



## ***Perth's Continuing Population Growth***

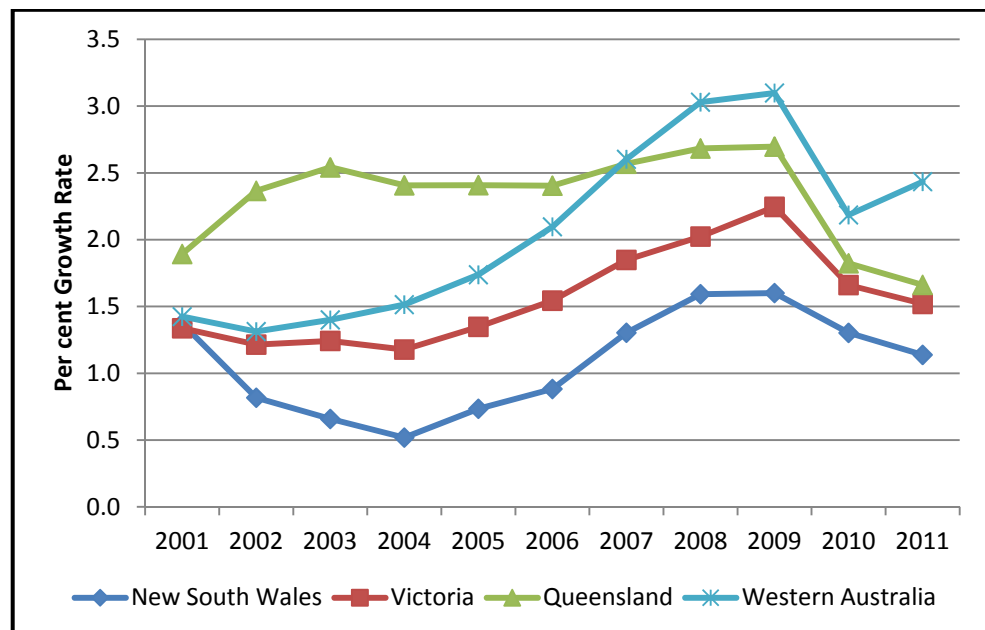
Matthew Tonts and Veronica Huddleston

### **Introduction**

Recently released estimated resident population data indicates that both Western Australia and the Perth metropolitan area continued to record strong growth in the 12 months to the end of June 2011 (ABS 2012). As noted in FACTBase 24 released in November 2011, Perth's comparatively strong economic performance provides much of the impetus for this population increase. This Bulletin provides an update of population trends in Western Australia and Metropolitan Perth as well as the implications of these trends to Perth's future development trajectory.

### **Population Change in Western Australia**

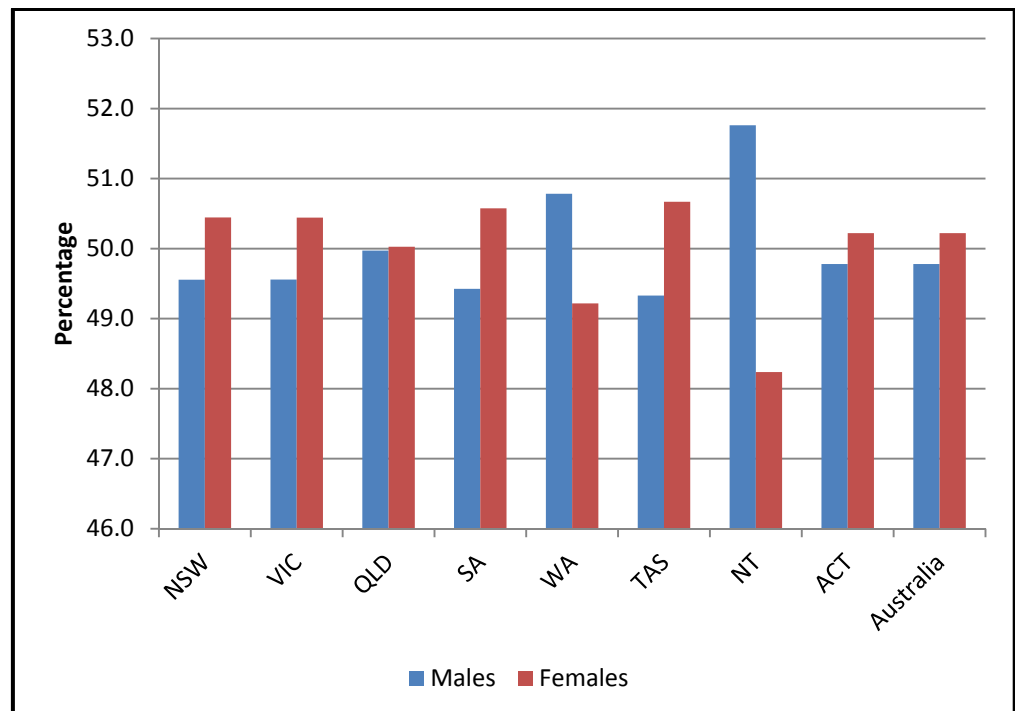
Western Australia had reached a population of 2.35 million by June 2011. This represented a population growth rate of 2.4 per cent over the 12 months to June, which was higher than the 1.4 per cent Australian national growth rate. This growth rate, while lower than the growth rates experienced in 2008 and 2009, was still the fastest of the Australian states and territories (see Figure 1). During the same period, the ACT registered a 1.9 per cent increase in population while Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales recorded increases of 1.7 per cent, 1.5 per cent and 1.1 per cent, respectively.



