

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This product contains estimates of the resident population for areas based on Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) and Mesh Blocks (MBs), which are sub-SA2 areas, according to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3. These estimates correspond with 30 June 2001–2022 ERP by SA2 as released in [Regional population, 2022](#). These estimates are final for 2001 to 2016, preliminary rebased for 2017 to 2021 (based on the 2021 Census), and preliminary for 2022.

These estimates are not standard ABS output, but rather are customised data available for purchase as an information consultancy. Thus, these estimates are not published on the ABS web site.

ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION

Estimated resident populations (ERPs) are official estimates of the Australian population, which link 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**.

ERPs for Australia and its states and territories are prepared quarterly. They are prepared based on Census counts, and updated taking into account births, deaths and migration. Estimates and further information about the estimation method are available in **National, state and territory population**.

ERPs for sub-state regions 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 sources. Estimates for 2016 and onward are based on 2016 and 2021 Census counts, and updated by taking into account births, deaths and migration. Data and further information about these methods are available in **Regional population**.

Population estimates for sub-SA2 areas as at 30 June of a Census year are compiled by apportioning the population estimate for each SA2, using Census usual residence counts. Sub-SA2 estimates for post-Census years are apportioned using changes in population indicator data for these sub-SA2 areas since the Census. Indicator data includes medicare enrolments and counts of people on the electoral roll.

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 enable flexibility to be built up to broader areas and age groups. Data aggregated to these broader areas, and age groups, are more reliable than the finer level data. Some historical estimates are apportioned from other, older geographies such as Census Collection Districts (rather than aggregated from smaller areas), and can be less reliable than those aggregated from smaller areas.

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 nor, to a large extent, births and deaths registrations, and migration data. The accuracy of some administrative data also depends on time taken for people who move to update their address details with the relevant agency.

While the ABS validates the population estimates for SA2-based areas and LGAs, the ABS undertakes minimal validation for other areas such as SA1s and Postal Areas, i.e. those based on sub-SA2 areas.

The accuracy of estimates for sub-SA2 areas also depends on the accuracy of SA2 ERPs. The accuracy of sub-state ERPs, including SA2 ERPs, is further covered in the Methodology of **Regional population, 2022**.

STATISTICAL AREAS

Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1)

SA1s are areas defined in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Edition 3 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 remote and regional areas generally have smaller populations than those in urban areas. SA1s are used as the building blocks for other ASGS defined regions such as Sections of State, Urban Centre and Localities and Remoteness Areas. There are approximately 61,800 SA1s and they cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. Population estimates are prepared for SA1s by breaking down estimates from the SA2 level.

Postal Area (POA)

Postal Areas are an ABS Mesh Block (MB) approximation of a general definition of postcodes. They are created by allocating whole Mesh Blocks (MBs) to postcodes based on the distribution of the estimated population within each MB. Postal Areas exclude 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 postcodes than Postal Areas.

Other statistical areas

Other statistical areas for which ERPs are produced include:

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

Further information on these statistical areas is contained in **Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2021**, and **Australian Statistical Geography Standard Edition 3 - Non ABS Structures, July 2021**.

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.