

# Explanatory notes

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## Statistical Area Level 1 population estimates

### Introduction

This product contains estimated resident population (ERP) for areas based on Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) and Mesh Blocks (MBs), according to the 2016 edition of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). These estimates are not standard output, but rather are customised data available for purchase as an information consultancy. Thus, these estimates are not published on the ABS website.

These estimates correspond with 30 June 2001–2019 ERP by SA2 as released in **Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2018-19** (cat. no. 3218.0) and **Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2019** (cat. no. 3235.0). These estimates are final for 2001 to 2016, revised for 2017 to 2018, and preliminary for 2019.

### Estimated resident population (ERP)

ERP is the official estimate of the Australian population, which links people to a place of usual residence within Australia. More information about ERP and other population concepts is available in **Information Paper: Population Concepts, Australia** (cat. no. 3107.0.55.006).

Population estimates for Australia and its states and territories are prepared quarterly. They are prepared based on Census counts, and updated with births, deaths and migration. Estimates and further information about the estimation method are available in **Australian Demographic Statistics** (cat. no. 3101.0).

Population estimates for sub-state areas (SA2-based, and Local Government Areas) are prepared annually, as at 30 June. Estimates for years prior to 2016 were prepared based on a modelling process incorporating Census and administrative data. Estimates for 2016 and onward are based on 2016 Census counts, and updated by for births, deaths and migration. Data and further information about these methods are available in **Regional Population Growth, Australia** (cat. no. 3218.0) and **Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2019** (cat. no. 3235.0).

Population estimates for SA1s are prepared annually, as at 30 June. Estimates for Census years are apportioned from SA2s, using Census usual residence counts. Estimates for non-Census years are apportioned from SA2s using changes in indicator data at the SA1 level since the Census. Indicator data includes aggregated Medicare enrolments and counts of people on the electoral roll. Some historical estimates are apportioned from other, older geographies such as Census Collection Districts. The SA1 estimates can then be aggregated to geographies such as Remoteness Areas and Commonwealth and State Electoral Divisions.

To prepare population estimates for MB-based areas such as Postal Areas and State Suburbs, SA1 estimates are broken down into MBs using Census usual residence counts.

## Data usage and quality

All population estimates should be regarded as derived numbers rather than actual counts of the population. Estimates of very small populations must be used with caution, with an understanding that they are less precise than for larger populations. Estimates of very small populations are made available to provide users the flexibility to aggregate to broader areas and age groups. Data aggregated to these broader areas and age groups are more reliable than the finer level data. Historical estimates converted from older geographies can be less reliable than those prepared based on current SA1 and MB boundaries.

These estimates have been confidentialised and very small cells randomised. Note that (unlike confidentialised data tables from the Census) small population estimates here include artificial 1s and 2s. These are the result of a confidentialisation process and forced additivity being applied to original values, with the original values derived from multiple data sources. Therefore, while unrounded data are provided, accuracy to the last digit should not be assumed, especially for small cells.

All sources for calculating ERP, including the Census of Population and Housing, are subject to error. Errors can arise from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. The ABS has little control over error associated with non-ABS administrative data such as births and deaths registrations, and migration data.

While the ABS validates the population estimates for SA2-based areas and LGAs, the ABS undertakes minimal validation on estimates for SA1- and MB-based areas.

The accuracy of estimates for areas below the SA2 level also depends on the accuracy of SA2 ERP. The accuracy of sub-state ERP, including SA2 ERP, is further covered in the Quality Declaration for **Regional Population Growth** (cat. no. 3218.0).

## Australian statistical areas

### Statistical Area Level 1

*Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s)* are areas defined in the 2016 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) and are generally designed as the smallest unit for the release of Census data. They generally have a population of 200 to 800 people, with an average population size of about 400 people. SA1s in rural and remote areas generally have smaller populations than those in urban areas. SA1s are used as the building blocks for other ASGS defined regions including the Section of State and Urban Centre and Localities Structures, and the Remoteness Structure. There are approximately 57,500 SA1s and they cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

### Postal Area

*Postal Areas (POAs)* are ABS approximations of Australia Post postcodes, created by allocating Mesh Blocks (MBs) to postcodes based on the distribution of the estimated population within each MB. Postal Areas exclude Australia Post postcodes that are not street delivery areas, such as post office boxes, mail back competitions, large volume receivers and specialist delivery postcodes. They also exclude some postcodes which cannot be allocated a MB. This means that there are more Australia Post postcodes than Postal Areas.

### Other statistical areas

Other statistical areas for which ERPs may be produced include:

- State Suburbs

- Urban Centres/Localities
- Commonwealth and State Electoral Divisions
- Remoteness Areas

For further information on these areas see **Australian Statistical Geography Standard: Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016** (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001) and associated Volumes 3 (Non ABS Structures), 4 (Significant Urban Areas, Urban Centres and Sections of State) and 5 (Remoteness Structure).

## Additional statistics available

The ABS may have other relevant data available on request. Inquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au).