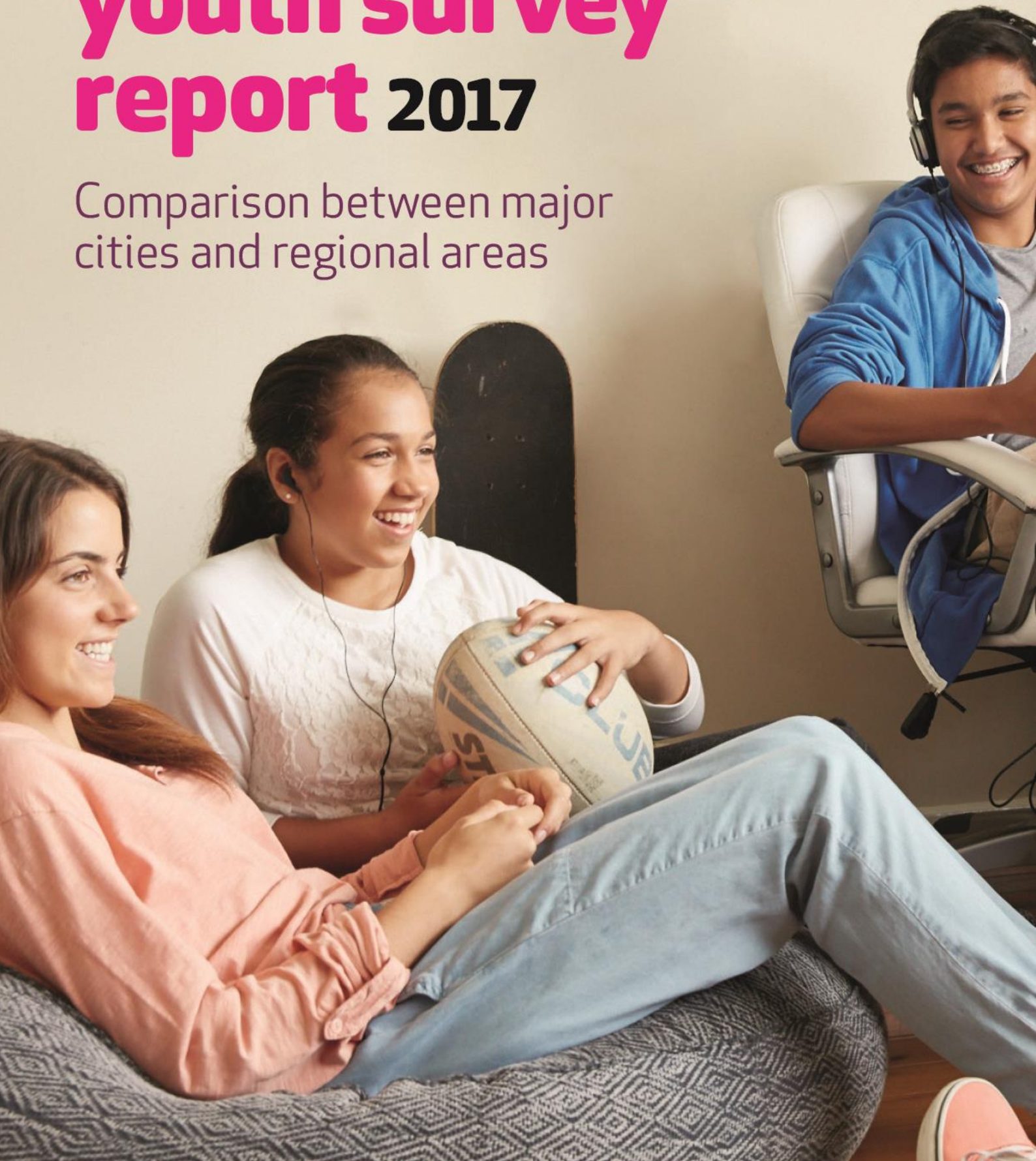


**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

youth survey report 2017

Comparison between major
cities and regional areas



Mission Australia Youth Survey 2017: Comparison between major cities and regional areas

