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Introduction

Statistical standard for geographic areas 2018 (SSGA18) replaces the 1992 standard, which was published as the New Zealand Standard Areas Classification 1992 (NZSAC92).

The statistical standard for geographic areas is to be used from 2018. It defines the Stats NZ input and output geographic classifications and describes their primary purposes, and sets out requirements and guidelines for the creation and maintenance of statistical geographies.

The Statistical standard for meshblock is part of the SSGA18.

Background

All data collected, statistical or otherwise, must be referenced to both time and place. Place can be any geographic reference, for example, the whole of New Zealand, a region, a town, or a lake. Identifying and classifying places into statistical geographies allows users of statistics to see not just how data varies but also where it varies.

The SSGA18 is Stats NZ's official standard for statistical geographic areas in New Zealand. It allows statistical units, such as households, people, or businesses, to be assigned to the location where they live, work, and operate.

The SSGA18 was developed to enable the production of integrated statistics by geographic area. It provides a range of geographic units that are convenient for data collection, compilation, and output, and are useful for spatial analysis of social, demographic, and economic statistics.

The statistical geographies standard had its last major update after the 1989 local government reorganisation and was published as the NZSAC92. Minor updates have occurred since 1992 through annual meshblock maintenance, after local government boundary changes, and with 5-yearly area unit updates. But over time, the statistical geographies have become out of date, and no longer reflect current land use and population patterns.

The SSGA18 has been updated with new concepts and definitions, and using geographic information system (GIS) technologies, to better meet the needs of users, and to better align with international best practice.

Stats NZ encourages the use of the SSGA18 by other organisations to improve the comparability and usefulness of statistics generally.

The new statistical geographies – statistical area 1 (SA1), statistical area 2 (SA2), and urban rural areas – are included in the 2018 annual Geographic boundary files release.

The 2018 Census of Population and Dwellings statistics and 2018 Business Demography statistics will be the first Stats NZ publications to use the new geographies. Population counts from the 2018 Census will be used to create derived statistical geographies, such as the urban influence classification (which will replace the Urban/Rural Profile (experimental) classification) and metropolitan area geography. When they are completed, the new derived geographies will be added to this standard.

Stats NZ would like to thank central and local government organisations, community groups, and individuals for their valuable contribution of local geographic knowledge, which assisted in the design of these new geographies.

Classification criteria

The SSGA18 is designed to meet user needs for social, demographic, and economic statistics.

As such, the geographies:

- are useful and relevant for data dissemination at different resolutions
- can be aggregated into larger contiguous units
- are useful building blocks for creating user-defined geographies.

Meshblocks, statistical areas, and urban/rural areas are statistically defined according to these criteria and principles.

Target population size

The population size of statistical areas should be reasonably consistent to ensure comparability. Geographies should have a minimum and maximum population threshold and the range should be minimised as much as possible. The population size of the geographic area should be balanced between releasing detailed information and considering privacy and confidentiality, to ensure that robust statistical outputs can be produced. Near-zero areas (that is, areas with few residents) are appropriate if they fulfil other criteria.

Boundaries relatable to the user

Geographies should represent a ‘community of place’ where people interact together socially and economically.

Boundaries visible on the ground

Boundaries should follow dividing features, such as rivers, roads, railway lines, and lakes. An area should ideally represent a single land use, such as the built-up environment, farm land, forests, or wilderness areas.

Compact shape

The statistical area should be compact and have contiguous boundaries to provide flexible and relevant building block geographies for users, and to assist with data visualisation.

Stable over time

The boundaries of higher-level geographies should remain stable, where possible, to allow the comparison of data over time. However, when the population distribution changes, geographies should be updated to reflect such changes. Boundaries of the smallest geographies should be regularly maintained to reflect real world changes, such as new subdivisions and motorways.

Additional criteria

Additionally, statistical geographies should:

- be well-defined, using objective criteria
- be mutually exclusive and therefore not overlap
- be comprehensive, covering the whole area to which the classification applies
- separate land and water (where possible)
- separate urban and rural areas (where possible)
- align to territorial authority and regional council boundaries
- have clear, objective maintenance criteria and plans that specify criteria for changing boundaries.

Definitions

The SSGA18 classification structures are split into two broad groups:

- statistical geographies
- administrative areas.

All of these geographies are built directly from meshblocks.

Statistical geographies

The statistical geographies form a hierarchy of geographic areas whose boundaries are specifically created according to well-defined concepts. In total, they cover all of geographic New Zealand. The boundaries align with regional council and territorial authority boundaries (with the exception of the Richmond urban area).

The statistical geographies are a statistical classification only, not a legal one, and include:

- meshblock
- statistical area 1 (SA1)
- statistical area 2 (SA2)
- urban rural.

The statistical geographies are defined and maintained by Stats NZ.

See Statistical geography hierarchy for more information.

Administrative and electoral boundaries

Central and local government administrative and electoral boundaries were established in legislation under the Local Government Act 2002 and the Electoral Act 1993. They are defined by the Local Government Commission and the Representation Commission.