**Figure 1: Population Growth Rates, 2001 - 2011, Selected States**



Together with the Northern Territory, Western Australia’s population exhibited a slightly higher proportion of males compared to females (50.8% and 49.2%, respectively). As shown in Figure 2, Queensland was the only state to exhibit a relatively even proportion of males and females in its population. There were relatively fewer males than females in the rest of the Australian states and the whole of Australia (which recorded 51% females and 49.8% males in its overall population).

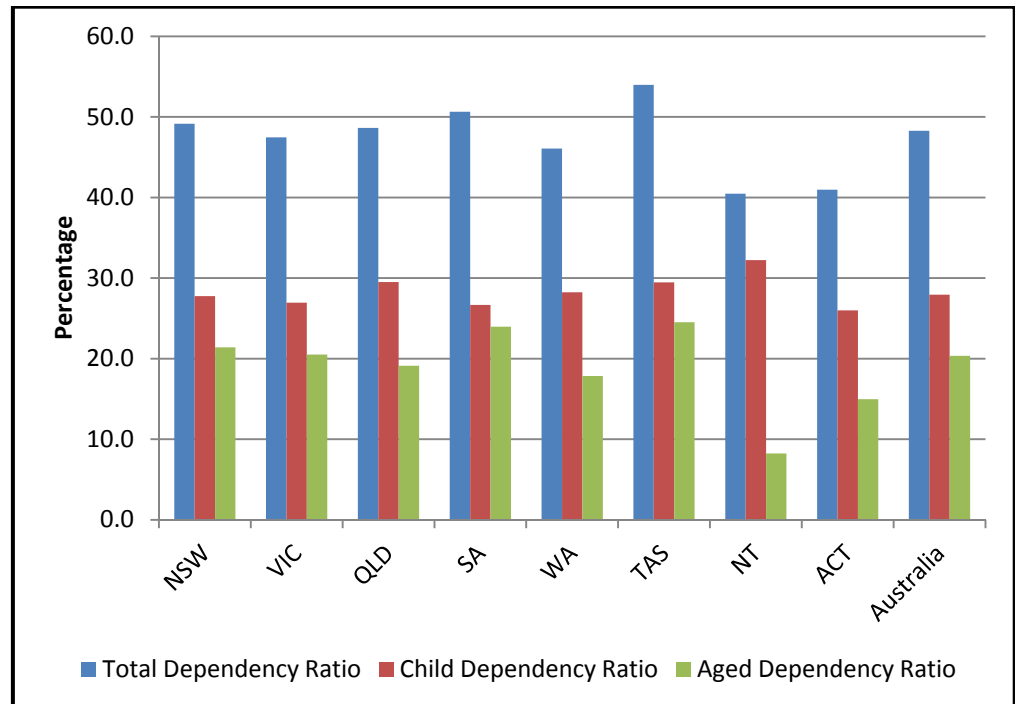


**Figure 2: Gender Breakdown, 2011, Australian States and Territories**

Compared to the whole of Australia, there were reasonably small cohorts of residents less than 15 years and those over 65 years in Western Australia. As a result, the State’s dependency ratio of 46.1 is lower than the Australian dependency ratio of 48.3 (see Figure 3).<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Northern Territory and ACT, Western Australian child and aged dependency ratios were lower than most of the Australian states.

<sup>1</sup> Defined as the number of children (less than 14 years) and elderly people (over 65 years) for every 100 people of working age (15 to 64 years), the dependency ratio is used to measure the dependence that non-working people have on working people.

