



Online submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ASGS review, July 2019

This document provides a copy of the responses provided to prompted questions as part of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) review, July 2019. For more information visit <https://consult.abs.gov.au/industry-statistics/review-of-the-asgs-for-2021/>

Urban Centres and Localities (UCLs).

ABS is proposing to use Mesh Blocks as the building blocks for UCLs, instead of SA1s. How would you categorise this change to UCL design?

Very positive Positive Neutral Negative Very negative Not sure

ABS is proposing that Urban Centres may have non-contiguous regions. Can you foresee any significant issues arising from Urban Centres being designed with non-contiguous regions?

Yes. For large UCLs it could create some confusion, eg there are many parts of Melbourne on the urban fringe which could potentially become non-contiguous regions. Does the ABS envisage one very large spatial unit with smaller ones around the edges?

Do you support the creation of Urban Centres with non-contiguous regions?

Yes

ABS is proposing to create a new category within the classification to identify Rural Residential regions. Do you support the inclusion of a Rural Residential category within the UCL classification?

Yes

Although this doesn't impact on Hobsons Bay, it will be useful for regional areas as this is becoming a more common settlement pattern and the urban-rural interface is no longer clear cut in many cases. Note there are some rural-residential areas that are located away from towns and these should be included in the classification.

Do you support the proposed definition of Rural Residential areas as Mesh Blocks with a population density of 25 persons per square kilometre, and not within a UCL?

Unsure

The ABS is proposing to create ASGS Commonwealth and State Electoral Divisions using Mesh Blocks rather than SA1s. This will more accurately approximate the Electoral Divisions. How would you categorise this change to ASGS Commonwealth and State Electoral Division design?

Very positive Positive Neutral Negative Very negative Not sure



Natural Resource Management Regions (NRMRs) and Australian Drainage Divisions (ADDs) were introduced into the ASGS Non ABS Structures classification in 2011. Initially they were approximated using whole Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) and for 2016 they were improved by using Mesh Blocks as a building block.

Are there any other widely used environmental boundaries that you think could be usefully integrated into the ASGS?

Hobsons Bay City Council does not use these boundaries, and we have no comments regarding other environmental boundaries.

ASGS Coding Structure

The ABS is considering removing the short codes for SA1s and SA2s. How would you categorise this change to the ASGS coding structure? Please provide any specific comments below.

Very positive Positive Neutral Negative Very negative Not sure

As long as there are concordances provided to show the link between the spatial units in each Census then Hobsons Bay City Council can work with this.

Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)

The ASGS will be updated in 2021 using the following underlying design principles:

- 1. Coherence - the ASGS provides a set of boundaries that are as stable and consistent as possible, so that users can compare data over time**
- 2. Relevance - the ASGS boundaries are current and reflect recent changes in population, economy and infrastructure**
- 3. Confidentiality - the ASGS boundaries are designed to protect confidentiality of small-population data**
- 4. Interpretability - the ASGS boundaries reflect regions recognisable to users**
- 5. Timeliness – the ASGS is updated every five years in line with the Census of Population and Housing**
- 6. Accuracy - the ASGS boundaries are accurate and high quality**
- 7. Accessibility - the ASGS boundaries are produced in accessible and usable formats**

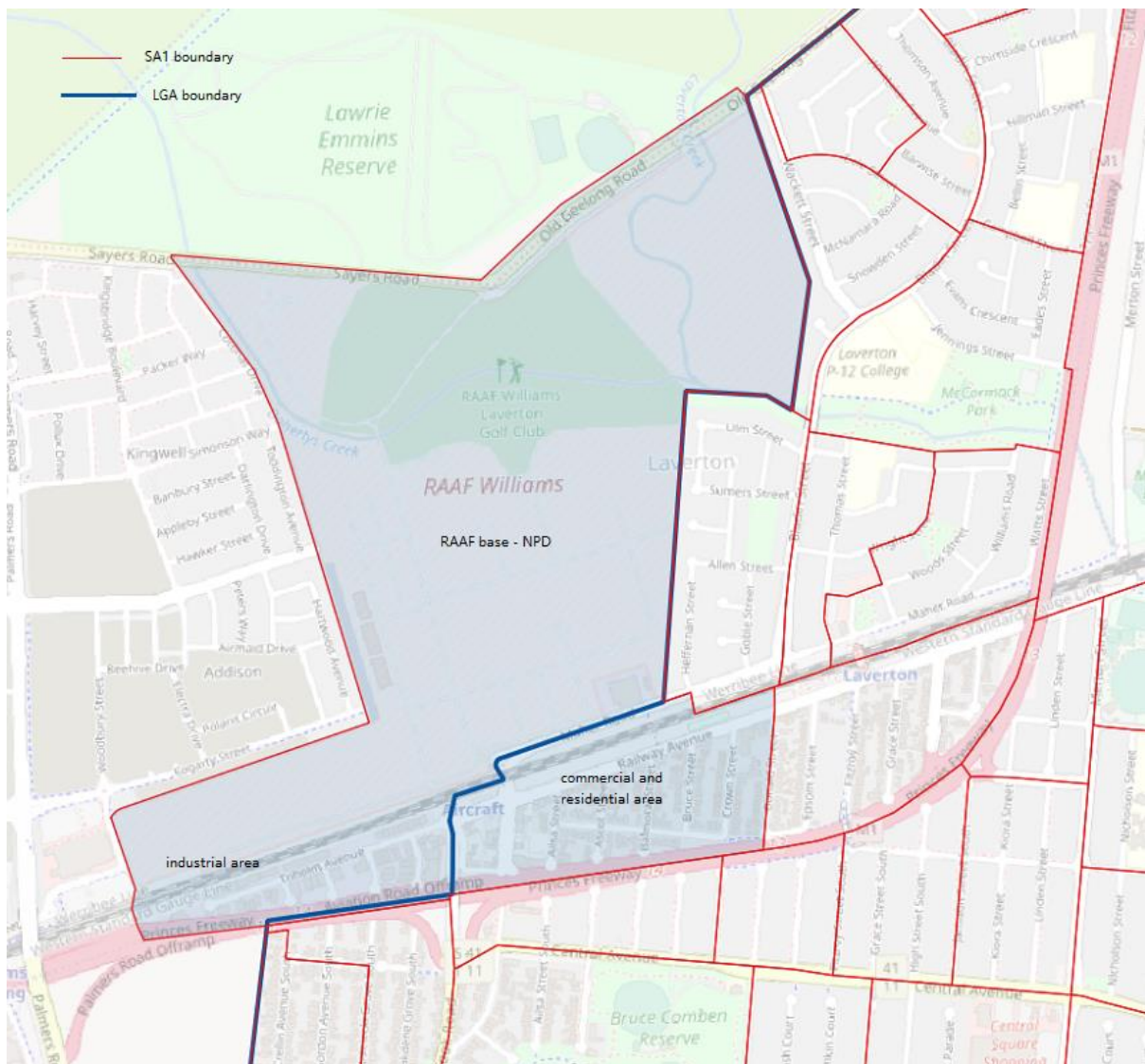
Do you have any specific feedback regarding these principles and their relative importance in the ASGS update for 2021?