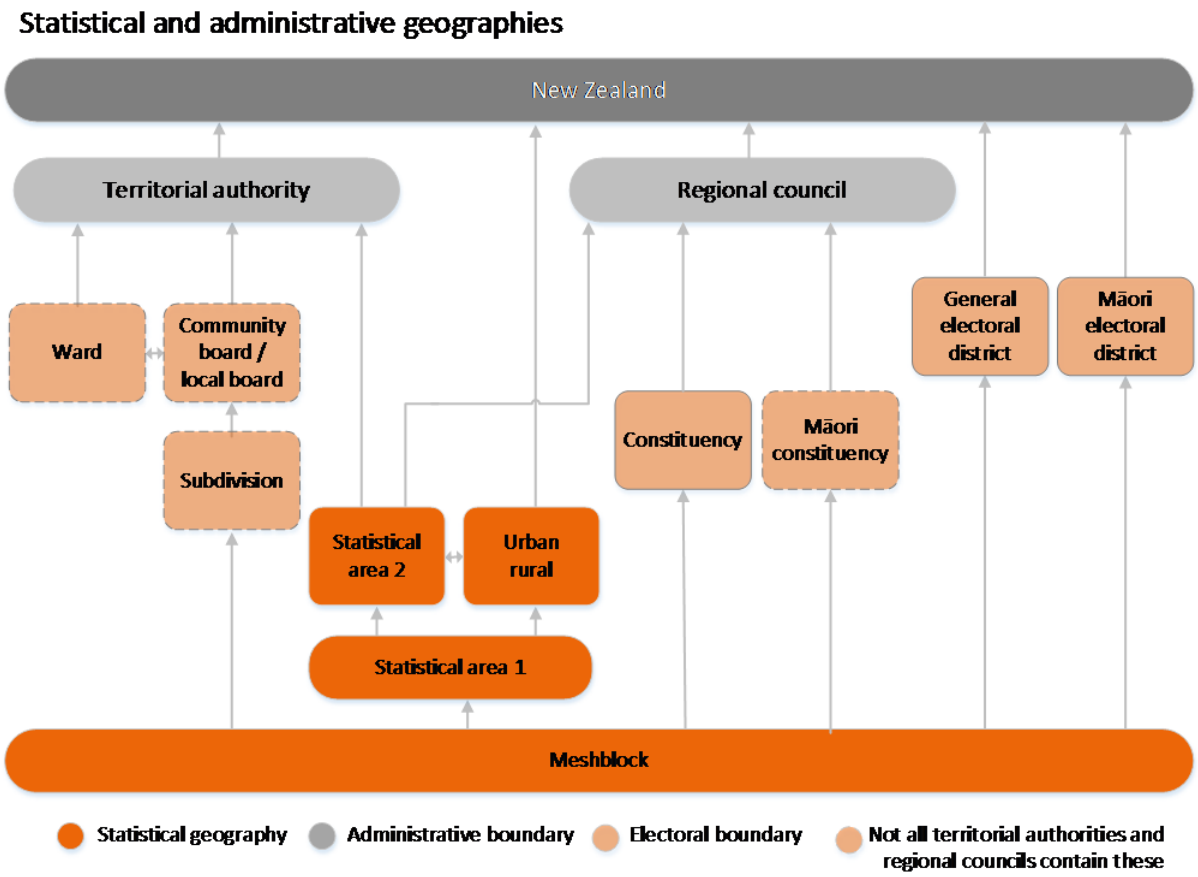
Administrative areas include:

- regional council
  - constituency
  - Māori constituency
- territorial authority
  - ward
  - community board / local board
  - subdivision
- general electoral district
- Māori electoral district.

See Local government administrative areas and Electoral areas for more information.

Figure 1 shows how the various SSGA18 structures relate to each other.

Figure 1



New Zealand

For statistical purposes, the term “New Zealand” refers to geographic New Zealand, that is, North Island, South Island, Stewart Island, and the Chatham Islands, plus the Kermadec Islands, the Auckland Islands, the Subantarctic Islands (Campbell Island, Antipodes Islands, Bounty Islands, and Snares Islands), and the Ross Dependency.

The North, South, Stewart, and Chatham Islands are digitised according to the New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000 standard projection for general mapping in New Zealand. The other islands are not digitised but are included in the statistical geographies to provide complete coverage of geographic New Zealand.

Statistical geography hierachy

The statistical geography hierarchy has four levels:

- meshblock
- statistical area 1 (SA1)
- statistical area 2 (SA2)
- urban rural.

Each statistical geography is nested within the level above. SA1s are built by joining meshblocks together and SA2s are built by joining SA1s together. Within the urban rural geography, urban areas are defined at SA2 level and rural settlements are defined at SA1 level.

