

Introduction



The 2015 Yearbook is the second in a series of statistical reports that are designed to help answer the question of how our regions are progressing against social, economic, environmental and governance indicators. This information will enable governments, private investors and the community to identify trends that are important for policy development, investment decisions and planning. Understanding these issues is particularly important when making decisions in relation to infrastructure needs and government services, as both are influenced by the geographic distribution of population, economic activity and natural resources.

What's New in 2015?

This Yearbook builds on the information that was provided in 2014 by updating data sources wherever possible and improving the method used to construct estimates for a number of indicators. For example, the unemployment rate is now based on Small Area Labour Market statistics produced by the Department of Employment every quarter, which allows for more frequent reporting than indicators based on the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. Migration figures have been updated in a similar way, allowing for presentation of annual estimates based on the Australia Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) new Regional Internal Migration Estimates. A full list of the updated indicators is provided in Table 1.

An exciting addition in 2016 will be the development of an interactive web application to host Yearbook data. The web application will allow users to easily search for their own region and access interactive charts and tables that illustrate how the region is progressing on key indicators. In response to feedback provided by stakeholders in 2014, the web application will also provide a more detailed geographic breakdown of data, allowing users to search for their region according to Local Government Area boundaries and Regional Development Australia committee boundaries. This more detailed data will provide the opportunity to develop better insights at the sub-state level.

Table 1 Indicators updated in the 2015 Yearbook

Updated indicators	Table Number	Nature of update
Society		
Life expectancy at birth	P 1.1.1	Additional year of data
Physical assault victimisation	P 1.4.1	Additional year of data
Malicious property damage victimisation	P 1.4.2	Additional year of data
Road fatalities	P 1.4.3	Additional year of data
Unpaid help	P 1.8.1	Additional year of data
Attendance for cultural events	P 1.8.2	Additional year of data
Economy		
New business entry rate	P 2.1.3	Additional year of data
Unemployment rate	P 2.2.1	New source/Additional data
Average duration of unemployment	P 2.3.1	Additional year of data
International visitors	P 2.6.1	Additional year of data
International trade value	P 2.6.2	Additional year of data
Environment		
Air pollution	P 3.1.1	Additional year of data
Domestic trips	P 3.2.1	Additional year of data
Terrestrial area protected	P 3.3.1	Additional year of data
Greenhouse gas emissions	P 3.4.1	Additional year of data
Traffic congestion	P 3.5.1	Additional year of data
Average commuting time	P 3.5.2	Additional year of data
Governance		
Generalised trust	P 4.1.1	Additional year of data
Political group	P 4.2.2	Additional year of data
Context		
Estimated resident population	C 1.1.1	Additional year of data
Population projections	C 1.1.2	Additional year of data
Net internal migration	C 1.1.3	New source/Additional data
Population by age	C 1.2.1	Additional year of data
Selected pensions	C 1.4.2	Additional year of data
Passengers through airports	C 2.1.2	Additional year of data
Network delay	C 2.1.5	Additional year of data
Freight through ports	C 2.2.2	Additional year of data
Residential water supply	C 2.3.3	Additional year of data
Actively trading businesses	C 3.2.1	Additional year of data
Business size	C 3.2.2	Additional year of data

The Framework

The information in this Yearbook is organised according to a framework that groups indicators into domains corresponding to different aspects of socio-economic progress. This approach builds on a framework that was originally developed by the ABS for the *Measures of Australia's Progress* publication. The *Measures of Australia's Progress* framework has been adjusted to incorporate data sources which are available across a wide range of geographies. It has also been extended to include contextual indicators that provide information that is not related to progress, but which are nonetheless important for forming a well-rounded understanding of the basic characteristics of each region.

Progress Indicators

Most of the indicators in this Yearbook are based on the concept of societal progress. Progress is about improvements in the well-being of people and households over time. This requires looking beyond the economic system in a region to also include the wider range of experiences and living conditions of people in those regions.¹

Internationally, there has been an increasing interest in measuring well-being and progress of societies. Projects like the Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress² and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies have highlighted the importance of broader measures of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Multilateral agencies have developed methods for comparing the progress of different nations, including the UN Human Development Index³, the OECD Better Life Index⁴ and the related OECD Regional Well-Being initiative.⁵

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has measured progress at the national scale in the publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP).⁶ The themes measured by MAP were selected through extensive national consultation to identify what Australians considered most important to them for national progress. In the Yearbook the MAP themes are examined at a regional scale uncovering the variation in rates of progress below the national level.

