

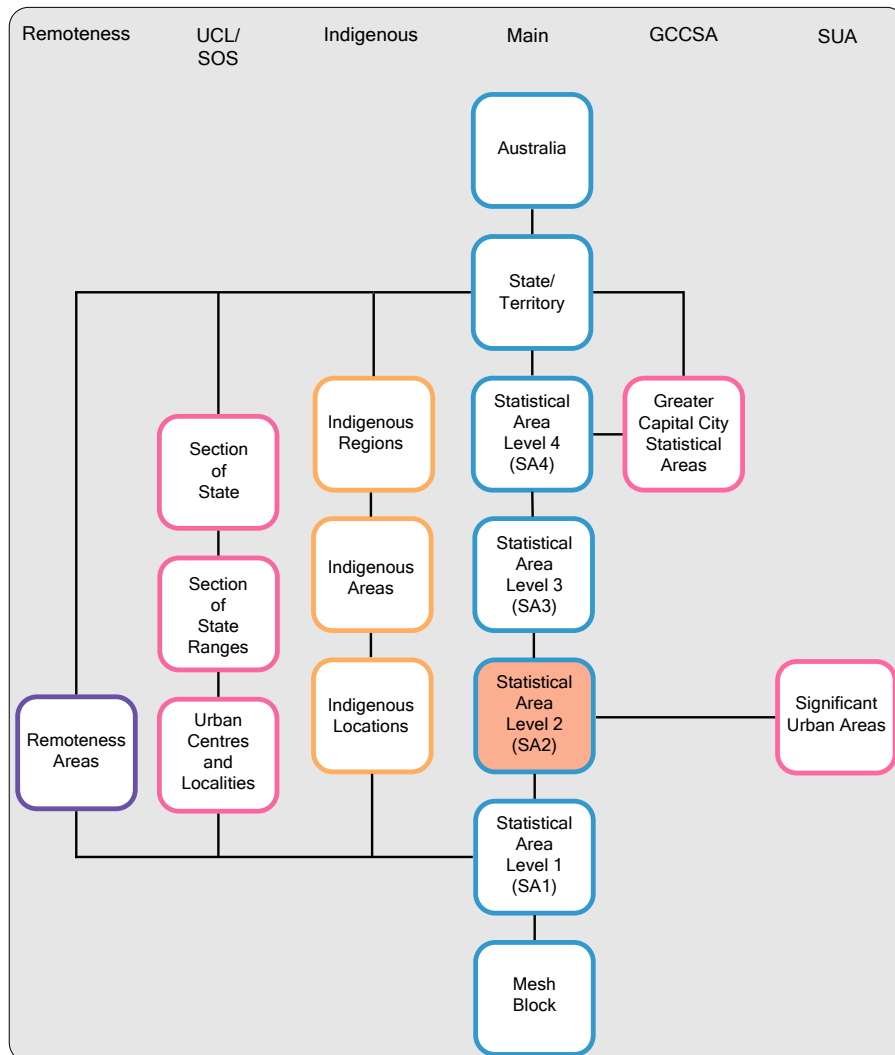
## STATISTICAL AREAS LEVEL 2 (SA2s)

### What are SA2s?

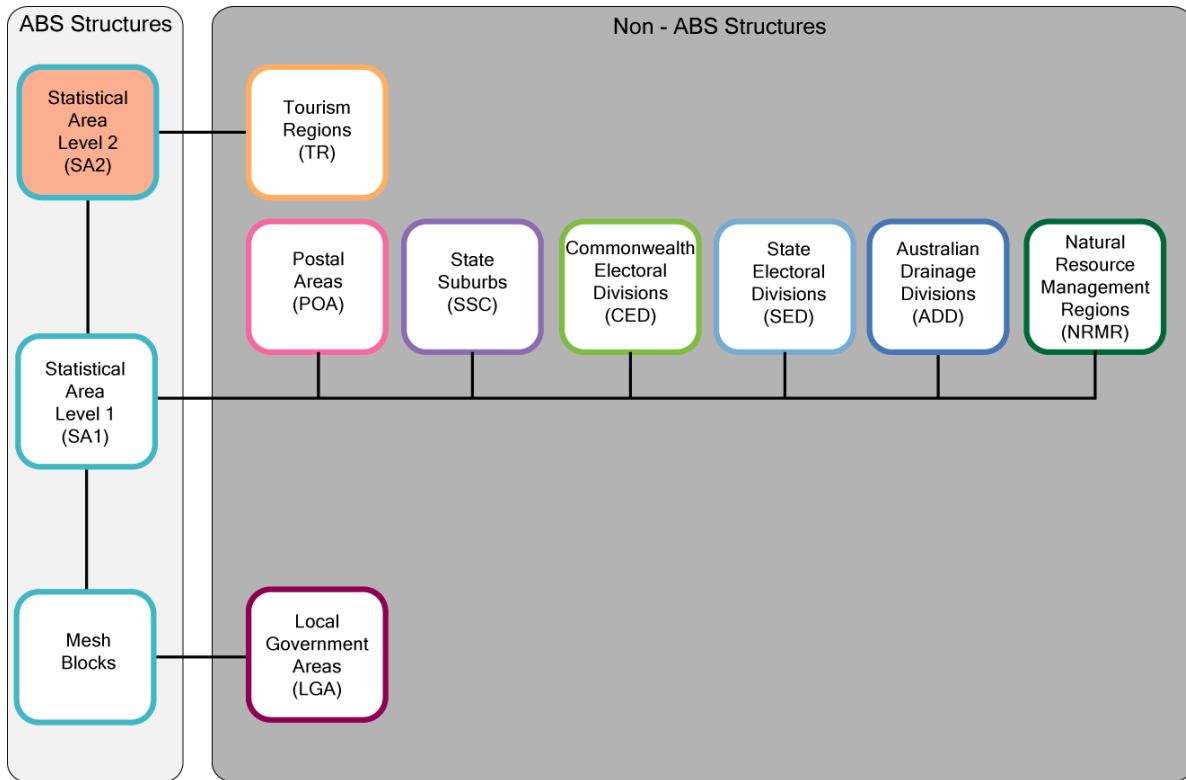
Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s) are a medium-sized general purpose area built up from whole Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s). They replace the Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) defined by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). Their aim is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically.