Key points

- 24,055 young people responded to the *Youth Survey 2017*
- 15,071 young people aged 15-19 years from major cities (61.2% females, 36.4% males).
- 8,450 young people living in regional areas (51.0% females, 45.4% males).
- Greater proportion of young people from regional areas identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (9.7% compared with 2.8% of young people from major cities).
- Around twice the proportion of respondents from major cities stated that they were born overseas and speaking a language other than English (18.4% and 21.9% compared with 9.2% and 11.1% of respondents from regional areas).
- A slightly higher proportion of young people from major cities reported that they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* in their studies (60.7% compared with 58.1% of respondents from regional areas).
- A slightly higher proportion of students from major cities stated that they intended to complete Year 12 (97.9% compared with 95.3% of participants from regional areas).
- A greater proportion of respondents from major cities than from regional areas were planning to go to university after school (75.5% compared with 60.0%).
- The top three barriers that respondents from major cities felt would impact on their study/work goals were *academic ability* (23.5%), *mental health* (13.8%) and *financial difficulty* (13.6%). For young people from regional areas the top three barriers were *academic ability* (19.3%), *financial difficulties* (15.2%), followed by *mental health* and *where you live* as third equal (both 11.9%).
- A greater proportion of young people from major cities ranked *coping with stress* and *school or study problems* as issues of personal concern (47.6% and 37.4% compared with 41.3% and 32.7% of respondents from regional areas).
- The top three issues of national concern identified by young people living in major cities or regional areas were *mental health*, *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination*.
- A greater proportion of respondents from regional areas identified *alcohol and drugs* as an issue (36.9% compared with 29.5% of young people from major cities), while a greater proportion of respondents from major cities saw *equity and discrimination* as an issue of national concern (28.8% compared with 24.5% of young people from regional areas).
- A higher proportion of young people from major cities reported taking part in *sports as a participant* (76.2% compared with 73.8% of respondents from regional areas), while a higher proportion of young people from regional areas reported taking part in sports as a spectator (67.6% compared with 64.7% of respondents from major cities).

Background

In 2017, a total of 24,055 young people aged 15-19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey*. This brief report compares the responses of young people in terms of their location, which was measured by their place of usual residence at the time of completing the survey. Each respondent was grouped into either living in a major city or a regional area as determined by the remoteness levels developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics¹ (see Appendix A).

Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 15,071 respondents were living in major cities (61.2% females, 36.4% males) and a total of 8,450 respondents were living in regional areas (51.0% females, 45.4% males). A greater proportion of young people from regional areas than major cities identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (9.7% compared to 2.8%). Around twice the proportion of respondents from major cities stated that they were born overseas and speaking a language other than English (18.4% and 21.9% compared with 9.2% and 11.1% for young people from regional areas). A slightly higher proportion of respondents from major cities than regional areas were studying full-time (96.1% compared with 92.9% respectively). A higher proportion of young people from regional areas reported working part-time (45.4% compared with 38.3% of young people living in major cities).

Plans for study and training

Respondents who reported that they were currently studying were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. A slightly higher proportion of young people from major cities reported that they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* in their studies (60.7% compared with 58.1% of respondents from regional areas).

Young people were asked about their future plans for education and training following school. A slightly higher proportion of students from major cities stated that they intended to complete Year 12 (97.9% compared with 95.3% of participants from regional areas). Respondents were asked whether they were currently undertaking an apprenticeship, traineeship, TAFE or similar training or if they had done so in the past. Slightly more respondents from regional areas (21.6%) indicated that they were doing so (compared with 17.0% from major cities).

When young people were asked what they were planning to do after school, going to university was the most frequently chosen option. However, a greater proportion of respondents from major cities than from regional areas indicated that they planned to do so (75.5% compared with 60.0%).

Confidence in achieving study/work goals after school

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Similar proportions of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve study/work goals, with 41.0% of young people from regional areas indicating that they were *extremely confident* or *very confident* and 39.9% of young people from major cities indicating that they were *extremely confident* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their goals after school.

¹ ABS (2012) 'Postcode 2012 to Remoteness Area 2011', 1270.0.55.006 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Correspondences, July 2011, Accessed 14/11/17:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1270.0.55.006July%202011?OpenDocument>.

Barriers to post-school goals

Respondents who were still at school were asked to indicate whether they felt there were any barriers which may impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Around half of young people from major cities and regional areas indicated that they felt there would be barriers (51.6% and 51.1% respectively).

Respondents who reported the presence of barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items which barriers they saw as preventing them from achieving their goals after school. For young people from major cities, the top three barriers they felt would impact on their study/work goals were *academic ability* (23.5%), *mental health* (13.8%) and *financial difficulty* (13.6%). For young people from regional areas the top three barriers were *academic ability* (19.3%), *financial difficulties* (15.2%), followed by *mental health* and *where you live* (third equal; both 11.9%).

What young people value

In 2017 young people were again asked how much they valued *family relationships*, *financial security*, *friendships*, *getting a job*, *physical and mental health* and *school or study satisfaction*. Among respondents from major cities *friendships*, *family relationships* and *school or study satisfaction* ranked as the three most highly valued items (82.1%, 81.0% and 75.2%). *Family relationships*, *friendships* and *physical and mental health* ranked as the three most highly valued items for young people from regional areas (78.6%, 78.1% and 70.5%).