Meshblock

Meshblocks are the smallest geographic units for which statistical data is reported by Stats NZ. A meshblock is a defined geographic area, varying in size from part of a city block to a large area of rural land. Meshblocks are contiguous: each meshblock borders on another to form a network covering all of New Zealand, including coasts and inlets. The meshblock classification extends out to New Zealand's 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and is digitised to the 12 mile (19.3km) limit. Meshblocks have an ideal size range of 30–60 dwellings (around 60–120 residents).

The primary purposes of the meshblock classification are:

- to provide a small, relevant and flexible building block geography for aggregation into other statistical geographies
- to ensure geographic boundaries can be physically identified and located on the ground by alignment with geographic or physical features, or with the cadastre
- as the lowest-level building block, to form the basis of New Zealand's electoral system, by which it defines electorates and polling areas for both parliamentary and local government elections.

The Statistical standard for meshblock defines meshblocks and describes their primary purposes. The standard sets out requirements and guidelines for the creation and maintenance of the meshblock classification and Stats NZ's responsibilities for maintaining the standard.

As the lowest-level building block, the meshblock classification is primarily an input geography which supports the electoral system, survey enumeration, and higher-level geographies. Statistical outputs are limited to single variables, such as census population and dwelling counts, to which confidentiality rules are applied to prevent the identification of individuals living in sparsely populated areas.

The meshblock classification

The meshblock classification is a flat classification, and in 2018 contains 53,589 meshblocks – 53,573 digitised and 16 non-digitised. Meshblocks are not named and have seven-digit codes.

See Classification of Meshblock for more information.

Statistical areas

Statistical area geographies are aggregations of meshblocks optimised to be of similar population sizes to enable the release of low-level data. They are non-administrative areas that are in between meshblocks and territorial authorities in size. Statistical areas either define or aggregate to define urban rural areas, territorial authorities, and regional councils.

The statistical area 1 (SA1) geography is a new output geography that allows the release of more detailed information about population characteristics than is available at the meshblock level.

The statistical area 2 (SA2) geography replaces the area unit geography. Although the concepts for SA2s are generally the same as the area unit concepts, the boundaries and names have changed to reflect changes in land use and population patterns since the 1992 geography was created.

Statistical area 1 (SA1)

SA1 definition

The main purpose of the SA1 geography is to provide an output geography that allows the release of more low-level data than is available at the meshblock level. Built by joining meshblocks, SA1s have an ideal size range of 100–200 residents, and a maximum population of about 500. This is to minimise suppression of population data in multivariate statistics tables.

The SA1 should:

- form a contiguous cluster of one or more meshblocks
- be either urban, rural, or water in character
- be small enough to:
    - allow flexibility for aggregation to other statistical geographies
    - allow users to aggregate areas into their own defined communities of interest
- form a nested hierarchy with statistical output geographies and administrative boundaries. It must:
    - be built from meshblocks
    - either define or aggregate to define SA2s, urban rural areas, territorial authorities, and regional councils.

SA1 population size

SA1s generally have a population of 100–200 residents, with some exceptions:

- SA1s with nil or nominal resident populations are created to represent remote mainland areas, unpopulated islands, inland water, inlets, or oceanic areas.
- Some SA1s in remote rural areas and urban industrial or business areas have fewer than 100 residents.
- Some SA1s that contain apartment blocks, retirement villages, and large non-residential facilities have more than 500 residents.

The SA1 classification

The SA1 classification is a flat classification and in 2018 contains 29,889 SA1s – 29,873 digitised and 16 non-digitised. SA1s are not named. SA1 codes have seven digits starting with a ‘7’ and are

numbered approximately north to south. As new SA1s are created, they are given the next available numeric code.

See Classification of Statistical Area 1 for more information.

Statistical area 2 (SA2)

SA2 definition

The main purpose of the SA2 geography is to provide an output geography for higher aggregations of population data than can be provided at the SA1 level. The SA2 geography aims to reflect communities that interact together socially and economically. In populated areas, SA2s generally contain similar-sized populations.

The SA2 should:

- form a contiguous cluster of one or more SA1s
- excluding exceptions below, allow the release of multivariate statistics with minimal data suppression
- capture a similar type of area, such as high-density urban areas, farmland, wilderness areas, and water areas
- be socially homogeneous and capture a community of interest. It may have, for example:
  - a shared road network
  - shared community facilities
  - shared historical or social links, or
  - socio-economic similarity
- form a nested hierarchy with statistical output geographies and administrative boundaries. It must:
  - be built from SA1s
  - either define or aggregate to define urban rural areas, territorial authorities, and regional councils.

In major urban areas, an SA2 or a group of SA2s often approximates a single suburb. A small urban area containing up to 5,000 residents may be represented by a single SA2. In rural areas, rural settlements are included in their respective SA2 with the surrounding rural area.

SA2 population size

SA2s in city council areas generally have a population of 2,000–4,000 residents while SA2s in district council areas generally have a population of 1,000–3,000 residents.

In rural areas, many SA2s have fewer than 1,000 residents because they are in conservation areas or cover large areas that have sparse populations, for example, Fiordland.