When measuring progress at a regional level, this Yearbook seeks to answer the question of:

“Is life in your region getting better?”

Rather than make comparisons between regions, the information on progress in this Yearbook should be used to look at how individual regions are doing over time, and if these changes are inline with the broader national trend.

The concept of progress is multidimensional and a range of indicators have been selected to show whether progress is being made across four domains. The Progress section of the Yearbook has been divided into four sections, each focusing on one of the four domains of progress:

- Part P.1, for Society;
- Part P.2, for Economy;
- Part P.3, for Environment; and
- Part P.4, for Governance.

Each domain consists of a set of themes, reflecting the aspirations that Australians have for their nation. Each theme is represented by one or more **progress indicators**, which are summary statistics that signal whether that aspect of life is moving in a ‘good’ direction (progress) or a ‘bad’ direction (regress).

¹ OECD, *Measuring Well-being and Progress: Understanding the issue*, 2013

² Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi, *Report of the commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress*, 2009

³ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2014, Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*, 2014

⁴ OECD, *Better Life Index*, 2014

⁵ OECD, *Regional Well-Being*, 2014

⁶ ABS, *Measures of Australia's Progress*, 2013 (cat. no. 1370.0)

Some themes from MAP are based on indicators that are not available below the national or state level. These themes represent gaps in the regional evidence base and future versions of the Yearbook will seek to fill these gaps (see For Further Development below).

Many of the progress indicators in this Yearbook have been adapted directly from MAP. Some indicators use the same data source as the relevant MAP indicator. For other indicators, the MAP data source could only provide information at the national or state level, and not at the more detailed geographic level required to provide acceptable regional coverage. In these cases, the MAP data source has been replaced in favour of related data sources which provide information on the same concept but at a more detailed geographic level.

Contextual Indicators

The Yearbook aims to provide a general overview of the way in which Australia's regions are progressing over time. While the main focus is on progress, these indicators have also been supplemented with **contextual indicators** that provide background information to help interpret changes in a region.

The contextual indicators section of the Yearbook has been divided into three sections, each focusing on one of three contextual domains:

- Part C.1, Population and Demographics;
- Part C.2, Transport and Infrastructure; and
- Part C.3, Industry and Innovation.

Like the progress indicators, each domain consists of a set of themes that are represented by one or more statistical indicators.

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development develops and publishes statistical information about transport and infrastructure across Australia. This Yearbook draws on information from the Department's Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) and other sources to supplement the information on national progress, as well as highlight the important contribution that infrastructure and transport investment makes in facilitating growth in the regions of Australia.

Figure 1 Indicator Framework

Regions – Remoteness Classes, Major Urban Areas, Sub-State Regions	Progress Indicators		Contextual Indicators	
	Society	Economy	Population and Demographics	Transport and Infrastructure
	Health	Opportunities	Population	Moving People
	Close Relationships	Jobs	Age Structure	Moving Freight
	Home	A Resilient Economy	Housing	Communications and Utilities
	Safety	Enhanced Living Standards	Social Characteristics	Land Use
Learning and Knowledge	Fair Outcomes			
Community Connections and Diversity	International Economic Engagement			
A Fair Go				
Enriched Lives				
Environment	Governance	Industry and Innovation		
Healthy Natural Environment	Trust	Industry		
Appreciating the Environment	Participation	Business Activity		
Protecting the Environment		Innovation		
Sustaining the Environment				
Healthy Built Environments				

Box 1 Some key terms

Statistical indicators are measures that provide users with a summary of the state of play with respect to a topic. For example, median income is a statistical indicator that provides an easily interpreted summary measure of the distribution of income in a region. This would otherwise be a detailed set of data items relating to the number of people in different income groups.

Progress indicators are a particular type of statistical indicator. Progress indicators are chosen on the basis that most people would agree that an increase (or decrease) in the indicator can be unambiguously associated with either progress or regress. For example, *life expectancy* is a commonly used indicator of progress in the theme of Health. An increase in life expectancy is directly related to progress in the health condition of people living in the region.

In comparison, *population growth* does not qualify as a progress indicator, as there is considerable disagreement as to whether population growth in a region represents progress.

Geographic and Regional Variation

A statistical geography is a system for organising data according to location. Statistical geographies divide a large geographic area (such as a country) into smaller geographic areas. The smaller areas can then be grouped together in different combinations to represent regions of interest.

The indicators in this Yearbook are viewed through a geographic lens providing the ability to track the progress of regions at several scales. The Yearbook uses the geographic classification in the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) 2011 to define the boundaries of the statistical regions presented.