Issues of personal concern

Young people were asked to rank how concerned they had been about a number of issues in the past year. The responses were similar for young people from major cities and regional areas, with *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *body image* ranked as the top three issues of concern. However, a greater proportion of young people ranked *coping with stress* and *school or study problems* as issues of personal concern (47.6% and 37.4% compared with 41.3% and 32.7% of respondents from regional areas).

Where young people go for help with important issues

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. The top three sources of help for young people living in major cities and regional areas were their *friend/s*, *parent/s* and *relative/family friend* (85.4%, 77.8% and 59.98% compared with 82.9%, 77.6% and 64.2% respectively).

How well do young people's families get along?

Young people were asked how well they thought their family got along. Similar proportions of respondents from major cities and regional areas rated their family's ability to get along very positively.

Most important issues in Australia today

Young people were asked to write down the three issues that they considered were the most important in Australia today. The top three issues of national concern identified by young people living in major cities and regional areas were *mental health*, *alcohol and drugs* and *equity and discrimination*. A greater proportion of respondents from regional areas identified *alcohol and drugs* as an issue (36.9% compared with 29.5% of young people from major cities), while a greater proportion of respondents from major cities saw *equity and discrimination* as an issue of national concern (28.8% compared with 24.5% of young people from regional areas).

Activities that young people are involved in

The top three activities for young people aged 15 to 19 years in major cities and regional areas were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work*. A higher proportion of young people from major cities reported participation in *sports as a participant* (76.2% compared with 73.8% of young people from regional areas), while a higher proportion of young people from regional areas reported participation in sports as a spectator (67.6% compared with 64.7% of young people from major cities).

Happiness and the future

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole. The majority of young people from major cities and regional areas felt happy about their lives overall (63.2% and 62.5% respectively).

Young people were also asked to rate how positive they felt about the future. Results for young people living in major cities and regional areas are very similar, with around six in ten respondents either very positive or positive about the future (62.3% of young people from major cities and 62.0% of young people from regional areas).

Summary tables

This report is based on the responses of 15,049 young people living in major cities and 8,450 young people living in regional areas in Australia.

Data displayed in this report have been defined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geographical Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Areas². The 'major cities' classification referenced in this report aligns with the 'Major Cities of Australia' remoteness area, while 'regional areas' is derived from the combined total of the 'Inner Regional Australia', 'Outer Regional Australia', 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia' remoteness areas. Respondents to Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2017 were classified into these remoteness areas according to postcode provided (see Appendix A).

Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire. Missing data have been excluded from the calculation of these tables.

For the full Youth Survey 2017 report visit www.missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey

Table 1. Profile of respondents

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Female respondents	61.1	50.9
Male respondents	36.3	45.3
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	2.8	9.7
Country of birth – not Australia	18.4	9.2
Language other than English	21.9	11.1
Disability	4.2	5.6
Education and Employment		
Studying full-time	96.1	92.9
Planning to complete Year 12	97.9	95.3
Apprenticeship/ traineeship/ TAFE/ or similar	17.0	21.6
Employed full-time	0.3	0.9
Employed part-time	38.3	45.4
Not in paid employment, looking for work	34.9	33.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	26.6	20.0

Table 2. Young people's satisfaction with studies

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Very satisfied	13.8	12.5
Satisfied	56.9	55.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22.5	24.6
Dissatisfied	5.3	5.4
Very dissatisfied	1.5	1.9

² ABS (2012) 'Postcode 2012 to Remoteness Area 2011', 1270.0.55.006 - Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Correspondences, July 2011, Accessed 14/11/17:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1270.0.55.006July%202011?OpenDocument>.

Table 3. Plans after leaving school

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
University	75.5	60.0
Get a job	31.1	33.5
Travel/gap year	28.3	30.1
TAFE/college	11.3	12.9
Apprenticeship	6.0	12.0
Other	4.9	6.4
No choices available	0.3	0.7

Table 4. Confidence in achieving study/work goals

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Extremely confident	9.5	10.2
Very confident	30.4	30.8
Somewhat confident	40.3	41.4
Slightly confident	16.7	14.5
Not at all confident	3.1	3.1

Table 5. Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals after school

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Presence of barriers	51.6	51.1
Academic ability	23.5	19.3
Mental health	13.8	11.9
Financial difficulty	13.6	15.2
Admission/job requirements	13.4	10.2
Lack of jobs	10.6	9.3
Family responsibilities	8.1	8.4
Lack of information	7.3	6.6
Lack of school support	5.1	5.6
Where you live	5.0	11.9
Transport	4.8	5.4
Other	4.7	4.7
Lack of family support	4.2	4.1
Physical health	3.7	3.8
Discrimination	3.0	2.4

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table 6. What young people value

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Friendships	82.1	78.1
Family relationships	81.0	78.6
School or study satisfaction	75.2	68.9
Physical and mental health	72.0	70.5
Financial security	48.1	48.8
Getting a job	37.1	44.7

Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely important* and *very important* for each item.