SA2s have been created in urban areas where there is significant business and industrial activity, for example ports, airports, industrial, commercial, and retail areas. These areas have fewer than 1,000 residents and are useful for analysing business demographics, labour markets, and travel-to-work patterns.

Some SA2s with nil or nominal populations have been created to ensure that the SA2 geography covers all of New Zealand and aligns with New Zealand's topography and local government boundaries. These types of SA2s are described below.

Water SA2s

SA2s with nil or nominal resident populations are created to represent inland water, inlets or oceanic areas and include:

- inland lakes larger than 50 km^2 (lakes smaller than 50 km^2 are included with the surrounding land SA2)
- harbours larger than 40 km^2
- major ports
- other non-contiguous inlets and harbours defined by territorial authority
- contiguous oceanic areas defined by regional council.

Island SA2s

Stewart Island and Chatham Islands are represented by separate SA2s.

To minimise suppression of population data, small islands with nil or low populations close to the mainland are generally included with their adjacent land-based SA2.

SA2s have been created for populated single islands or groups of islands that are some distance from the mainland, or to separate large unpopulated islands from urban areas. These SA2s are:

- Three Kings Islands
- Barrier Islands (includes Great Barrier and Little Barrier Islands, and other nearby islands)
- Gulf Islands (includes Motutapu, Rangitoto, and other islands in the Hauraki Gulf)
- Waiheke Island (six SA2s)
- Islands Thames Coromandel District
- Islands Bay of Plenty Region (Motiti Island, Mayor Island, Moutohora Island, and White Island)
- Bare Island (in the Hawke's Bay region but outside the territorial authority area)
- Matakana Island
- Kapiti Island
- Mana Island
- Islands Tasman District (Best Island, Bell Island, and Rabbit Island).

Alignment with territorial authority and regional council boundaries

In rural areas where territorial authority boundaries straddle regional council boundaries, SA2s have been created to maintain the statistical geography and administrative area hierarchy. These SA2s each have fewer than 200 residents and are: Arahiwi, Tiroa, Rangataiki, Kaimanawa, Taharua, Te More, Ngamatea, Whangamomona, and Mara.

The SA2 classification

The SA2 classification is a flat classification and in 2018 contains 2,253 SA2s – 2,237 digitised and 16 non-digitised.

Each SA2 is a single geographic entity with a name and a numeric code. The name refers to a geographic feature or a recognised place name or suburb. In some instances where place names are the same or very similar, the SA2s are differentiated by their territorial authority, for example, Gladstone (Invercargill City) and Gladstone (Carterton District).

SA2 codes have six digits. North Island SA2 codes start with a '1' or '2' and South Island SA2 codes start with a '3'. They are numbered approximately north to south within their respective territorial authorities. In 2018, the last two digits of each code is 00, and when SA2 boundaries change in the future, only the last two digits of the code will change, to ensure the north–south pattern is maintained.

See Classification of Statistical Area 2 for more information.

Urban rural

The urban rural geography classifies New Zealand into areas that share common urban or rural characteristics. It is used to disseminate a broad range of Stats NZ's social, demographic, and economic statistics.

The urban rural classification separately identifies urban areas, rural settlements, other rural areas, and water areas. The urban areas represent densely developed spaces, and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. Rural settlements, other rural areas, and bodies of water represent areas not included within an urban area.

The urban rural indicator classifies urban, rural, and water areas by type. Urban areas are classified by population size; rural areas are classified as rural settlements or rural other; and water areas are classified as inland water, inlet, or oceanic.

Urban areas and rural settlements are delineated by the inspection of aerial imagery, local government land designations on district plan maps, address registers, property title data, and any other available information. However, because the underlying meshblock pattern is used to define the geographies, boundaries may not align exactly with local government land designations or what can be seen in aerial images.

Urban areas are built from SA2s. Rural and water areas are built from SA1s.

Urban areas

Urban areas are statistically defined areas with no administrative or legal basis. They are characterised by high population density with many built environment features where people and buildings are located close together for residential, cultural, productive, trade, and social purposes.

Urban areas are delineated using the following criteria. They:

- form a contiguous cluster of one or more SA2s
- contain an estimated resident population of more than 1,000 people and usually have a population density of more than 400 residents or 200 address points per square kilometre
- have a high coverage of built physical structures and artificial landscapes such as:
    - residential dwellings and apartments
    - commercial structures, such as factories, office complexes, and shopping centres

  - transport and communication facilities, such as airports, ports and port facilities, railway stations, bus stations and similar transport hubs, and communications infrastructure
  - medical, education, and community facilities
  - tourist attractions and accommodation facilities
  - waste disposal and sewerage facilities
  - cemeteries
  - sports and recreation facilities, such as stadiums, golf courses, racecourses, showgrounds, and fitness centres
  - green spaces, such as community parks, gardens, and reserves
- have strong economic ties where people gather together to work, and for social, cultural, and recreational interaction
- have planned development within the next 5–8 years.