Where available, each indicator has been compiled at the following geographic scales:

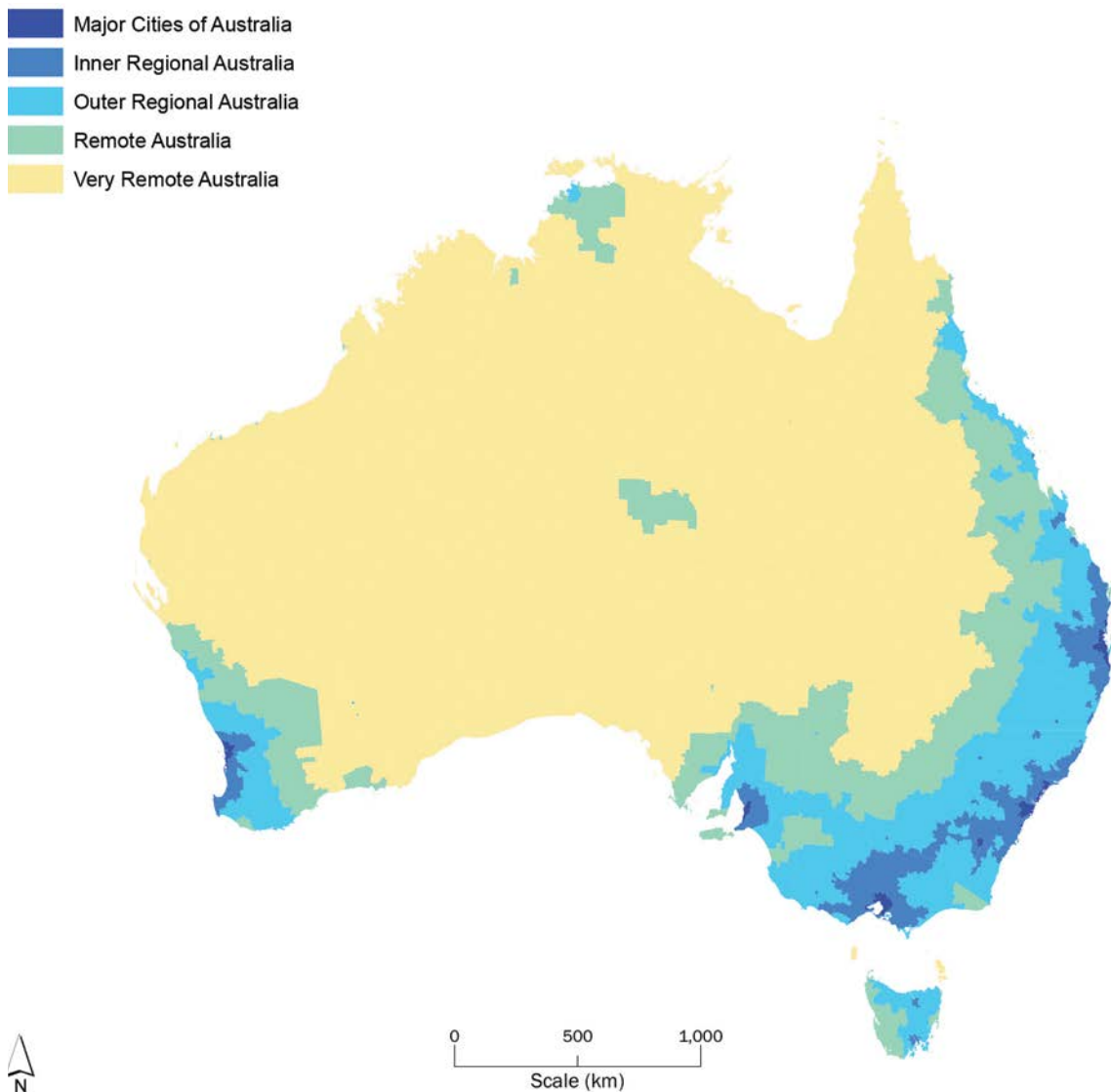
- Remoteness Classes;
- Major Urban Areas;
- Capital City and Balance of State; and
- Sub-State Regions.

Remoteness Classes

Australia has been divided into five remoteness classes defined in the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), which reflect differences in access-to-services due to the physical connections between locations. Remoteness classes provide a summary geographic classification to compare how outcomes vary between large regions that share common characteristics of remoteness. These Remoteness classes are:

- Major Cities of Australia;
- Inner Regional Australia;
- Outer Regional Australia;
- Remote Australia; and
- Very Remote Australia.