FACTBase



**Figure 3: Dependency Ratios, 2011, Australian States and Territories**

### Population Change within Metropolitan Perth and Peel

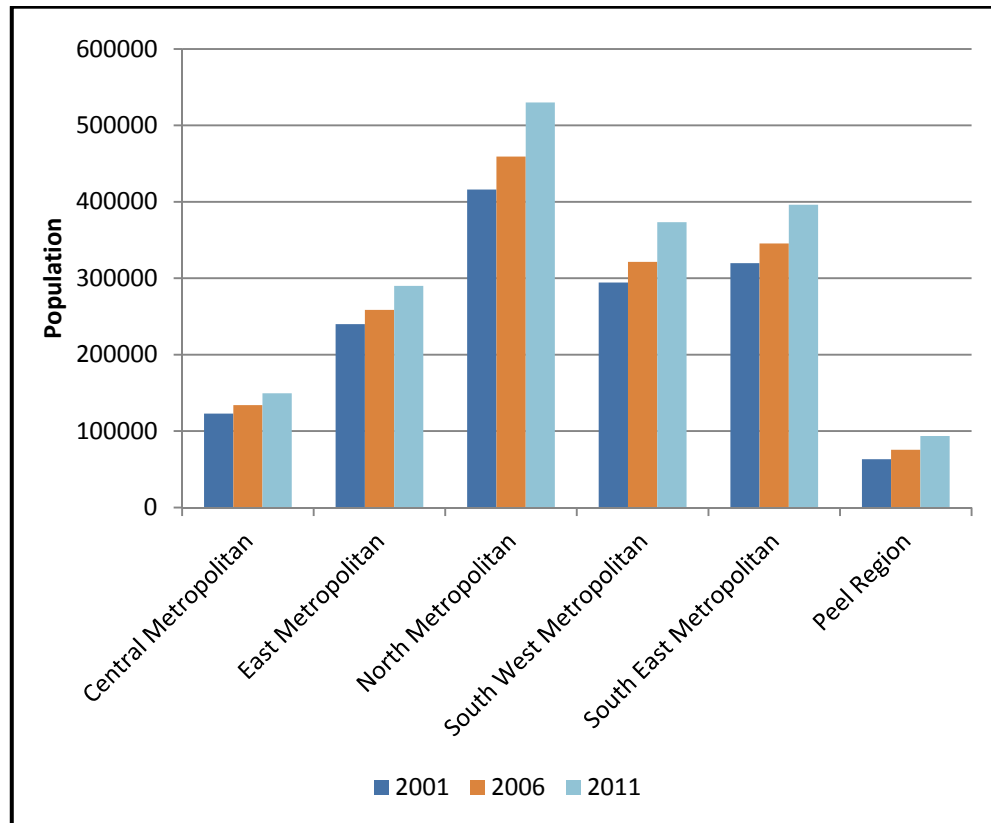
The primacy of the metropolitan area continues to be a characteristic of the population dynamics of Western Australia, with 74 per cent of the population residing in Metropolitan Perth. The inclusion of the three Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) that make up the Peel Region<sup>2</sup> increases this ratio to 78 per cent.

Since 2001, all of the major statistical subdivisions (SSDs) have experienced increasing population levels (Figure 4). Average annual growth rates from 2001 to 2011 were highest in the Peel Region, North Metropolitan and South West Metropolitan SSDs. The Eastern Metropolitan SSD recorded the lowest average annual growth rate of 1.9 per cent over this ten-year period.

<sup>2</sup> The three SLAs of Mandurah, Murray and Waroona comprise the Peel Region as defined in *Directions 2031 and Beyond* (WAPC, 2010).