Urban areas are further classified by the size of their estimated resident population:

- major urban area – 100,000 or more residents
- large urban area – 30,000–99,999 residents
- medium urban area – 10,000–29,999 residents
- small urban area – 1,000–9,999 residents.

Urban boundaries are independent of local government and other administrative boundaries, that is, an urban area may be contained within one or more local government region or administrative areas. The Richmond urban area, which is mainly in the Tasman District, is the only urban area that crosses territorial authority boundaries, and includes an SA2 that is in the Nelson City territorial authority.

Rural areas

Rural areas represent land-based areas outside urban areas. They are classified as rural settlements or other rural.

Rural settlement

Rural settlements are statistically defined areas with no administrative or legal basis. A rural settlement is a cluster of residential dwellings about a place that usually contains at least one community or public building.

Rural settlements are delineated using the following criteria. They:

- form a contiguous cluster of one or more SA1s
- contain an estimated resident population of 200–1,000, or at least 40 residential dwellings
- represent a reasonably compact area, or have a visible centre of population with a population density of at least 200 residents per square kilometre or 100 address points per square kilometre
- contain at least one community or public building, such as a church, school, or shop.

The SSGA18 urban rural geography includes rural settlements that were previously called rural centres in NZSAC92, rural settlements that were previously part of an NZSAC92 urban area, and newly identified rural settlements that meet the above criteria.

Rural settlements are usually combined with the surrounding rural area to form an SA2, in order to reach the target SA2 population size. In some instances, the settlement and the SA2 may have the same name, for example, West Melton rural settlement is part of the West Melton SA2.

Other rural

Other rural areas are the mainland areas and islands located outside urban areas or rural settlements. Other rural areas include land used for agriculture and forestry, conservation areas, and regional and national parks.

Other rural areas are defined by territorial authority.

Water

To ensure that the urban rural geography covers all of geographic New Zealand, bodies of water are classified separately, using the land/water demarcation classification described in the Statistical standard for meshblock. These water areas are not named, and are defined by territorial authority or regional council.

The water classes include:

- inland water – non-contiguous, defined by territorial authority
- inlets (which also includes tidal areas and harbours) – non-contiguous, defined by territorial authority
- oceanic – non-contiguous, defined by regional council.

The urban rural classification

The urban rural classification is a flat classification. Each urban area and rural settlement is a single geographic entity with a name and a numeric code. In 2018, there are 178 urban areas and 400 rural settlements, based on 2013 Census data and 2018 population projections. Some urban areas and rural settlements may be reclassified when 2018 Census data is available.

Other rural areas, inland water areas, and inlets are defined by territorial authority; oceanic areas are defined by regional council; and each have a name and a numeric code.

Urban rural codes have four digits. North Island locations start with a ‘1’, South Island codes start with a ‘2’, and oceanic codes start with a ‘6’.

See Classification of urban rural for more information.

The urban rural indicator

The urban rural indicator classifies urban, rural, and water areas by type.

The indicators, with their codes in brackets, are:

- urban area – urban major (11), urban large (12), urban medium (13), urban small (14)
- rural area – rural settlement (21), rural other (22)
- water – inland water (31), inlet (32), oceanic (33).

See Classification of urban rural indicator for more information.

Administrative areas

Local government administrative areas

Regional councils

The regional council is the top tier of local government in New Zealand. Regional councils are defined under schedule 2, part 1 of the Local Government Act 2002. They were established in November 1989 after the abolition of the 22 local government regions. Regional council boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under schedule 3, clause 17 of the Local Government Act 2002.

In 2018, there are 16 regions which cover every territorial authority in New Zealand, with the exception of the Chatham Islands Territory. Five regions are administered as unitary authorities, which function as both regional council and territorial authority.

Regional council boundaries are based largely on water catchments, such as rivers, lakes, and harbours. The seaward boundary of the regions is the 12-mile (19.3km) New Zealand territorial limit. In determining regions, consideration was also given to regional communities of interest, natural resource management, land use planning, and environmental matters.

The standard classification of regional council is a flat classification and contains 17 categories (including '99 – Area Outside Region'). It is released annually on 1 January to coincide with the update of meshblocks, but there are not always changes from the previous classification.

See Classification of Regional Council for more information.

Territorial authorities

Territorial authorities are the second tier of local government in New Zealand, below regional councils. They are defined under schedule 2, part 1 of the Local Government Act 2002 as city councils or district councils. Territorial authorities were established in 1989 when 205 territorial local authorities were replaced by 75 territorial authorities. Territorial boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under schedule 3, clause 17 of the Local Government Act 2002.

In 2018, there are 67 territorial authorities: 12 city councils, 53 district councils, Auckland Council, and Chatham Islands Council. Five territorial authorities (Auckland Council, Nelson City Council, and the Gisborne, Tasman, and Marlborough district councils) also perform the functions of a regional council and are therefore unitary authorities. The Chatham Islands Council performs some regional council functions.

Territorial authority boundaries are based on community of interest and road access. Some territorial authorities are coterminous with regional council boundaries but there are exceptions. See Alignment with territorial authority and regional council boundaries for more information.

