

LEGAL NEED DASHBOARD

Need for Legal Assistance Services (NLAS) indicators



LAW AND JUSTICE
FOUNDATION
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Definitions & User Guide

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Reference publication

For information on the purpose and use of the NLAS indicators see:

[Need for Legal Assistance Services \(NLAS\) indicators – 2021 Census Update](#) (Justice Issues 33, March 2023).

Indicators definitions

Table 1: Indicators definitions

Indicator	Description
NLAS(Capability)	<p>NLAS(Capability) counts people aged 15 to 64, with low personal income, and a lower level of educational attainment. It includes those who meet ALL criteria listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age 15–64• Personal income is less than \$649 a week, or \$33,800 a year• Highest Year of school completed is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- year 12 for those aged 15–44- year 11 for those aged 45–54- year 10 for those aged 55–64• No post-school qualifications above Certificate 2• Not currently studying
NLAS(Community)	<p>NLAS(Community) counts people aged 15 or over, with medium household income, and a lower level of educational attainment. It includes those who meet ALL criteria listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age 15 or over• Equivalised total household income* is less than \$999 a week, or \$52,000 a year• Highest Year of school completed is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- year 12 for those aged 15–44- year 11 for those aged 45–54- year 10 for those aged 55–69- year 9 for those aged 70–79- year 8 for those aged 80 or over• No post-school qualification above Certificate 2• Not currently studying <p><i>Note: NLAS(Community) is not available for non-spatial areas described as 'No usual address'</i></p>

Both NLAS indicators are computed using Australian Bureau of Statistics **2021 Census** data.

* **Equivalised total household income** is household income adjusted to facilitate comparison of income levels between households of differing size and composition. It is based on the principle that larger households require a higher level of income to achieve the same standard of living as a smaller household. However, there are economies of scale, so each additional person does not require the same amount of additional income to maintain the same standard of living. Each person in the household contributes points according to an 'equivalence scale' (that is 1 point to the first adult, 0.5 points to each additional person aged 15+, 0.3 points to each child aged 0-14). The total household income is then divided by the sum of these points (or equivalence factor) to obtain the equivalised total household income.



Levels of geography

All geographic boundaries are defined as per the ABS [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\) Edition 3](#).¹

To support collaborative service planning at national, jurisdictional and local levels, data is available for the following geographies:

Local Government Area (LGA) 2021: ABS approximation of gazetted local government boundaries as defined by each state and territory. LGA boundaries are updated every year. However, for consistency across geographies, the **2021** LGAs boundaries are used in the dashboard.

- o Available for NSW only, **CLSD regions** are clusters of LGAs. The [Cooperative Legal Service Delivery \(CLSD\) Program](#) supports 12 regional justice partnerships in regional, rural and remote NSW.²

Postal Areas (POA): ABS approximation of a general definition of postcodes.

Statistical Area (SA2, SA3, SA4)

- o SA2s are medium-sized areas that represent a community that interacts together socially and economically. They generally have a population between 3,000 and 25,000 with an average of about 10,000 people.
- o SA3s are designed for the output of regional data through clustering groups of SA2s that have similar geographic and socio-economic characteristics. In general, SA3s have a population between 30,000 and 130,000 people.
- o SA4s are the largest sub-state regions, their boundaries represent labour markets and the functional area of Australian capital cities respectively. In regional areas, SA4s tend to have a population of 100,000 to 300,000 people, while in cities they tend to have a larger population of 300,000 to 500,000 people.

State/territory: six states and two territories of Australia. In addition, Jervis Bay, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island are categorised as 'Other Territories'.

Table 3: Number of spatial areas at each level of geography

Spatial areas	LGA *	Postal area *	SA2	SA3	SA4	Suburb/locality *	State/territory
Number of spatial areas, covering the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps	547	2,643	2,454	350	89	15,334	9
<i>* Non ABS Structures: these are ABS approximations of official administrative/legal boundaries to enable comparison with other data.</i>							

¹ This is the structure used by the ABS for the reference period July 2021 to June 2026.

² The purpose of each CLSD partnership is to build and nurture a network of legal assistance and community services to increase access to justice and improve legal and social outcomes for people experiencing social or economic disadvantage or dislocation.