Table 7. Issues of personal concern to young people

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Coping with stress	47.6	41.3
School or study problems	37.4	32.7
Body image	31.8	30.1
Depression	23.9	23.1
Family conflict	20.3	19.5
Personal safety	15.5	15.3
Bullying/emotional abuse	14.9	16.0
Suicide	12.6	13.4
Discrimination	11.2	10.9
Drugs	6.2	7.8
Alcohol	5.7	6.4
Gambling	3.1	3.6

Note: Items were ranked by summing the responses for *extremely concerned* and *very concerned* for each item.

Table 8. Where young people go for help with important issues

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Friend/s	85.4	82.9
Parent/s)	77.8	77.6
Relative/family friend	59.9	64.2
Brother/sister	53.5	54.8
Internet	53.5	47.2
GP or health professional	43.3	43.9
Teacher	38.1	38.6
School counsellor	33.9	32.1
Online counselling website	18.4	16.6
Telephone hotline	12.7	11.8
Community agency	10.3	13.1
Magazines	5.5	6.0

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table 9. How well do young people's families get along?

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Excellent	26.8	25.9
Very good	32.7	31.3
Good	21.3	22.6
Fair	12.1	12.4
Poor	7.0	7.7

Table 10. Most important issues in Australia today

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Mental health	33.8	33.6
Alcohol and drugs	29.5	36.9
Equity and discrimination	28.8	24.5
Education	13.4	12.0
International relations	13.4	13.7
The economy and financial matters	12.8	12.4
The environment	11.8	9.5
Crime, safety and violence	11.3	11.4
Population issues	11.3	8.6
Bullying	10.7	10.5
Employment	9.9	10.8
Homelessness/housing	8.7	7.4
Health	8.3	8.6
LGBTIQ issues*	7.8	5.8
Politics	6.6	7.1

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ) issues.

Table 11. Activities young people are involved in over the past year

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Sport as a participant	76.2	73.8
Sport as a spectator	64.7	67.6
Volunteer work	54.9	53.2
Arts/cultural/music activities	54.6	49.2
Student leadership activities	42.1	40.4
Youth groups and clubs	30.8	30.2
Religious group/activity	31.3	25.2
Environmental group/activity	23.1	24.7
Political groups/organisations	8.5	7.6

Table 12. How happy are young people

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
100 – Very happy	9.7	11.2
90	13.6	13.5
80	22.2	21.7
70	17.7	16.1
60	9.9	10.1
50 – Not happy or sad	11.4	12.3
40	5.7	5.6
30	3.9	3.4
20	2.4	2.6
10	1.2	1.1
0 – Very sad	2.1	2.4

Table 13. Feelings about the future

	Major cities %	Regional areas %
Very positive	15.3	16.8
Positive	47.0	46.2
Neither positive nor negative	27.5	27.2
Negative	7.1	6.8
Very negative	3.1	2.9

Appendix A

The data displayed in this report have been defined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geographical Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Areas. The 'major cities' classification referenced in this report aligns with the 'Major Cities of Australia' remoteness area, while 'regional areas' is derived from the combined total of the 'Inner Regional Australia', 'Outer Regional Australia', 'Remote Australia' and 'Very Remote Australia' remoteness areas. As such, the capital cities of Darwin and Hobart have been classified under 'Inner Regional Australia' as per the remoteness area classification for these regions. Respondents to Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2017 were classified into these remoteness areas according to the postcode provided.

Comparisons were made between postcode data and ABS ASGS remoteness areas was done using geographical correspondences made available by the ABS for 2012 postcode regions and 2011 remoteness areas. Correspondences are a method for reassigning data from one geographical region to another. Although correspondences are not always exact (e.g. a postcode region may be split into different remoteness areas if the boundary for a remoteness area crosses that postcode region), converting smaller geographic units to larger units usually results in relatively more accurate data conversion that when converting larger to smaller areas or between areas of similar size. As postcode regions are smaller than remoteness areas, relative to each level of remoteness, correspondences utilised within this report are relatively exact. Correspondence tables used in this report can be accessed at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1270.0.55.006July%202011?OpenDocument>.