The standard classification of territorial authority is a flat classification and contains 68 categories (including '999 – Area Outside Territorial Authority'). It is released annually on 1 January, and occasionally mid-year, but there are not always changes from the previous classification.

See Classification of territorial authority for more information.

Electoral areas

General electoral district

General electoral districts are the voting districts for parliamentary elections. They are constituted under section 35 of the Electoral Act 1993 and boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries.

Boundaries are set by the Representation Commission following each five-yearly census. Each electorate must have approximately the same number of people to ensure equal representation. The Representation Commission also considers communities of interest, facilities of communications, topographical features, and any projected variation in the general electoral population of those districts during their existence.

See Classification of General Electoral District for more information.

Māori electoral district

Māori electoral districts are the voting districts for parliamentary elections for people who choose to be on the Māori Electoral Roll. They are constituted under section 45 of the Electoral Act 1993 and boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries.

The number of Māori electoral districts, and electoral population for each Māori electorate, is controlled by the criteria specified in the Electoral Act 1993. When setting the boundaries, the Representation Commission also considers communities of interest among the Māori people generally and members of Māori tribes, facilities of communications, topographical features, and any projected variation in the Māori electoral population of those districts during their existence.

See Classification of Māori Electoral District for more information.

Constituencies, general constituencies, and Māori constituencies

Constituencies are the voting districts for regional council elections. They were first established in November 1989. They are defined under the Local Electoral Act 2001 and boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under section 19U of the Act.

Constituencies are required to reflect communities of interest, and their boundaries must, so far as is practicable, coincide with territorial authority and ward boundaries.

If a regional council decides to have a Māori constituency, the constituencies within the council area are known as general constituencies and Māori constituencies.

The Local Electoral Act 2001 provides for constituency boundaries to be reviewed before every second triennial local government election.

See Classification of constituency for more information.

Wards

Wards are the voting districts for territorial authorities and were first established in November 1989. They are defined under the Local Electoral Act 2001 and boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under section 19T of the Act.

The ward system was designed to allow communities within a territorial authority to be recognised, and to increase community involvement in local government.

In 2018, the following 12 territorial authorities do not have wards: Rotorua district, Kawerau district, Wairoa district, Whanganui district, Palmerston North city, Upper Hutt city, Carterton district, Nelson city, Kaikoura district, Chatham Islands territory, Dunedin city, and Invercargill city.

The Local Electoral Act 2001 provides for ward boundaries to be reviewed before every second triennial local government election.

See Classification of Ward for more information.

Community boards, local boards, and subdivisions

Community boards

Community boards are defined under the Local Government Act 2002 and Local Electoral Act 2001. Community board boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under schedule 6, clause 2 of the Local Government Act 2002, and section 19W of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

The purpose of community boards is to administer the affairs of communities with a population of 1,500 or more people within rural, urban, or metropolitan areas of a territorial authority. A community board's functions, powers, and duties are at the discretion of its parent territorial authority, so these may differ between community boards.

Community boards are a link between the council and the community. Community boards can be established at any time but may only be abolished as part of a council's regular representation review carried out before the triennial local government elections; this is provided for in the Local Electoral Act 2001.

More than 100 community boards operate in urban and rural areas of territorial authorities, excluding Auckland, which has local boards.

See Classification of Community Board for more information.

Local boards

Local boards were introduced as part of the new local government arrangements for Auckland in 2010. Local board boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under schedule 3, clause 15 of the Local Government Act 2002, and section 19T of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

Local boards can be established in the area of any unitary authority. Local boards share governance with a council's governing body, and each has complementary responsibilities guaranteed by legislation. Local boards can propose bylaws and they gather community views on local and regional matters.

See Classification of Community Board for more information.

Subdivisions

Subdivisions are a further division of community or local board areas to ensure fair geographical representation on a community or local board.

Subdivision boundaries must coincide with meshblock boundaries under schedule 3, clause 15 of the Local Government Act 2002, and section 19T of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

See Classification of Territorial Authority Subdivision for more information.

Other administrative boundaries

This section summarises other administrative boundaries that are used to administer government funding and service provision, which are based on meshblocks and higher-level geographies.

District health boards and constituencies

District health boards (DHBs) are administered under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000. Boundaries represent geographic areas based on territorial authority and ward boundaries as constituted at 1 January 2001. DHBs and constituencies are defined at meshblock level.

DHB constituencies are the electoral districts within district health boards. In 2018, the Southern DHB is the only DHB that has constituencies.

See Location boundaries (map) on the Ministry of Health website for more information.

Jury districts

High court and district court jury districts are administered under the Juries Act 1981. The Act specifies that each jury district comprises every place that is within 45km of each courthouse by the most practicable route. The Electoral Commission regularly prepares lists for the Ministry of Justice of all potential jurists who live in the meshblocks within a 45km radius of each jury courthouse.