Figure 2 Remoteness Classes, ASGS 2011



Major Urban Areas

The major urban areas of Australia have been identified as the large urban cores and surrounding built-up urban areas with a population of more than 85,000 residents. Throughout the Yearbook the major urban areas are presented in order of population, with the most populated areas at the top of the tables to the least populated areas at the bottom. In total, 20 of Australia's largest cities have been included in the Yearbook.

For the seven capital cities (excluding Canberra), the ABS defined Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs) have been used to represent the major urban area. These regions represent the functional socio-economic extent of each of the State and Territory capitals. The boundaries cover people who regularly socialise, shop or work within each city, including those that live in small towns and rural areas surrounding the city.

The remaining 13 major urban areas are based on the ABS defined Significant Urban Areas (SUAs). These regions are concentrations of urban development with a population of 10,000 people or greater, which include a dense urban core and some surrounding hinterland. Unlike GCCSAs, SUAs do not always represent the functional labour market zone of a major city, as many people who live outside the urban area may still travel to work inside the urban area.

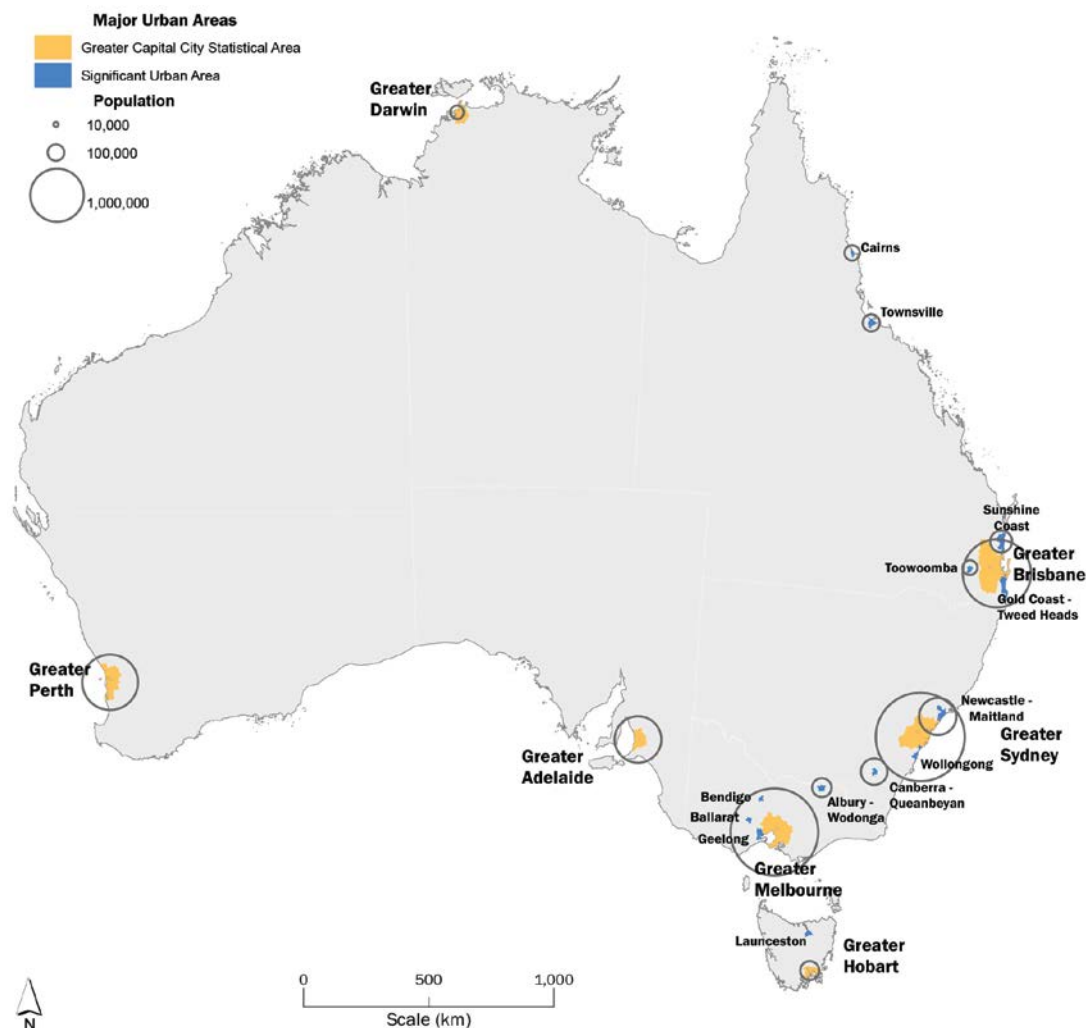
Canberra has been defined by the SUA of Canberra - Queanbeyan, which crosses the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory border and includes a wider urban extent than the GCCSA of the ACT. While Canberra is still a capital city, the SUA used to define the major urban area of Canberra - Queanbeyan is a better approximation of the wider urban core that crosses the state border. Similarly, the SUA of Albury - Wodonga crosses the New South Wales and Victoria border to account for the integrated nature of the urban extent across the Murray River.