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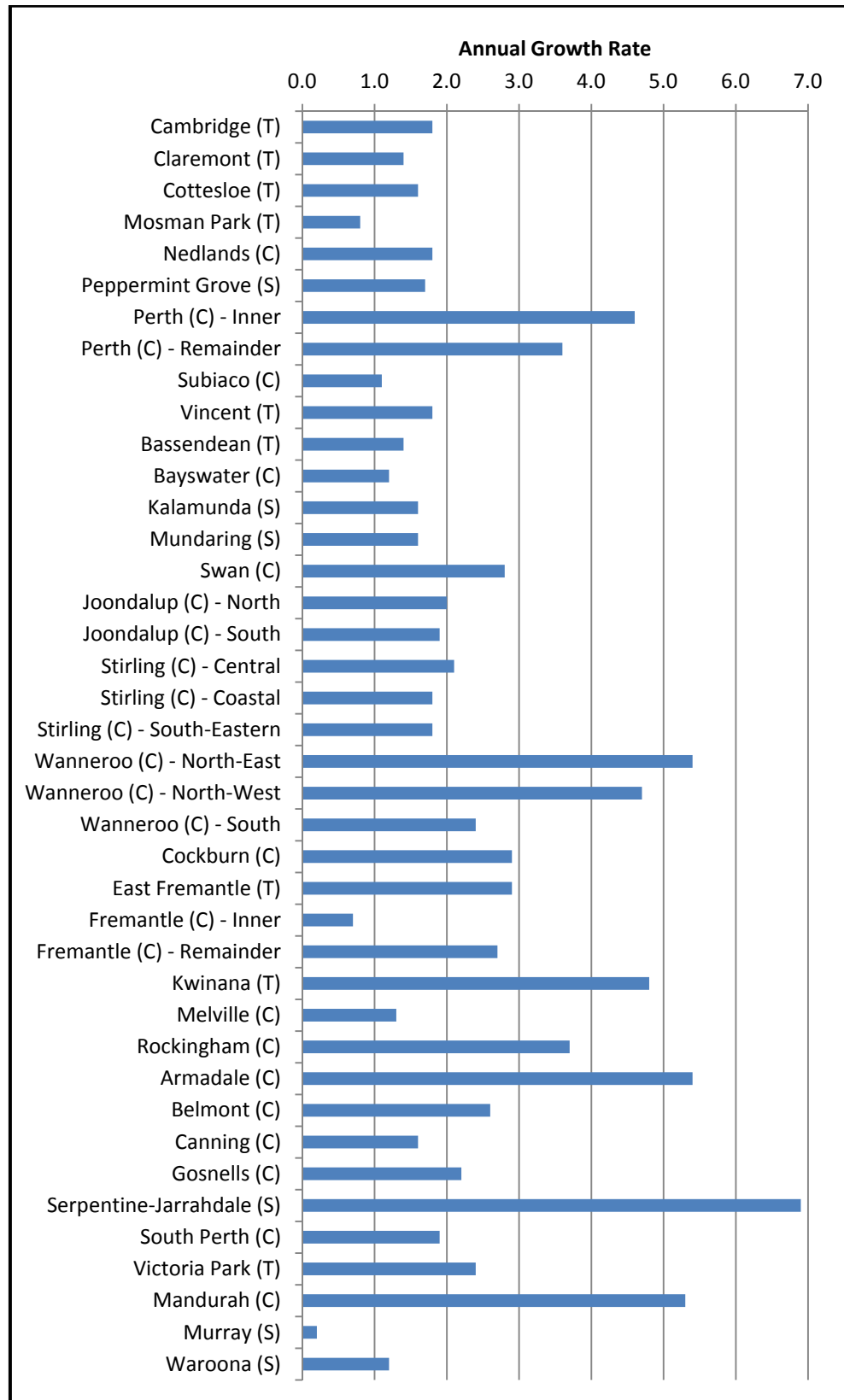
**Figure 4: Population Levels, 2001, 2006 and 2011, Metropolitan Perth Statistical Subdivisions**

Figure 5 shows the annual growth for the 40 individual Statistical Local Areas that comprise Metro Perth and Peel. The fastest-growing SLAs in 2010-11 were: Serpentine-Jarrahdale (6.9%), Armadale (5.4%), Wanneroo North-East (5.4%), Mandurah (5.3%), Kwinana (4.8%), Wanneroo North-West (4.7%) and Perth-Inner (4.6%).

A comparison of the decadal population growth rates (2000-01 and 2010-11) for SLAs within the Metropolitan Perth and Peel Region is shown in Figures 6A and 6B. The SLAs of Inner Perth - Inner, Wanneroo - North-East and Wanneroo - North-West have consistently shown high population growth rates for these two time periods, while the SLAs of Kwinana, Armadale, Serpentine - Jarrahdale and Mandurah registered growth rates of more than 4 per cent only in 2010-11.



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**Figure 5: Population Growth Rates, 2010-11, Metropolitan Perth and Peel Region Statistical Local Areas**