There are 2214 SA2s covering the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

**Diagram 1:** ASGS ABS Structures



**Diagram 2: Non-ABS Structures**



2011 Census Data is available at SA2 level. The SA2 is the smallest area for the release of ABS non-Census and Intercensal statistics, including the Estimated Resident Population and Health & Vitals data.

SA2s are also used to approximate Tourism Regions on which tourism data are produced.

Jervis Bay Territory, the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the Territory of Christmas Island are each represented by a SA2.

Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 illustrate how the SA2 fits within the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Whole SA2s aggregate to form Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3s) and Significant Urban Areas.

## How are SA2s different from SLAs?

SA2s are designed as the primary output region for the release of non-Census and Intercensal data.

SA2s have a more consistent population size than SLAs. On average they have a population of approximately 10,000 people. Most are designed to be within the population range 3,000 - 25,000. Consequently there are more SA2s than SLAs - 2214 SA2s in 2011 compared to 1408 SLAs in 2011. SA2s in rural and remote areas generally have lower populations than in urban areas.

Unlike SLAs, SA2s do not necessarily align to Local Government Area boundaries, although the SA2s do closely reflect them. SA2s more closely align to the gazetted suburbs and localities than did SLAs. SA2s identify towns with a population over 10,000 people.

Large areas without permanent population (such as international airports, large commercial areas and national parks etc.) are often represented by "zero SA2s" - these are SA2s with an effective design population of zero.

## How does this change affect time series?

SLAs and SA2s were designed using very different criteria, resulting in considerable differences between the two. It is often difficult to make a comparison between SLAs and SA2s, but there are circumstances where it is possible.

The ABS has produced both SLA to SA2 and SA2 to SLA correspondences (concordances) to facilitate bridging of time series. These correspondences and a suite of other geographical correspondences are located in the following online publication under the 'Downloads' tab: [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Correspondences, July 2011](#) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.006).

Identified issues surrounding the use of correspondences are discussed in detail in the ABS publication [Information Paper: Converting Data to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard, 2011](#) (cat. no. 1216.0.55.004).

Please refer to the '**Converting Data to the ASGS**' chapter on the ABS Statistical Geography web site through <http://www.abs.gov.au/geography> for further information on correspondences. A video of a seminar on the subject is also accessible on this web site.

An additional resource, a '*Time Series*' fact sheet, is available from the '**ASGS Fact Sheets**' chapter of the ABS Statistical Geography web site: <http://www.abs.gov.au/geography>

## How long will ABS continue to produce data at the SLA level?

Beyond 2012, data will not be available for SLA or SLA-based ASGC regions.

A summary of the ABS publications that will be impacted by the transition from the ASGC to the ASGS is available from the '**ASGS Implementation Schedule for ABS Publications**' chapter of the ABS Statistical Geography web site: <http://www.abs.gov.au/geography>

There are plans for several statistical publications to release data for both ASGC and ASGS for varying periods of time after the changeover. For each publication a table summarises how and when the publication will be output on the ASGC as well as the ASGS. The table also indicates the availability of any time series data that will be provided as well as resources where further information will be available.

## Where can I get the SA2 boundaries?

The SA2 boundaries are available in MapInfo Interchange and ESRI Shapefile formats and can be downloaded from the '**ABS Geography Publications**' chapter of the ABS Statistical Geography website: <http://www.abs.gov.au/geography>

Alternatively, SA2 digital boundaries are available through the '**Downloads**' tab of the ASGS Main Structures online publication: [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011](#) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

The publication includes a manual, maps of the main structure regions SA2 and above, and complete lists of the various regions of the ASGS and their hierarchical relationships.

## Where can I get further information?

A detailed discussion of SA2s and the criteria used in their design can be found in the online publication: [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011](#) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

Any questions or comments can be emailed to [geography@abs.gov.au](mailto:geography@abs.gov.au)