In some cases the names of major urban areas are the same as the names for the larger sub-state regions in which they are located (see Sub-State Regions below). For example, the major urban area of Cairns is located within the sub-state region of the same name. In these cases the major urban area is always smaller than the wider sub-state region, which often includes a significant amount of the surrounding hinterland.

Table 2 Statistical geographic areas used to define Australia’s major urban areas

Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs)	Significant Urban Areas (SUAs)
Greater Sydney	Gold Coast - Tweed Heads
Greater Melbourne	Newcastle - Maitland
Greater Brisbane	Canberra - Queanbeyan
Greater Perth	Sunshine Coast
Greater Adelaide	Wollongong
Greater Hobart	Geelong
Greater Darwin	Townsville

Figure 3 Major Urban Areas – Greater Capital City Statistical Areas and Significant Urban Areas



Capital City and Balance of State

For some of the indicators, data for Remoteness Classes or Major Urban Areas is unavailable. In these cases the indicator is presented for the Capital City and Balance of the State. Each state is divided into the region which represents the socio-economic extent of each of the eight State and Territory capital cities and the regions that represent the remaining area of the State or Territory. These capital cities are the same geographic regions defined in the Major Urban Areas (with the exception of Canberra - Queanbeyan).

Sub-State Regions

The sub-state regions in the Yearbook are geographic areas that represent functional economic zones within the States and Territories. Statistical Areas Level 4 (SA4s) are informed by labour market catchment areas, the population of the region, State and Territory boundaries and sample design of the ABS Labour Force Survey.

These regions have a minimum size of 100,000 people, with some exceptions for sparsely populated remote areas. In regional areas, SA4s tend to have populations closer to the minimum (100,000–300,000). In metropolitan areas, SA4s tend to have larger populations (300,000–500,000).

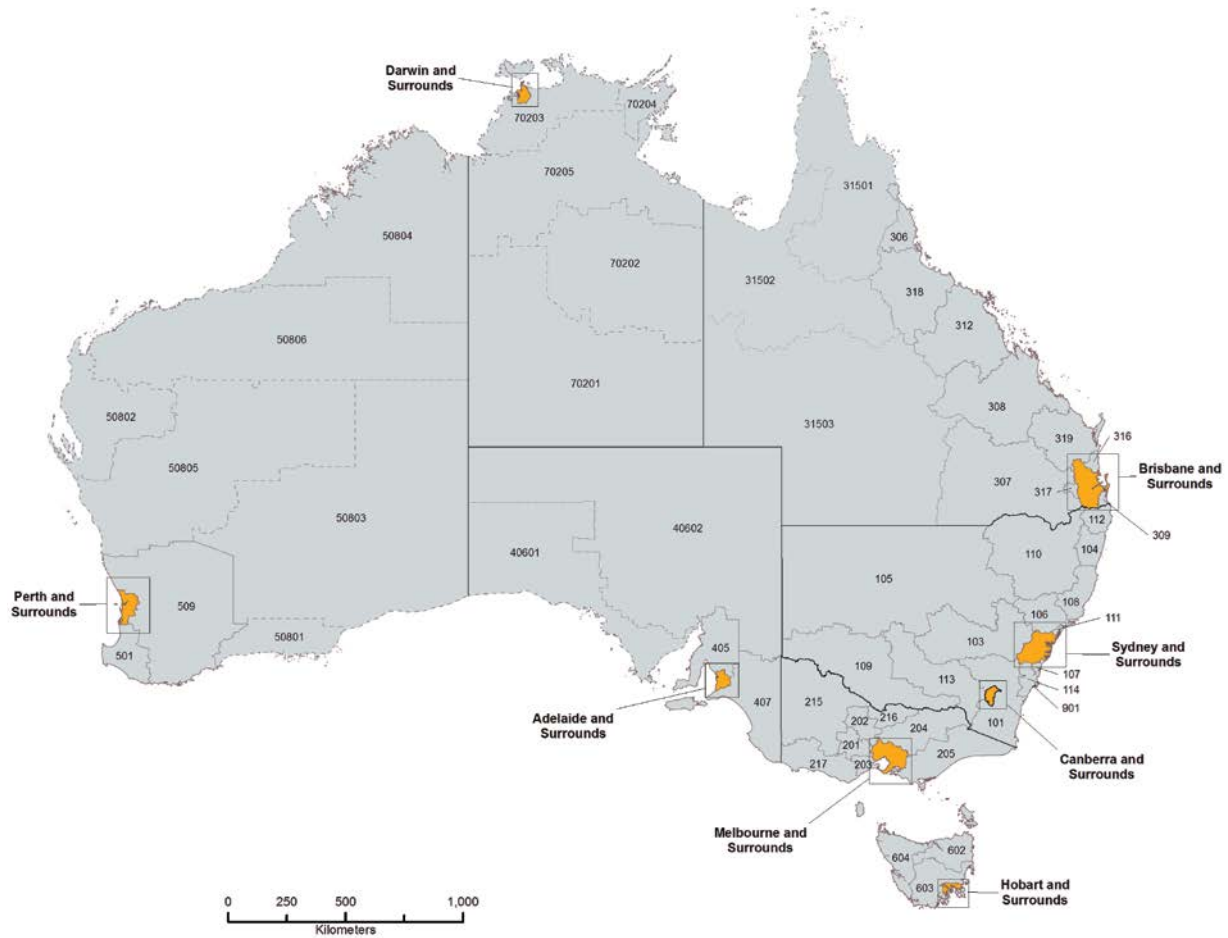
The sub-state regions aggregate to the capital cities and the balance of the States. For example, the Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) of Greater Sydney is made up of fifteen SA4s and the remaining thirteen SA4s in New South Wales make up the balance of the State. The GCCSAs represent the socio-economic extent of each of the eight State and Territory capital cities.

