

URBAN CENTRES AND LOCALITIES (UCLs) and SIGNIFICANT URBAN AREAS (SUAs)

What are UCLs?

Urban Centres and Localities (UCLs) are a geographical unit that statistically describe Australian population centres with populations exceeding 200 persons. They are designed for the release of data from the Census of Population and Housing, and are derived from analysis of the data within Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) from the 2011 Census. UCLs are created from aggregates of SA1s. Centres with a core urban population of 1,000 persons or more are considered to be Urban Centres, whilst smaller centres with populations of 200 persons or more and a core urban population below 1,000 persons are considered to be Localities.

For 2011, there are 1839 Urban Centres and Localities covering all of Australia, with no gaps or overlaps. There are 684 Urban Centres, 1,128 Localities, and 27 Special Purpose UCLs covering Remainder of State/Territory, Migratory – Offshore – Shipping and No usual address. Centres that cross a state or territory border (e.g. Mulwala – Yarrowonga, Gold Coast – Tweed Heads) are considered to be the same UCL, but are split along that border.

Populations contained within Urban Centres are used to describe Australia's urban population, with populations contained in Localities and Remainder of State/Territory describing Australia's rural population.

What are SUAs?

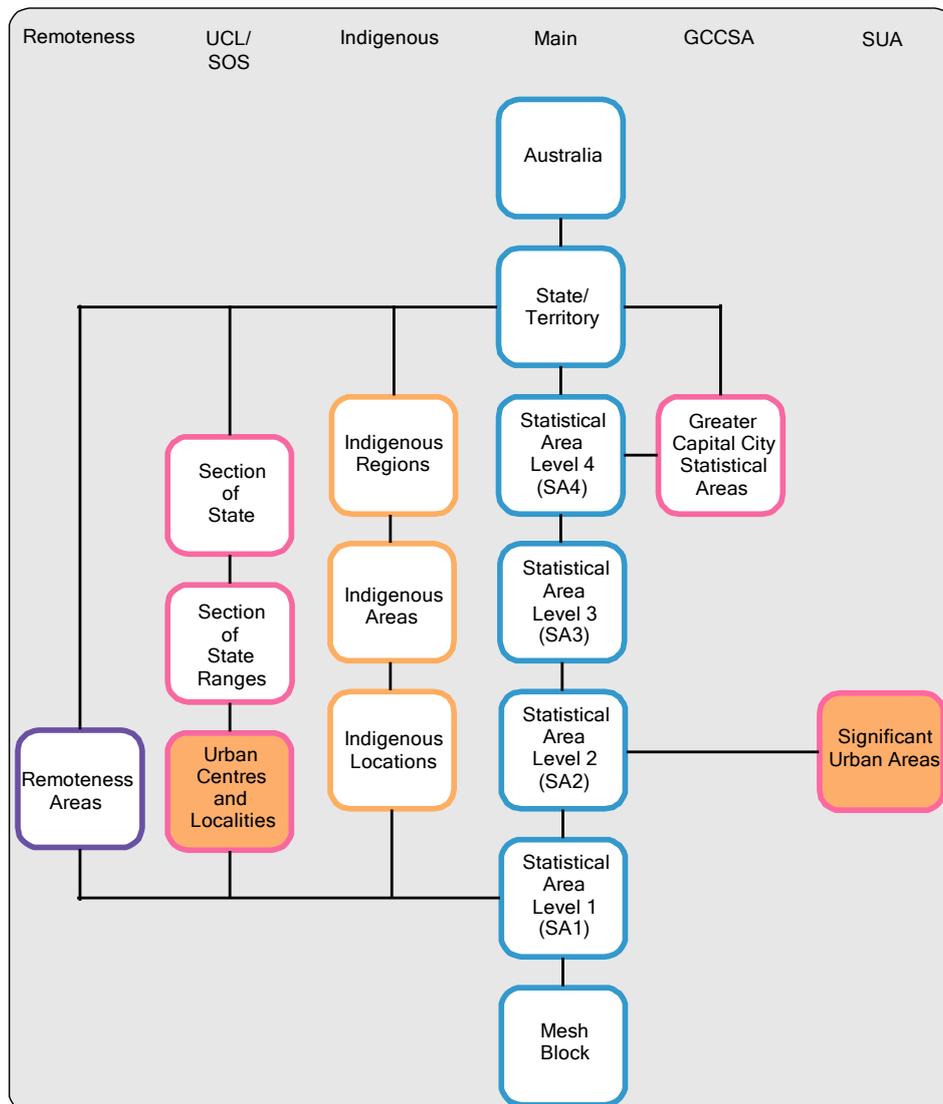
Significant Urban Areas (SUAs) are a geographical unit that describe extended urban concentrations of more than 10,000 people. They are aggregates of SA2s and are designed to enable the release of a wide range of intercensal data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) such as Estimated Resident Populations (ERPs), Australia's official population measure. They describe urban concentrations and do not necessarily represent a single Urban Centre as they can represent a cluster of related Urban Centres with a core urban population of over 10,000 people. They can also include related peri-urban and satellite development and the area into which the urban development is likely to expand.

Each SUA contains at least one centre with a core urban population of over 7,000 people. Related Urban Centres have an edge-to-edge separation of less than 5km along reasonable sealed roads. All Urban Centres of over 10,000 people are contained within an SUA.

SUAs cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlap and may cross a state or territory border (e.g. Albury – Wodonga, Gold Coast – Tweed Heads). For 2011 there are 110 SUAs, including 101 SUAs for urban concentrations and nine remainder areas representing the balance of each state and territory ('Not in any Significant Urban Area').

Diagram 1 shows the ABS structures of the ASGS, with UCLs and SUAs highlighted.

Diagram 1: ASGS ABS Structures



What data will be available?

A range of Census products are available for Urban Centres and Localities. All other ABS data published intercensally at SA2 level can be aggregated to Statistical Urban Area.

Where can I get the UCL and SUA boundaries?

Both the UCL and SUA 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, digital boundaries are available through the '**Downloads**' tab of the ASGS Main Structures online publication: [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 4 – Significant Urban Areas, Urban centres and Localities, Section of State](#) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.004).

The publication includes a manual, maps of both the UCLs and SUAs, and complete lists of the various regions of the ASGS and their hierarchical relationships.

Where can I get further information?

A detailed discussion of UCLs and SUAs and the criteria used in their design can be found in the online publication: [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 4 – Significant Urban Areas, Urban centres and Localities, Section of State](#) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.004).

More information on the ASGS and ABS Statistical Geography can be found by visiting the ABS website: <http://www.abs.gov.au/geography>

Any questions or comments can be emailed to geography@abs.gov.au