Licensing trust districts and wards, and community trust districts

Licensing trusts and community trusts were originally created to sell liquor in areas where previously no licences to sell liquor existed. They are currently administered under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. Licensing trust districts and wards, and community trust districts, generally coincide with meshblock boundaries, but some do not.

The 2012 Act gives the Local Government Commission the authority to review the boundaries to ensure that they are coterminous with meshblock boundaries. For a list of the boundaries that are not coterminous, see Licensing Trust Districts on the Local Government Commission website.

New Zealand Police boundaries

New Zealand Police districts, police areas, and police station areas are defined by the New Zealand Police for operational and statistical reporting purposes. New Zealand Police boundaries are based on the meshblock pattern.

See Police districts on the New Zealand Police website for more information.

Regional tourism organisations

Regional tourism organisation areas are defined by Regional Tourism Organisations New Zealand (RTONZ). Boundaries generally align with territorial authority boundaries.

See the RTO Location Map on the RTONZ website for more information.

Work and Income boundaries

Accommodation Supplement areas

The Accommodation Supplement provides targeted financial assistance to help people with high accommodation costs. It is administered by Work and Income under the Social Security Act 1964. Accommodation Supplement areas are defined using Stats NZ urban areas, urban zones, and area units. For the purposes of the Social Security Act, SA2s may be considered as equivalent to area units.

Work and Income administration regions are not coterminous with meshblocks.

Operational issues

Changes to statistical geographies

Changes to the meshblock digital boundary and classification are applied continuously. A public release is made on 1 January each year with ad hoc releases available to users at other times.

See the Statistical standard for meshblock for more information about meshblock maintenance.

The statistical areas (SA1 and SA2) and urban rural geographies are also released on 1 January each year. The annual update may sometimes have no changes from the previous release.

Changes to SA1 geographies are triggered by:

- alteration of local government boundaries
- adjustments to meshblock boundaries.

Changes to all statistical geographies may occur after:

- a five-yearly review prior to each Census of Population and Dwellings
- a major review every 15–20 years.

The five-yearly review examines changes in population patterns using the latest census data and population estimates, aerial imagery, building consents applications, address registers, property title data, and any other available information. The review identifies where meshblocks and urban boundaries need to be adjusted to include areas of actual and anticipated growth in the next 5–8 years. Population change may also trigger changes to SA1 and SA2 boundaries to maintain the population limits and to improve community of interest delineation.

The urban rural indicator classification will be reviewed after each census to determine whether an area's urban size group or rural settlement status has changed.

Changes to local government boundaries

There are four mechanisms through which local government boundaries may change.

1. The Local Government Act 2002 by:
    - notices in the New Zealand Gazette signed by the Minister of Local Government under schedule 2
    - land reclaimed from the sea that automatically forms part of the adjoining district under schedule 2
    - orders in Council implementing a reorganisation scheme issued under schedule 3
    - constitution of a community under schedule 6
    - orders in Council implementing a determination of the Local Government Commission under section 26.
2. Representation reviews may be carried out under the Local Electoral Act 2001.
3. Occasionally boundaries may be altered or defined by an Act of Parliament.
4. Natural processes such as the middle line of a river changing its natural course (schedule 2, part 3 of the Local Government Act 2002), and changes to coastal boundaries through accretion or gradual erosion (common law).

Changes to electoral boundaries

Under the Electoral Act, the boundaries of the general and Māori electorates must be reviewed after each population census and Māori Electoral Option, which is also conducted every five years.

Using the census results, the Government Statistician reports on the number of General and Māori electorates that will be required in future elections. With assistance from Stats NZ, the Representation Commission prepares draft boundaries which it then releases for public comment. The final electorate boundaries are released after a round of consultation and public hearings. These boundaries remain in place until the next review is completed.

The current electorate boundaries released in April 2014 were used for the 2014 and 2017 elections. The next boundary review will take place in 2019 and the new boundaries will apply to the 2020 and 2023 General Elections.

Glossary

cadastre
Land information and survey system used to record and locate boundaries of land.

contiguous
Sharing a common border with another geography.

coterminous
Having the same or coincident boundary as another geography.

digitising
The process of converting the geographic features on an analog map into digital format.

flat classification
A classification that is not hierarchical.

hierarchical classification
A system of grouping things according to a hierarchy, or levels and orders. Hierarchical classifications range from the broadest level (eg territorial authority) to the detailed level (eg meshblock).

multivariate statistics table
A table containing cross tabulations of more than one variable, for example, age group by sex.

New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000
The projection used for New Zealand's Topo50 1:50,000 and other small scale mapping. NZTM2000 is formally defined in Standard for New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 Projections: Version 2 – LINZS25002.

resident population
The resident population is defined by Stats NZ as:

- estimated resident population – an estimate of all people who usually live in an area at a given date
- census usually resident population – a count of all people enumerated by census, who usually live in that area, and were present in New Zealand on census night.

Appendix: Differences between NZSAC92 and SSGA18

Although some of the statistical geographies have the same name as the 1992 classification, they differ in concepts and geographic coverage. The following table defines the 1992 and 2018 geographies and explains the changes.