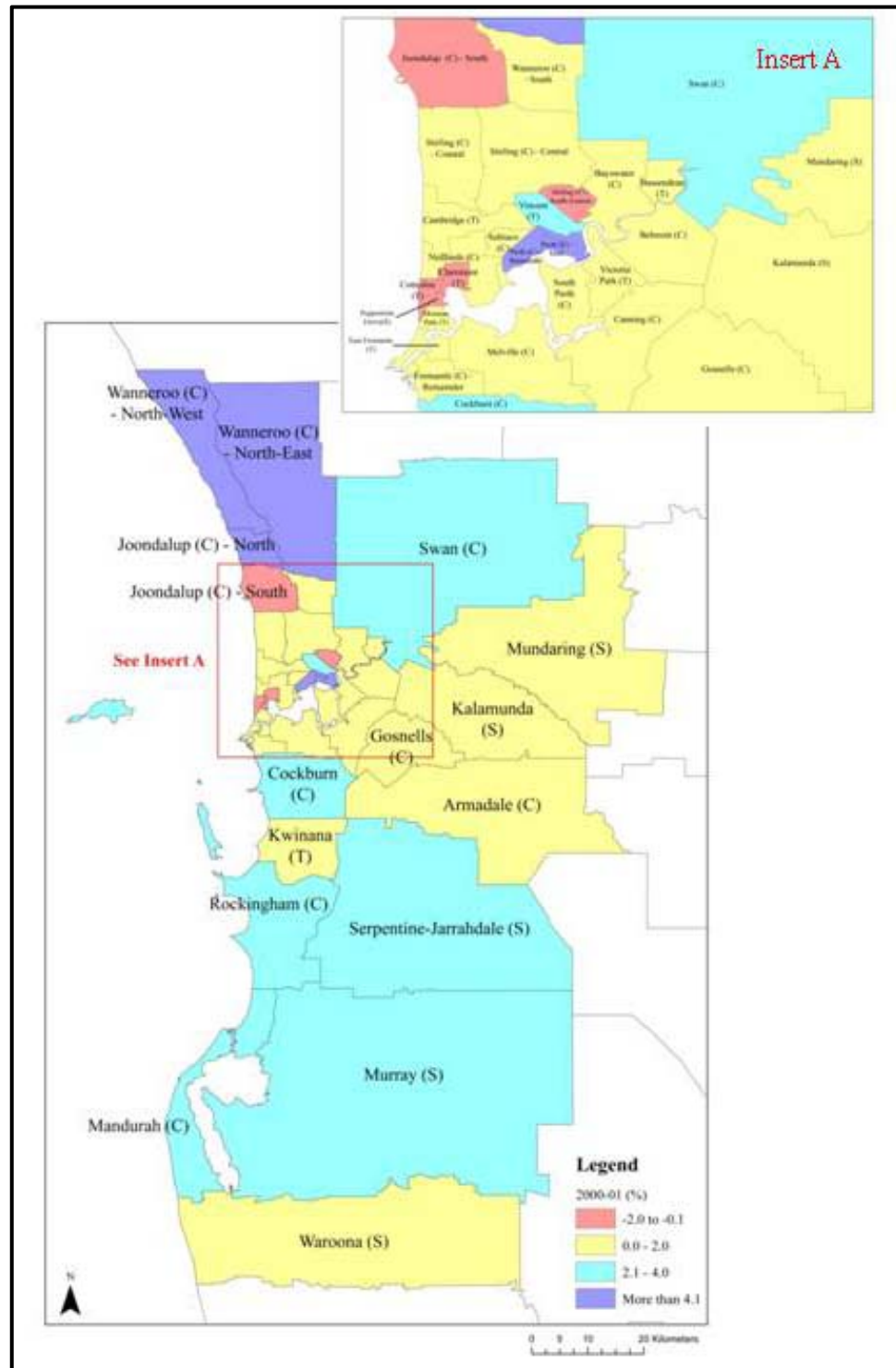
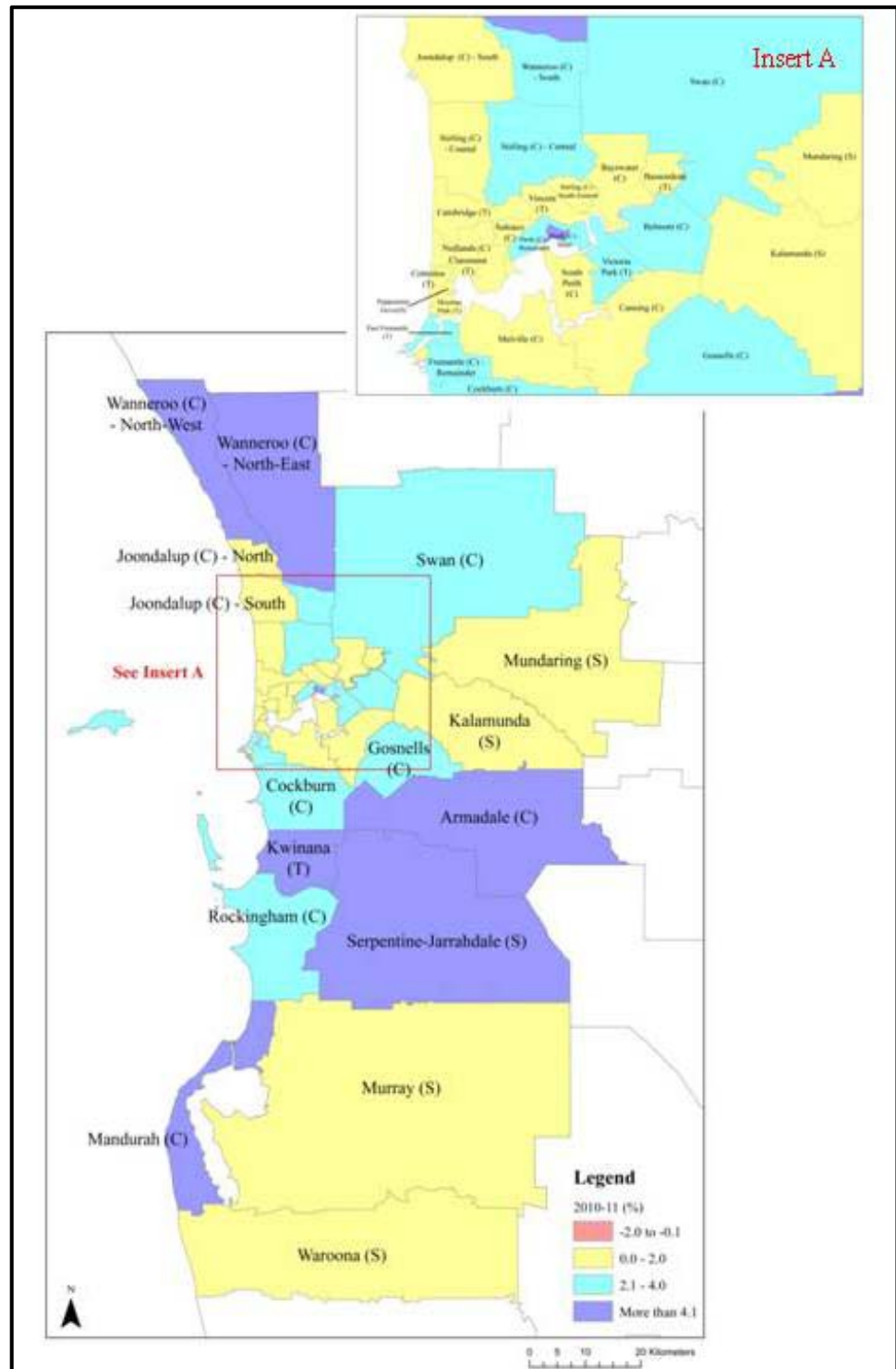