General notes

Rounding, small numbers & aggregated totals

Numbers (that is, 'counts') presented in the dashboard are rounded to the nearest 10. Small numbers (less than 10) are not displayed and replaced with a '<10' label. As a general rule, small numbers should be treated with particular caution and not relied upon to draw definitive conclusions.

For confidentiality purposes, the ABS uses a process of perturbation³ and DSS publishes counts rounded to the nearest 5. This protects the privacy of individuals while maintaining a high standard of accuracy. Adding up counts for a few areas to obtain aggregated totals is acceptable. However, adding up counts for a large number of small areas will increase the margin of error, which is why it is best to use the closest or highest level of geography available for your purposes. For example, to obtain total counts for a specific SA4, it is best to refer to the SA4 tab rather than calculating the sum of SA2 counts within that SA4. This is also why the total of, for example, all LGAs in a state may be slightly different to the data presented at state level (the sum of LGAs is indicative, but data by state provides more accurate totals at the jurisdictional level).

Counts and rates

The dashboard allows users to show data as counts or as rates. Counts provide a better indication of the size of the population of interest, and therefore the extent of potential legal needs that may result in demand for services in a geographic area. Rates can be useful in understanding the relative representation of a group between different geographic areas. In areas with a small population, the calculation of rates can easily result in very high percentages even when the population of interest remains quite small (compared with more populous areas), which is why it is important to also take the size of the counts into consideration when interpreting such data.

Depending on the size of the population or group of interest, population rates tend to be expressed per 100, per 1,000 or 100,000 of population, etc. **NLAS rates** are typically expressed per 100 of the relevant population, or in other words as a percentage of the population of the same age group as the indicator.

When data is displayed as rates in the dashboard, it automatically calculates the proportion of NLAS population **as a percentage of the population of the same age group within each area**.

- **NLAS(Capability) rates** are expressed as percentages of the population aged **15-64**.
- **NLAS(Community) rates** are expressed as percentages of the population aged **15 and over**.

³ The process involves random slight adjustments of the data. For more detail, see ABS, How the data is processed, Census methodology, Reference period 2021, released 28/06/2022.

Cross-border postcodes

There are 15 cross-border postcodes in Australia. Data for those postcodes has been apportioned to each jurisdiction according to the percentage of the general population residing on either side of the border. This means that:






- When selecting a jurisdiction, data reported against cross-border postcodes only includes counts for that state/territory (even if the whole postcode area appears highlighted on the map).
- When selecting a cross-border postcode (without applying a jurisdiction filter), data is aggregated to show all counts for the postcode area (regardless of the state/territory data is assigned to).

For this reason, postcode data should not be used when comparing state/territory level counts.

Map colours

Each area on the map is automatically assigned a colour based on the count or percentage for the selected indicator in that area. A five-colour scale is used, ranging from pale yellow to dark blue. Colours are assigned slightly differently depending on whether data shows counts or rates.

- **Counts** are ranked and coloured by quintiles, with each colour representing 20% (a fifth) of all selected areas.

	Top 20% of areas with highest counts
	Next 20% of areas with higher counts
	20% of areas ranked in the middle
	Next 20% of areas with lower counts
	Bottom 20% of areas with lowest counts

- **Rates** are coloured based on the actual number (percentage figure) using equal intervals, so the darkest colour represents the highest rates within the selected area and the lightest colour represents the lowest rates.

Note that, when only a few areas are selected – for example less than 10 LGAs – it is possible that not every colour on the scale is used if there is a wider gap between some data points.

Also, depending on the number of areas selected and the data spread (the difference between highest and lowest), it can also happen that different colours are used for similar numbers if they are just above or below the automatically calculated threshold.



Tips and Troubleshooting

Click on headings below for some tips and solutions to get around some common Tableau dashboard quirks. If you cannot find the answer to your problem or query, please [contact us](#).

