

IS LIFE IN YOUR REGION GETTING BETTER? MEASURING PROGRESS IN AUSTRALIA'S REGIONS

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Abstract

The Progress in Australian Regions – Yearbook is an annual statistical report on how regions across Australia are progressing against social, economic, environmental and governance indicators. It provides an overview of the ways regional areas are changing over time and is designed to be used by regional stakeholders and communities to understand progress in their region.

The *Yearbook* is organised according to a framework that has been developed to group indicators into domains corresponding to different aspects of socio-economic progress. The *Yearbook* aims to consider the broad concept of progress, which includes all improvements in the well-being of people and households over time. This requires looking beyond regional economic systems to also consider the wider range of experiences and living conditions of people in each region. The *Yearbook* also includes contextual indicators not related to progress, but which are nonetheless useful in forming a well-rounded understanding of the basic characteristics of each region.

This approach builds on a framework developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Progress indicators are classified into four domains: Society, Economy, Environment and Governance. Contextual indicators are classified into three domains: Population and Demographics, Transport and Infrastructure, and Industry and Innovation. Each domain consists of a set of themes that are represented by one or more statistical indicators.

The *Yearbook's* indicators can be viewed through a geographic lens, providing the ability to track the progress of regions at various 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.

One of the challenges of producing the *Yearbook* is data gaps. For several progress themes, there were insufficient current data sources to support the measurement of progress. The limited availability of some classes of regional data is another challenge.