Figure 6A: Map showing Population Growth Rates, 2000-01



**Figure 6B: Map showing Population Growth Rates, 2010-11**





As at June 2011, the population density of Western Australia was the second lowest of all Australian states and territories (0.9 people per square kilometre compared to 2.9 people per square kilometre). Figures 7A and 7B show the change in the residential densities of all the SLAs in the Perth metropolitan area in the decade since 2000. Within the Metropolitan Perth and Peel Region, eight SLAs recorded population densities of more than 2,000 people per square kilometre in 2011, compared to only three in 2001. These were the SLAs of Vincent, Subiaco, East Fremantle, South Perth, Mosman Park, Cottesloe, Stirling – South-Eastern, and Claremont. SLAs with low densities of less than 500 people per square kilometre decreased from 14 in 2001 to 12 in 2011, indicating a relatively increasing trend in residential densities within Metropolitan Perth and the Peel Region.

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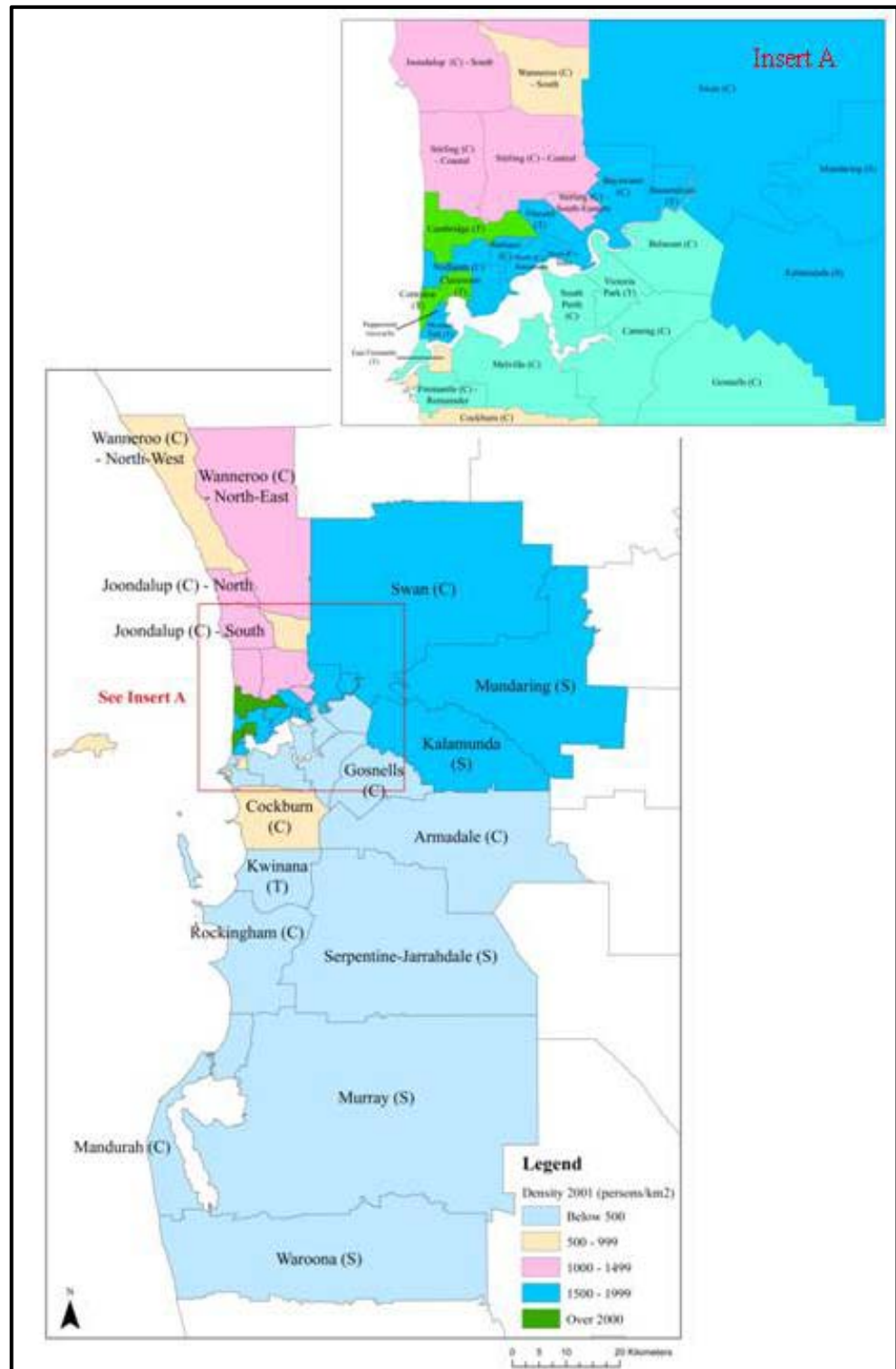
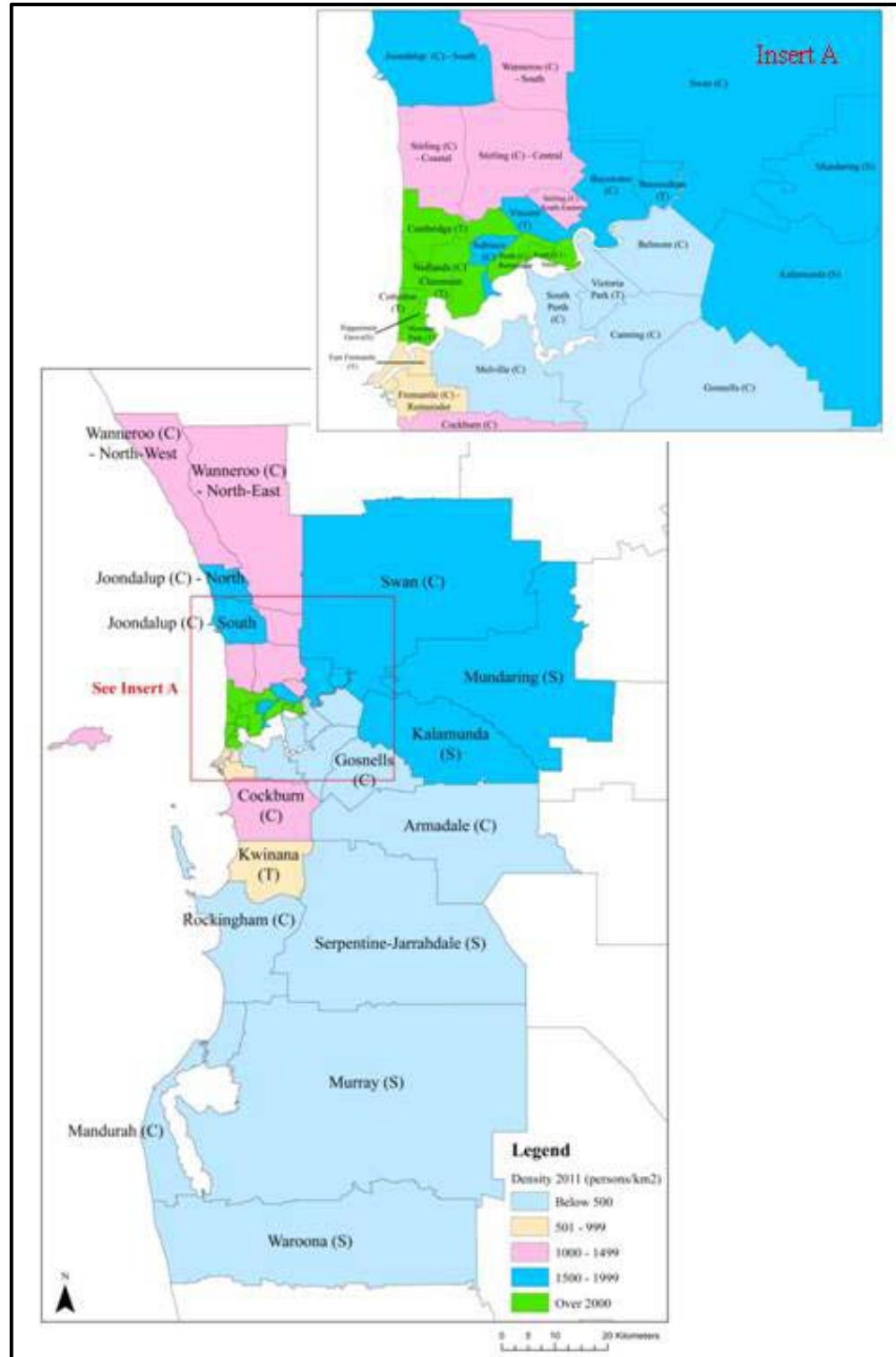