Based on user feedback, the 2015 Yearbook includes data for Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3s), where available, for outback regions in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory within data tables for Sub-State Regions.

As noted above, the Yearbook web application provides an even more detailed split of sub-state regions according to Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries and Regional Development Australia (RDA) committee boundaries (RDAs). There are 565 LGAs within Australia, each corresponding to the area of a local government, council, shire or similar administrative body. LGAs are wholly contained within States and Territories, meaning they do not cross state borders.

In turn, RDA boundaries are generally defined as amalgamations of LGAs. There are 55 RDAs which cover the entirety of Australia excluding external territories. Each RDA is an appointed committee of local stakeholders that are involved in coordinating regional development and planning activities.

Figure 4 Sub-State Regions – Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, Statistical Areas Level 4 and Selected Statistical Areas Level 3, ASGS 2011



New South Wales

Greater Sydney

- 102 Central Coast
- 115 Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury
- 116 Sydney - Blacktown
- 117 Sydney - City and Inner South
- 118 Sydney - Eastern Suburbs
- 119 Sydney - Inner South West
- 120 Sydney - Inner West
- 121 Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby
- 122 Sydney - Northern Beaches
- 123 Sydney - Outer South West
- 124 Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains
- 125 Sydney - Parramatta
- 126 Sydney - Ryde
- 127 Sydney - South West
- 128 Sydney - Sutherland

Rest of New South Wales

- 101 Capital Region
- 103 Central West
- 104 Coffs Harbour - Grafton
- 105 Far West and Orana
- 106 Hunter Valley exc Newcastle
- 107 Illawarra
- 108 Mid North Coast
- 109 Murray
- 110 New England and North West
- 111 Newcastle and Lake Macquarie
- 112 Richmond - Tweed
- 113 Riverina
- 114 Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven

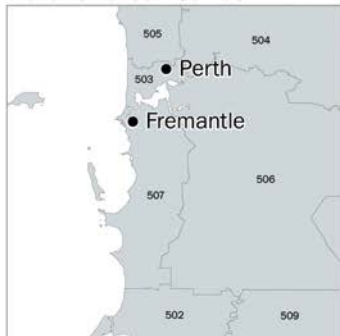
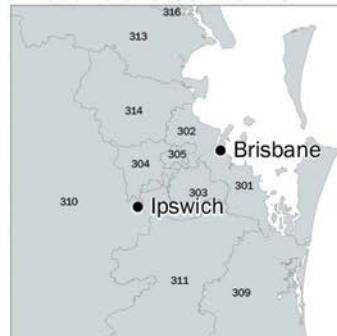
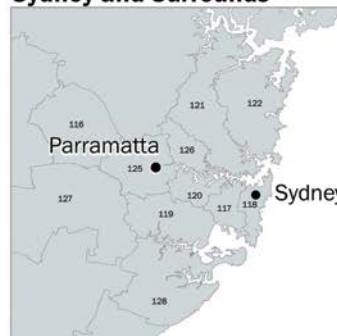
Victoria

