

If you need to know how many people live in your region then take note. In August 2013 the ABS released a new series of official population estimates for each region of Australia. This improved set of information provides a more accurate measure of population across Australia, and a stronger base for estimating population into the future.

NEW POPULATION ESTIMATES FROM THE 2011 CENSUS

After every Australian Census, the official population estimate for each region of the country is recalibrated using Census counts, based on where people usually live.

There are three main steps that turn the Census count for an area into a population estimate:

- the number of people missed in the Census (undercount) is estimated, allocated across the regions, and added to the Census count for each region;
- Australian residents temporarily overseas on Census night are added to their region of residence; and
- because the Census is held in August, a backdating adjustment is made to account for the population change that occurred between Census night and the 30 June reference date.

Population estimates derived this way are called 'rebased' estimates, as the new Census data forms the 'base' for this series. One major strength of population estimates is that they specifically include people who were missed in the Census.

Preliminary rebased populations

The first set of regional population estimates prepared using Census counts are published around a year after the Census, and are called 'preliminary rebased'. At this stage the estimates of residents temporarily overseas, and the backdating components of population change (births, deaths and migration) that help turn the Census count into the 30 June population estimate, are preliminary.

When rebased population estimates are calculated for the Census year, 30 June estimates for previous years are recalculated to align better with the rebased Census year estimates.

The 2011 preliminary rebased series of estimates for Australia's regions were released by the ABS in July and August 2012.

Final rebased populations

Around two years after the Census, when all supplementary data are available, a 'final rebased' estimate is prepared for each region.

The 2011 series of final rebased population estimates included the following enhancements:

- an improved allocation of Census undercount across the regions;
- final estimates of Australian residents overseas on Census night for each region; and
- final births, deaths and migration data for each region were used for backdating the Census night estimates to 30 June.

Final rebased population estimates for Australia's regions for years up to and including 2011 were released by the ABS on 30 August 2013. Updated estimates for 2012 were also released at this time.

These rebased estimates supersede all previous versions of estimates produced for the same time periods, and were prepared for all of Australia's official statistical boundary sets, including Local Government Areas.

For more information about the final series of 2011 Census-based population estimates, refer to 'Feature Article: Final rebasing of Australia's sub-state population estimates, June 2007 to 2011' in [Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2012](#) (cat. no. 3235.0).

Better estimates of population for your region now and into the future

The final rebased data provide the best base for estimating population forward from 2011, giving Australians the best measure of how many people live in each region. The annual population updates will continue to reference this 2011 base until information from the 2016 Census is available.

A NEW SERIES OF HISTORICAL POPULATION ESTIMATES

In addition to the release of new estimates from the 2011 Census, the ABS has reassessed the way that populations for previous years were derived. Consequently we have prepared a new and better quality historical series of population levels for Australia and all of its regions.

A key part of the process of calculating Australia's official population estimates from the Census is estimating the number of people missed from the Census. This Census undercount is added to the Census count to help obtain the estimate of people who live in Australia for the Census year.

For the 2011 Census we improved the estimate of Census undercount, with a major change to the methodology used to derive the undercount. We found that the number of people missed from the Census was not as high as previously thought. This means that the undercount adjustment used to estimate the population from the 2011 Census was significantly lower than for previous Censuses.

Had we used the old method in 2011, we would have added around 250,000 more people across Australia's regions who were not actually in the population.

Our analysis also determined that too many people were added to the Census counts for previous Censuses (1996, 2001 and 2006). This means that previous population estimates calculated for earlier years were generally higher than they would have been using the new methodology to estimate undercount.

We have therefore revised historical data from 1991, to deliver more reliable population levels and to ensure population growth for your region better reflects what we know from other information.

This extraordinary, one-off historical data revision process is referred to as 'recasting' the data.

The recasting process involved calculating new estimates of undercount for the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census base points, starting with Australia and the states and territories. These revised series were published in [Australian Demographic Statistics](#) (cat. no. 3101.0) on 20 June 2013.

Recasting Australia's regional population estimates

New estimates of undercount were then derived for all areas within each state and territory, starting with the capital city and rest of state regions.

This process ensured that the new historical population figures were as accurate as possible across the 20 year period, when compared against information from a number of different data sources.

The new historical series therefore represent the highest quality population data the ABS has ever produced for regions across Australia.

For more information about the new historical series of population estimates for Australia and its regions, refer to 'Feature Article: Recasting 20 years of Australia's sub-state population estimates' in [Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2012](#) (cat. no. 3235.0).

Availability of the new series

A new 20 year series of regional population estimates was released by the ABS on 30 August 2013. This series contains estimates for Australia's wide range of official statistical boundary sets, including Local Government Areas.

You can find this new series of regional population estimates in the following products:

- for **total populations** refer to [Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012](#) (cat. no. 3218.0)
- for **age/sex breakdowns** refer to [Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2012](#) (cat. no. 3235.0).