- **Tip: Tableau toolbar explained**
- **Tip: Tableau map controls explained**
- **Tip: Selecting data with filters**
- **Can I download the data?**
- **Why isn't the data available by suburb?**
- **How do I get back to the beginning/reset the dashboard?**
- **I can no longer see the tooltip or any information when hovering over the map**
- **Help, everything has disappeared! The dashboard has gone blank, the map/chart are gone...**
- **Help, I have lost track of where I am on the map! I have zoomed too far in or out, I am lost in the ocean...**
- **I have selected all areas but the map only highlights one area and everywhere else is greyed out**
- **It doesn't allow me to select or deselect the areas I want**
- **Summary statistics are no longer showing any data**
- **The map doesn't zoom in to the area I have selected**

Your question is not listed here, or you may have further comments or feedback on the dashboard? Please do not hesitate to contact us on research@lawfoundation.net.au.

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Tip: Tableau toolbar

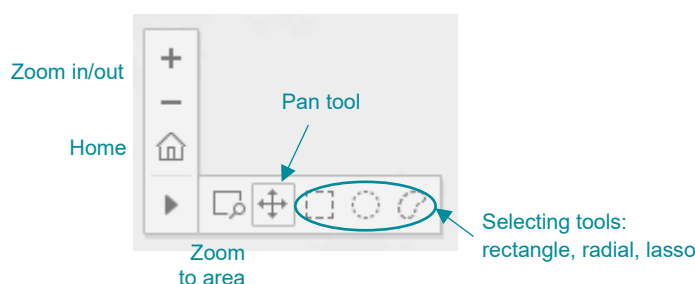
The Tableau toolbar is located just below the dashboard and provides standard online features such as undo/redo the last action, reset to default view (back to the beginning), download, view in full screen, and share. In full screen mode, the toolbar shifts down to the bottom of the screen.



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Tip: Tableau map controls

The map controls appear in the top left corner when hovering over the map. They allow for both moving around the map (including zooming in and out), and selecting areas from the map.



- Use the + and - buttons to zoom in or out.
- Use one of the selecting tools (rectangle, radial or lasso) to draw boundaries on the map and select a specific group of areas. Any area that is fully or partially within the drawn boundaries will be included in the selection, so it is best to zoom in for a more accurate selection. Make sure to change back to the pan tool to move the map without changing your selection.
- The Home button cancels any zooming or moving action, but without changing the selection. Note that using geography filters on the right hand side automatically updates the map to zoom into the area of interest. When an area is selected using the dropdown list(s), the Home button resets the map to the selected area.
- Use the pan tool (cross of arrows) to move the map around without selecting or deselecting any area.

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How do I get back to the beginning/reset the dashboard?

Click on the reset button that is located in the Tableau bottom toolbar below the chart, to the right.

It is represented by a 'back to start' arrow and looks like this:



This will reset the dashboard back to the default view: showing all population counts in NSW, with no comparison indicator.

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I can no longer see the tooltip or any information when hovering over the map

This may be due to a dropdown list being left open after applying a filter. Close the dropdown list by clicking on the little down arrow of the filter (or anywhere in the grey area on the right) to enable tooltips to appear on the map or the chart.

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Help, everything has disappeared! The dashboard has gone blank, the map/chart are gone...

This can happen when selecting conflicting filters, such as trying to select a CLSD region in NSW when the State filter is set to show QLD only. Update the geography filters accordingly, or you can fully reset the dashboard by clicking on the Tableau reset button in the bottom toolbar.

Correct the geography filters



Or reset the dashboard

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Help, I have lost track of where I am on the map! I have zoomed too far in or out, I am lost in the ocean...


Two options:

1. Reset the map by clicking on the Home button in the top left corner of the map. 
This will cancel any zooming or moving action, and take you back to the area selected with the geography filters on the right hand side (or to the view of NSW if no filters are selected).
2. Fully reset the dashboard by clicking on the reset button in the bottom toolbar. 
Note that this resets to the dashboard's default view, including the geography filters (to NSW only) and the indicators (to All population as primary indicator, with no comparison indicator).

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Can I download the data?

The dashboard allows you to download a **screenshot** of the dashboard as an image (.png file), in .pdf format, or as a PowerPoint slide.

Click the Download button from the Tableau toolbar  and choose the format that suits your needs.

To download a spreadsheet of the complete dataset included in the dashboard, click [here](#) (check your *Downloads* folder).