Greater Melbourne

- 206 Melbourne - Inner
- 207 Melbourne - Inner East
- 208 Melbourne - Inner South
- 209 Melbourne - North East
- 210 Melbourne - North West
- 211 Melbourne - Outer East
- 212 Melbourne - South East
- 213 Melbourne - West
- 214 Mornington Peninsula

Rest of Victoria

- 201 Ballarat
- 202 Bendigo
- 203 Geelong
- 204 Hume
- 205 Latrobe - Gippsland
- 215 North West
- 216 Shepparton
- 217 Warrnambool and South West

Perth and Surrounds**Darwin and Surrounds****Brisbane and Surrounds****Adelaide and Surrounds****Melbourne and Surrounds****Sydney and Surrounds****Queensland****Greater Brisbane**

- 301 Brisbane - East
- 302 Brisbane - North
- 303 Brisbane - South
- 304 Brisbane - West
- 305 Brisbane Inner City
- 310 Ipswich
- 311 Logan - Beaudesert
- 313 Moreton Bay - North
- 314 Moreton Bay - South

Rest of Queensland

- 306 Cairns
- 307 Darling Downs - Maranoa
- 308 Fitzroy
- 309 Gold Coast
- 312 Mackay
- 315 Queensland - Outback
- 316 Sunshine Coast
- 317 Toowoomba
- 318 Townsville
- 319 Wide Bay

South Australia**Greater Adelaide**

- 401 Adelaide - Central and Hills
- 402 Adelaide - North
- 403 Adelaide - South
- 404 Adelaide - West

Hobart and Surrounds**Rest of South Australia**

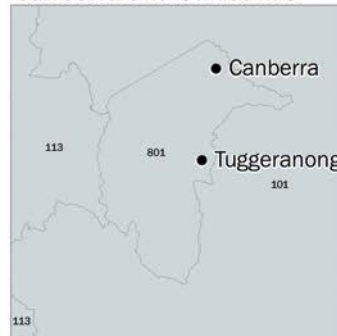
- 405 Barossa - Yorke - Mid North
- 406 South Australia - Outback
- 407 South Australia - South East

Western Australia**Greater Perth**

- 502 Mandurah
- 503 Perth - Inner
- 504 Perth - North East
- 505 Perth - North West
- 506 Perth - South East
- 507 Perth - South West

Rest of Western Australia

- 501 Bunbury
- 508 Western Australia - Outback
- 509 Western Australia - Wheat Belt

Canberra and Surrounds**Tasmania**

- 601 Greater Hobart

Rest of Tasmania

- 602 Launceston and North East
- 603 South East
- 604 West and North West

Northern Territory

- 701 Greater Darwin
- 702 Northern Territory - Outback

Australian Capital Territory

- 801 Australian Capital Territory

Reading the Tables




This Yearbook presents data on the changes to indicators for regions across time. These tables include both the values for the indicators as well as a visual representation of the change in the indicator and the trend over time.

Trend lines are used to provide a visual representation of progress over time for a specific region, rather than to compare the rate of change between regions. It is important to note that the trend lines do not use a consistent scale, either within an individual table, or across different tables.

The change bars represent the change in the indicator from the first reference period to the last reference period. The size of the bar corresponds to the size of the change. The change bars use a consistent scale within a single table, however, the scales may vary between tables, including using a separate scale for a single indicator across the different geographic levels.

When this change is indicative of progress in the region, the bar is coloured blue. When the change is indicative of regression in the region, the bar is coloured pink. The colour of the bar does not always correspond to the direction of the sign of the value. For the contextual indicators, the change bars are coloured grey irrespective of the direction of the change because these changes are not related to the concepts of progress or regress.

Figure 5 Example table with guidance for interpretation

Remoteness Class	2005-06 \$ real	2009-10 \$ real	2011-12 \$ real	2005-06 to 2011-12 change \$ real	Trend
Major Cities	669,326	772,187	745,222	75,896	
Inner Regional	668,084	664,277	615,021	-53,063	
Outer Regional	485,704	651,741	709,969	224,265	

Geographic regions
Based on the geographic classification in the ASGS.

