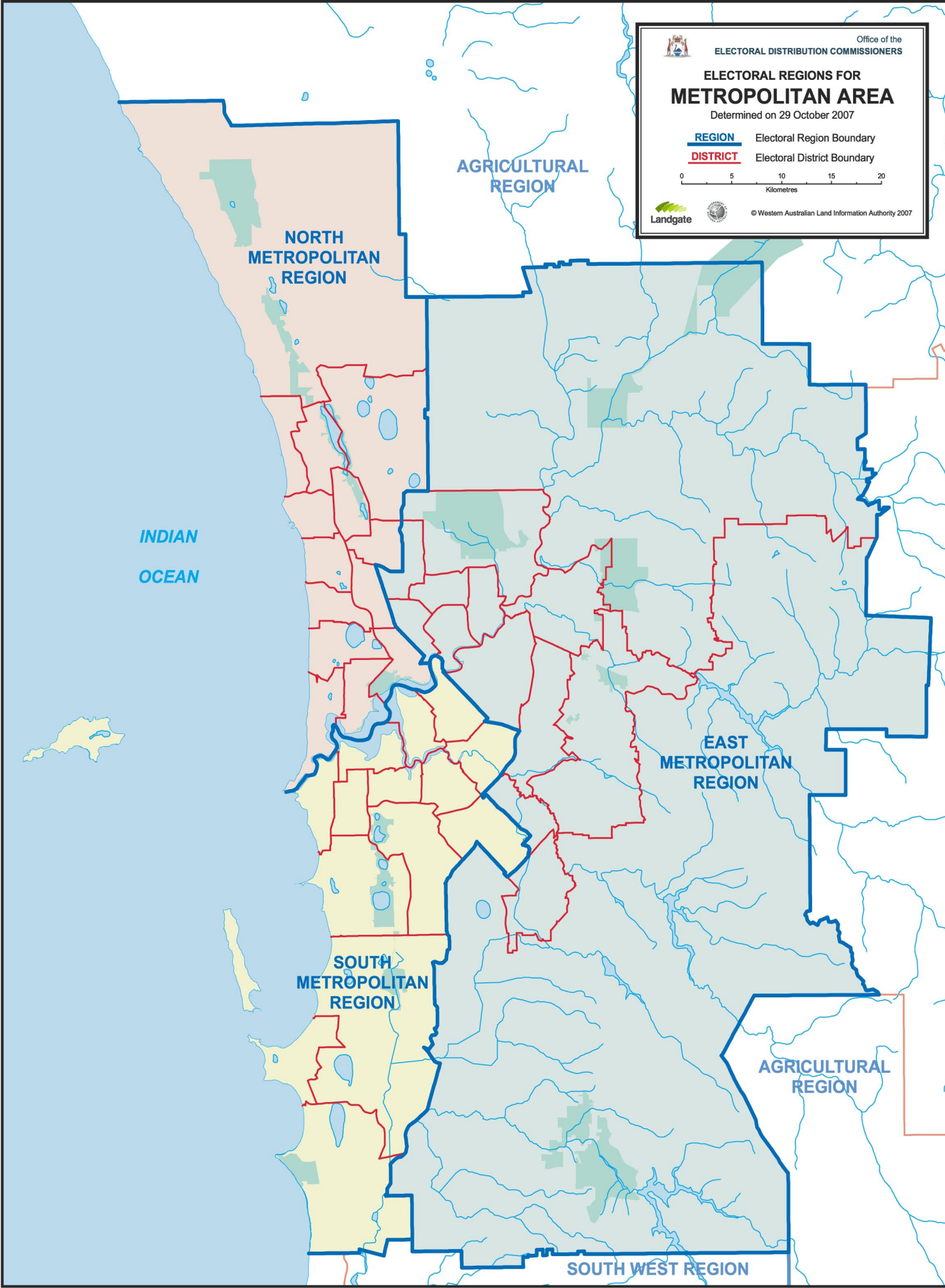
Determined on 29 October 2007

REGION Electoral Region Boundary

DISTRICT Electoral District Boundary



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SETTING THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

COUNTRY REGIONS

The *Electoral Act* specifies that the Mining and Pastoral Region must encompass an area that is remote from Perth and where the land use is primarily for mining and pastoral purposes. The Agricultural Region is required to comprise an area in which the land use is primarily for agricultural purposes, while the South West Region is now required to include coastal and forest areas in the south-west of the State.

The legislation requires the Commissioners to determine where the region boundaries should be established and the number of districts within each region. In determining the region boundaries, the Commissioners have taken into account the various factors specified in section 161 of the *Electoral Act*. The application of these legislative criteria to the number of electors enrolled at the relevant date has resulted in the country regions containing the number of districts shown in the country area summary. Unlike the metropolitan regions, there is no legislative requirement that country regions have an approximately equal number of districts.

Having regard to the land use descriptors which must be applied to the determination of country region boundaries, the numbers of electors in the areas meeting the legislative descriptions of the Agricultural and South West Regions effectively determined the numbers of districts in each of those regions. The Commissioners also found that the respective region boundaries required some degree of adjustment from the 2003 boundaries to better balance communities of interest.

Country Area Summary

Country Regions	Legislative Council Members	Legislative Assembly Districts	No. of Electors (inc. LDA)	Average No. of Electors per MLC (not inc. LDA)
Agricultural	6	4	82,479	13,747
Mining and Pastoral	6	5	107,985	12,296
South West	6	8	167,871	27,979
Total	18	17	358,335	19,907

LDA = Large District Allowance



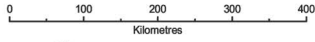
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ELECTORAL REGIONS FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Determined on 29 October 2007

REGION Electoral Region Boundary

DISTRICT Electoral District Boundary



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TIMOR SEA

KUNUNURRA

DERBY

BROOME

INDIAN OCEAN

PORT HEDLAND

KARRATHA

CARNARVON

MINING AND PASTORAL
REGION

WARBURTON

NORTHERN TERRITORY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

INDIAN
OCEAN

METROPOLITAN
REGIONS
See Metropolitan Area
Electoral Regions Map

PERTH

MERREDIN

AGRICULTURAL
REGION

BUNBURY

WAGIN

BOULDER

KALGOORLIE

GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

SOUTHERN OCEAN

MARGARET RIVER

SOUTH WEST REGION

ESPERANCE

ALBANY