Differences between NZSAC92 and SSGA18	
NZSAC92	**SSGA18**
Meshblock	**Meshblock**
The smallest geography area used in the collection and/or processing of data, variable in population and area size from 0–500 residents. In 1991, there were 35,152 meshblocks. In 2013, there were 46,637 meshblocks.	The smallest geographic unit for which statistical data is reported by Stats NZ, with an ideal size range of 30–60 dwellings (around 60–120 residents). In 2018, there are 53,589 meshblocks.
	Statistical area 1 (SA1)
No equivalent	An output geography that allows the release of more low-level data than is available at the meshblock level. SA1s are built by joining meshblocks, SA1s have an ideal size range of 100–200 residents, and a maximum population of about 500. In 2018, there are 29,889 SA1s.
Area unit	**Statistical area 2 (SA2)**
Aggregations of meshblocks. Non-administrative areas that are in between meshblocks and territorial authorities in size. Define, or aggregate to define, regional councils, territorial authorities, and urban areas. They define rural centres. The area unit pattern was reorganised after the 1989 local government changes. Area units were adjusted in response to changes in the boundaries of local government areas and urban boundaries, to reflect a redistribution of population, to establish rural centres, and to establish logical area units in rural areas. In 1991, there were 1,717 area units. In 2012, there were 2,020 area units.	An output geography for higher aggregations of population data than can be provided at the SA1 level. Aim to reflect communities that interact together socially and economically. SA2s are built by joining SA1s, and are coterminous with territorial authority and regional council boundaries. The target population size varies from 2,000–4,000 in city council areas, and 1,000–3,000 in district council. SA2s replace area units. Although the concepts are generally the same, SA2s are different to area units because of: • urban/rural boundary changes • improved delineation of communities and suburbs • creation of business-commercial SA2s • splitting or combining area units that are outside the target population size. In 2018, there are 2,253 SA2s.

Differences between NZSAC92 and SSGA18 continued	
NZSAC92	**SSGA18**
Urban area	**Urban area**
Designed to identify concentrated urban or semi-urban settlements, urban areas are statistically defined areas with no administrative or legal basis. Defined by complete area units and independent of local government and other administrative boundaries. Subdivided into: • main urban area: 30,000+ residents • secondary urban area: 10,000–29,000 residents • minor urban area: 1,000–9,999 residents. Main and secondary urban areas are centred on a significant urban centre and have to satisfy at least three of these criteria: • strong economic ties • cultural and recreational interaction • serviced from the core for major business and professional activities • an integrated public transport network • significant workplace commuting to and from the central core • planned development within the next 20 years, as a dormitory area to, or an extension of, the central core. To become a minor urban area, a rural centre must reach a population of 1,000 and provide at least five of these services: • school • community facilities • recreational amenities • specialised services • specialised retail businesses • financial services • visitor accommodation. In 2013, there were 143 urban areas.	Characterised by high population density with many built environment features where people and buildings are located close together for residential, cultural, productive, trade, and social purposes. Defined by complete SA2s and independent of local government and other administrative boundaries. Urban area criteria: • more than 1,000 residents and a high population density • high coverage of built physical structures and artificial landscapes • strong economic ties where people gather together to work, and for social, cultural, and recreational interaction • planned development within the next 5–8 years. Subdivided into: • major urban area: 100,000+ residents • large urban area: 30,000–99,999 residents • medium urban area: 10,000–29,999 residents • small urban area: 1,000–9,999 residents. Differ from 1992 urban areas because they: • are smaller in area and population because they do not include a commuting zone • are more tightly defined to improve population density calculations • some small urban areas were previously part of a main urban area, eg Mosgiel, which was previously part of the Dunedin urban area. In 2018, there are 178 urban areas.
Rural area	**Rural area**
Area outside urban areas	Rural settlements plus other rural areas

Differences between NZSAC92 and SSGA18 continued	
NZSAC92	**SSGA18**
Rural centre	**Rural settlement**
Has 300–999 residents. Enables users to distinguish between rural dwellers living in true rural areas and those living in rural settlements or townships. Defined by complete area units. Not separately identified in the urban area classification. In 2013, there were 133 rural centres in the area unit classification.	A cluster of residential dwellings about a place that usually contains at least one communal or public building. Rural settlement criteria: • 200–1,000 residents, or more than 40 residential dwellings • represent a reasonably compact area or have a visible centre of population with medium population density • usually contain at least one community or public building, such as a church, school, or shop. Includes newly identified rural settlements in rural areas and rural settlements that were part of an urban area in NZSAC92. In 2018, there are 400 rural settlements.
	Other rural
	Mainland areas and islands located outside urban areas and rural settlements.
Water	**Water**
Categories: • inland water not in urban area • inlet not in territorial authority • inlet in territorial authority but not in urban area • oceanic in region but not in territorial authority • oceanic.	Categories: • inland water by territorial authority • inlet by territorial authority • oceanic by region.