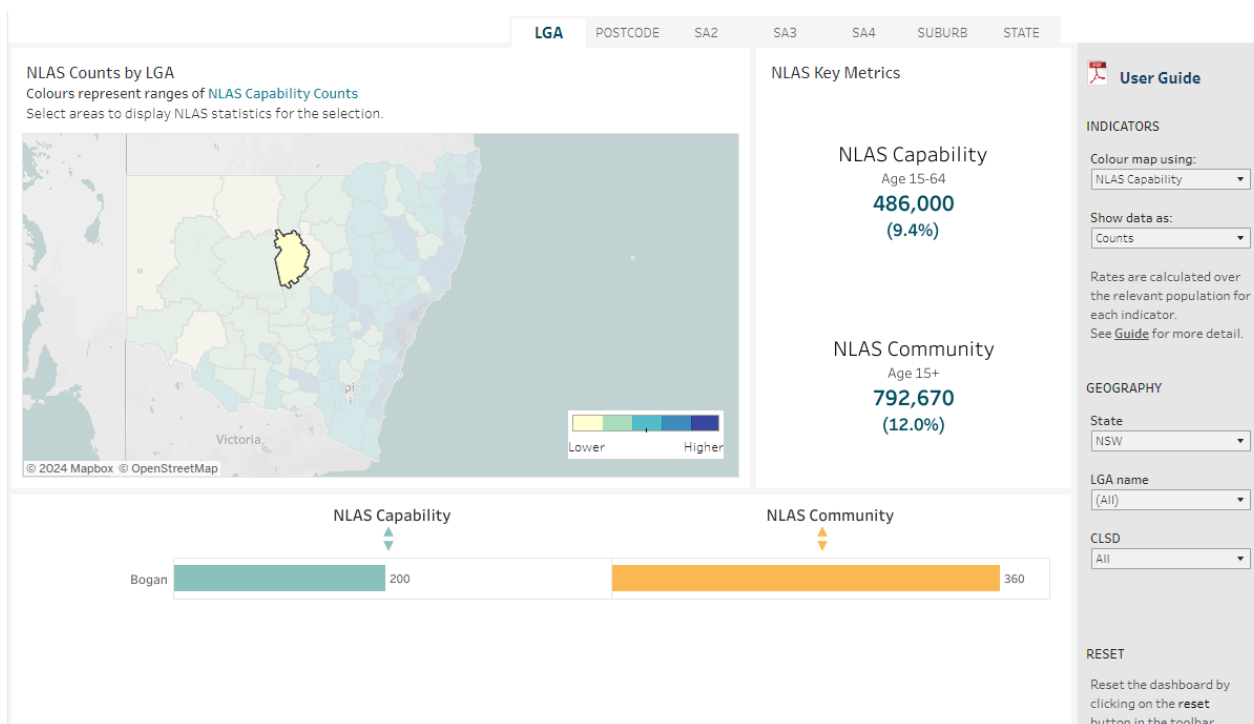
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I have selected all areas but the map only highlights one area and everywhere else is greyed out

This is usually caused by a specific sequence of actions that combines selecting and filtering. If you select an area from the map, then select a different area using the dropdown list to the right, and then select 'All' from the same list, the chart and Summary box show data for all areas, but the map highlights the initial selection, as shown below.

To reset the map selection, click on the highlighted area on the map to deselect it, and bring it in line with the geography filters on the right hand side. Alternatively, reset the dashboard to its default settings.

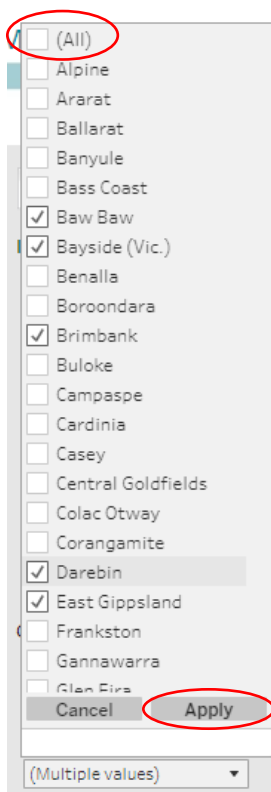


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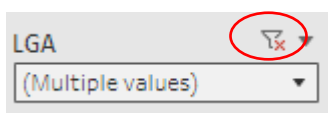
Tip: Selecting data with filters

The dropdown lists on the right-hand side allow for easy filtering of the data to focus on your geographic area of interest.