Figure 7A: Map showing Population Densities, 2001



**Figure 7B: Map showing Population Densities, 2011**



## Implications

With a buoyant economic outlook expected to continue, the population levels in both Western Australia and Metropolitan Perth are likely to continue their relatively high rates of growth. Based on population projections prepared by the Western Australian Planning Commission (2012), Metropolitan Perth will reach a population of between 2.18 million and 2.38 million in 2026. This represents, on a high case scenario, an increase of 640,000 residents in the region in just 15 years. Of course, what is important is not simply the number of people involved, but their spatial distribution, demographic and socio-economic characteristics and educational/skills attributes. This will have important implications for the nature of economic development, spatial planning and the provision of housing, social services and infrastructure. The high population growth rates exhibited by SLAs mostly located to the north and to the south of the central business district perimeter also has implications in terms of the extent and manner to which workers commute to jobs as well as the availability of housing within reasonable distance of employment opportunities. Perhaps more broadly, this raises questions about urban liveability. It is likely that a larger population will lead to a more vibrant and diverse city, provided that the built environment is organised in such a way that it can maximise the economic, social and cultural 'potential' of this growing population.

## References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), *Regional Population Growth, Australia*, ABS Cat. 3218.0, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Western Australian Planning Commission (2012) *Western Australia Tomorrow – Forecast Summary for Planning Regions*, Government of Western Australia, Perth.

Western Australian Planning Commission (2010) *Directions 2031 and beyond: Metropolitan planning beyond the horizon*, Government of Western Australia, Perth.

## About FACTBase

The FACTBase project is a joint venture between The University of Western Australia and the Committee for Perth, an influential member-based organisation driven by a diverse assembly of Perth's leaders. Members collaborate with business, government and community groups to actively improve the liveability of our city, resulting in a real and enduring contribution to Perth and the metropolitan area.



One of the only broad-reaching projects of its kind to be undertaken in the southern hemisphere, FACTBase condenses the plethora of databases and studies on the subject of liveability and analyse what's happening in Perth through words, maps and graphs.

### About the Authors

Matthew Tonts is a Professor of Human Geography and Veronica Huddleston is an Associate Professor of Human Geography at The University of Western Australia.

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