The ASGS boundaries don't always adhere to these principles – please refer to our answer below for an example.



Do you have any specific feedback regarding the design of any ASGS boundaries? This includes the shape and delineation of any boundaries within any ASGS geography. This input will be considered as part of our ASGS design process.

The SA1s in Hobsons Bay are generally acceptable, but there is one that falls over the boundary with Wyndham City Council. In 2016, the code is 2136315. An image of this SA1 (shaded) is provided below.



This SA1 incorporates a non-private dwellings on the Wyndham side (RAAF base) and an older, suburban area on the Hobsons Bay side (part of the suburb of Laverton). The population and dwelling types on either side of the boundary are different, so we recommend that the boundary align to the LGA boundary in order to separate them. This would provide better demographic data for this part of Hobsons Bay.



This issue also impacts the SA2 of Laverton, which, because it includes the growing suburb of Williams Landing, creates a lot of confusion when ERPs are released which indicate a growth rate of 6.5% (2017-18 data) for that SA2. Most of this occurs in Wyndham, not Hobsons Bay. At the same time however, the Laverton part of this SA2 is growing (we know this by looking at our building data which shows increasing amounts of infill), but as users of the ABS data, Council does not have official statistics for our evidence base.

Wyndham City Council also consider this SA1 as problematic (for the reasons outlined above) and that ideally it should align to the LGA boundary.

Aligning this SA1 to the LGA boundary is consistent with the design criteria of relevance (ie it separates the non-private dwellings in a growth area from an older, more stable suburban area), interpretability (ie LGAs are a recognised and commonly used spatial unit in social statistics), accuracy (ie no requirement by the ABS to estimate population growth on either side of the boundary when producing LGA population statistics) and accessibility (ie data for both Hobsons Bay and Wyndham LGAs will be readily available in the main structure).

In addition, there are a handful of SA1s in the suburb of Altona which now have more than 300 dwellings (due to the construction of apartments between 2011 and 2016) and ideally should be considered for splitting along a north-south axis. These SA1s are 2134121 (317 dwellings), 2134119 (374 dwellings) and 2134118 (337 dwellings). The number of dwellings will continue to increase in these SA1s due to infill development and construction of high rise apartments along Pier Street.

Do you have any further comments on how the ASGS could be improved to better suit your needs?

Local government is a major user of Census data as it provides the evidence base for policy formulation, advocacy and decision making. Therefore, it is critical that spatial units align to LGA boundaries so that the data is more accessible to users ie without having to account for geographic splits over boundaries. The example provided here illustrates how SA1s can be problematic, as they may not represent the true characteristics of the community. Problematic SA1s can then have flow on effects through the rest of the ASGS main structure, and we've demonstrated here that data for the SA2 of Laverton is not reflective of that community.

We also believe that the ABS needs to consider major strategic development sites in the design of SA1s in established parts of major urban areas. Not all growth occurs on the fringe. The Urban Development Program (UDP) data produced by the Victorian Department of Water, Land and Planning has good data which would assist the ASGS design process. Strategic planning for major Australian cities is concerned with curbing urban sprawl, and as such there are many former industrial sites converted into residential uses. An example in Hobsons Bay is Precinct 15 (covered by SA1 2134303) which will contain approximately 3,000 dwellings when fully built. The SA1 is fine for 2021, but in 2026 it is highly likely it will need to be split as development is likely to be underway at that time. Using the UDP data, in conjunction with consulting with State and Local Government, would allow the design of SA1s to capture this type of dwelling growth before each Census and provide better data to assist with planning and service provision.