- Click on the down arrow to open the list of available areas, and tick/untick boxes to customise your selection.
- Note that the list available will reflect other filters already applied. For example, if you selected Victoria in the state filter, the bottom filter will only show Victorian areas (LGAs, SA2s, etc. depending on which tab you are in).
- If you want to select only a few areas from a long list, untick the 'All' option at the top to automatically deselect all areas, then click on the ones you wish to see data for.
- Click on the Apply button, then click on the down arrow again to close the list.

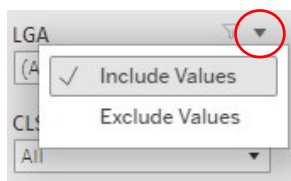
Click on the funnel symbol with the red cross to easily clear the selection in one click (this reverts to selecting all areas). Or open the list again and tick 'All' at the top.



You can also reverse the filter feature.

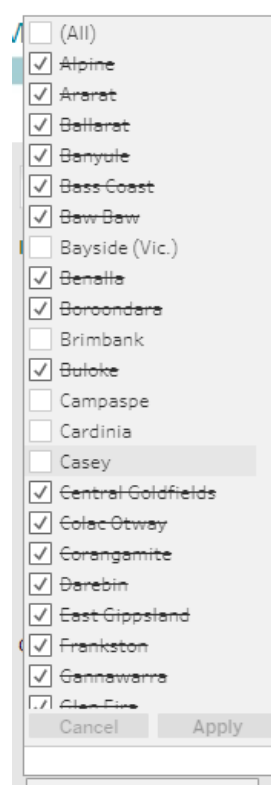
By default, a tick means that the area is included in your selection. But the filter can also work in reverse, whereby areas that are ticked are excluded from the selection.

To do this, click on the down arrow located next to the header (that is the one above the box, it appears when hovering the cursor over the text box/header), and change from 'Includes Values' to 'Exclude Values'.



This time, all areas that are ticked appear crossed out and will be excluded from your selection. And the map, chart and summary statistics will show data for areas that are unticked only.

This feature can be a little counter-intuitive (mind gymnastics alert!), but it is a handy tool if you are interested in getting data for a specific cluster of areas, and then see data for everywhere else combined (or for the rest of the jurisdiction).



The map doesn't zoom in to the area I have selected

When selecting an area using the geography filters (the dropdown lists on the right-hand side), the map automatically zooms into the selected area. However, it might happen, after a specific sequence of actions, that the map no longer zooms in or out as expected. This is caused by using a combination of actions such as selecting areas from the filters and also manually moving and selecting from the map. In order to reset the map, click on the Home button located in the map controls (they appear in the top left corner when hovering over the map).



The Home button cancels any zooming or moving action, without changing your selection from the dropdown lists.

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It doesn't allow me to select or deselect the areas I want **OR**

Summary Statistics are no longer showing any data

This happens when the dashboard gets tangled up in multiple contradictory selections. The dashboard allows for areas to be selected either from the map or using the available dropdown lists on the right-hand side. While both methods result in the selection of area(s), they are treated as different actions by Tableau (selecting vs filtering) and the combination of both methods can trigger errors. It is recommended to clear a selection using the same method as was used to select it. For example:

- If you selected from the map (by clicking an area or using the selecting tool), make sure to clear the selection by clicking anywhere in the sea before starting a new selection using the dropdown list.
- If you selected from the list (by ticking/unticking boxes), make sure to tick 'All' to remove the filter before selecting a different area from the map.

Not sure how you got there, or where you're at? Simply reset the dashboard by clicking on the reset button that is located in the Tableau bottom toolbar. It is represented by a 'back to start' arrow and looks like this:



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Why isn't the data available by suburb/locality?

NLAS(Community) cannot be computed at the suburb level because one of its component – household equivalised income – is not released by the ABS for that geography.

Uploading a small geography structure like suburbs at the national level can potentially reduce dashboard performance. Therefore, we thought it best to leave that geography layer out for this version of the dashboard.

NLAS(Capability) can, however, be computed by suburb. If you require this indicator at the suburb level, or for clusters of suburbs, please [contact us](#).

Also, our [Community Profiles Legal Needs Dashboard](#) provides data on a range of indicators by suburb.

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Disclaimer on the use of dashboard data

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