Change
Presents the change in the indicator from the first reference period to the last reference period. The size of the bar corresponds to the size of the change.
When this change is indicative of progress in the region, the bar is coloured blue. When the change is indicative of regression in the region, the bar is coloured pink. The colour of the bar does not always correspond to the direction of the sign of the value.

Trend Line
Presents the change in the indicator over time. Based on the three reference periods included in the table. The indicator may be available at greater frequency than included in the table, but the trend line is only based on the information in the table.

Data Quality and Availability

Data Quality

The indicators that have been selected for inclusion in this Yearbook have met criteria that set a benchmark for the statistical quality of the data. These criteria are:

- Regional availability – indicators should be available for at least one, but preferably two or more, geographic scales.
- Time series – progress indicators should be available as a consistent time-series, with data frequency that supports assessment of medium-term trends. There should be firm plans for the data to be collected again in the short or medium term.
- Authoritative – indicators should be collected by an official or government organisation, or a private organisation with a recognised history of high quality data provision.
- Nationally consistent – indicators should be available on a nationally consistent basis. In cases where the data is collected by individual jurisdictions, it should use a consistent set of concepts and methods across regions.

Data Gaps

When developing the *Measuring of Australia's Progress* publication, the ABS identified several progress themes that did not have any current data sources to support the measurement of progress at a national level. These themes are not represented in this Yearbook and represent current gaps in our ability to measure progress on key elements of societal progress.

Regional Data

Developing this publication has highlighted the availability limitations for regional data. Some indicators included in this publication are only available at a limited number of geographic scales, are available on geographic scales that do not allow for easy comparisons to other indicators, or must be built from alternative data sources.

Some indicators which have high quality and timely data sources at the national level cannot be disaggregated to smaller geographic regions and therefore proxy indicators have been used. These indicators may not exactly match those presented in the ABS publication *Measures of Australia's Progress*, but broadly capture the same concepts of progress. Care should be taken when comparing the national data included in this Yearbook with the data presented in *Measures of Australia's Progress*.

In other cases, there is extensive information published at the national and state level by government departments and agencies. Some examples of other data sources that can be used to inform regional policy include:

- *Report on Government Services* from the Productivity Commission (<http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs>);
- *Australian National Accounts* series of publications from the ABS (<http://www.abs.gov.au>), particularly:
 - *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (cat. no. 5206.0);
 - *Estimates of Industry Multifactor Productivity* (cat. no. 5260.0.55.002); and
 - *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts* (cat. no. 5220.0);
- *State of the Environment* report from the Department of the Environment (<http://www.environment.gov.au/science/soe/2011>);
- *Local Government National Report* from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (<http://www.regional.gov.au/local/publications/reports/index.aspx>); and
- *Infrastructure Statistics Yearbook* from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (http://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2014/yearbook_2014.aspx).

For Further Development

The set of indicators included in the Yearbook will evolve over time as new regional data becomes available and in response to user feedback. For example, the source data for a number of indicators in 2015 was adjusted to provide greater regional detail. A more holistic assessment of the indicator framework is planned for the 2016 update, which will involve reviewing existing data sources to ensure indicator quality is maintained and that information can continue to be presented in a consistent format over time.

The existing set of indicators has some important gaps. Data to be released in the next few years may help fill some of those gaps. Some examples are provided below:

- The ABS released preliminary results from the new *National Road Freight Survey* in late 2015. The survey provides new information on the volume of freight to and from regions, and could serve as the basis for an improved contextual indicator of freight flows to be included in the 2016 Yearbook.
- The Australian Financial Security Authority has recently commenced regular release of personal insolvency data for sub-state regions. Once a sufficient time-series becomes available, this indicator will be considered for potential inclusion as an additional progress indicator of 'a resilient economy' (and more specifically, of prudent financial management).
- The life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians⁷ has been identified as a potential future progress indicator. Remoteness class data is currently only available for a single time point, but when an additional time point is released (in several years) the indicator will be considered for inclusion as an additional indicator of societal progress.
- In late 2015, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) released new estimates of the average commuting distances travelled by residents of Australian cities and regions. This information will provide valuable context regarding land use patterns and the transport task in Australian cities in the 2016 edition.
- BITRE is also developing estimates of population-weighted density for urban areas which will be available for the 2016 Yearbook. Population-weighted density takes account of variances in density across different parts of a given city, estimating overall density of an urban area as a weighted sum of small area estimates.

Readers are encouraged to provide any feedback or suggestions for further development via email <Regional.Progress@infrastructure.gov.au>.

⁷ ABS, Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2010–2012, (cat. no. 3302.0.55.003)