Using ABS Census data to inform services for non-English speakers

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OF NEW SOUTH WALES

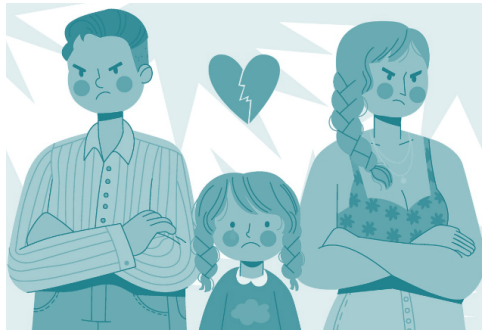
Data supports good planning

The use of relevant data for planning supports the equitable allocation of resources

There are consequences of not using appropriate data to plan for demand...

But what about services without clear drivers of demand?

Demand for legal assistance



- Some socio-demographic groups are more likely to experience some types of problem
- But experience of legal problems generally is widespread and hard to predict
- Instead focus on assessing demand amongst those most at need of publicly funded assistance
- Those most at need lack the **capability** to resolve issues

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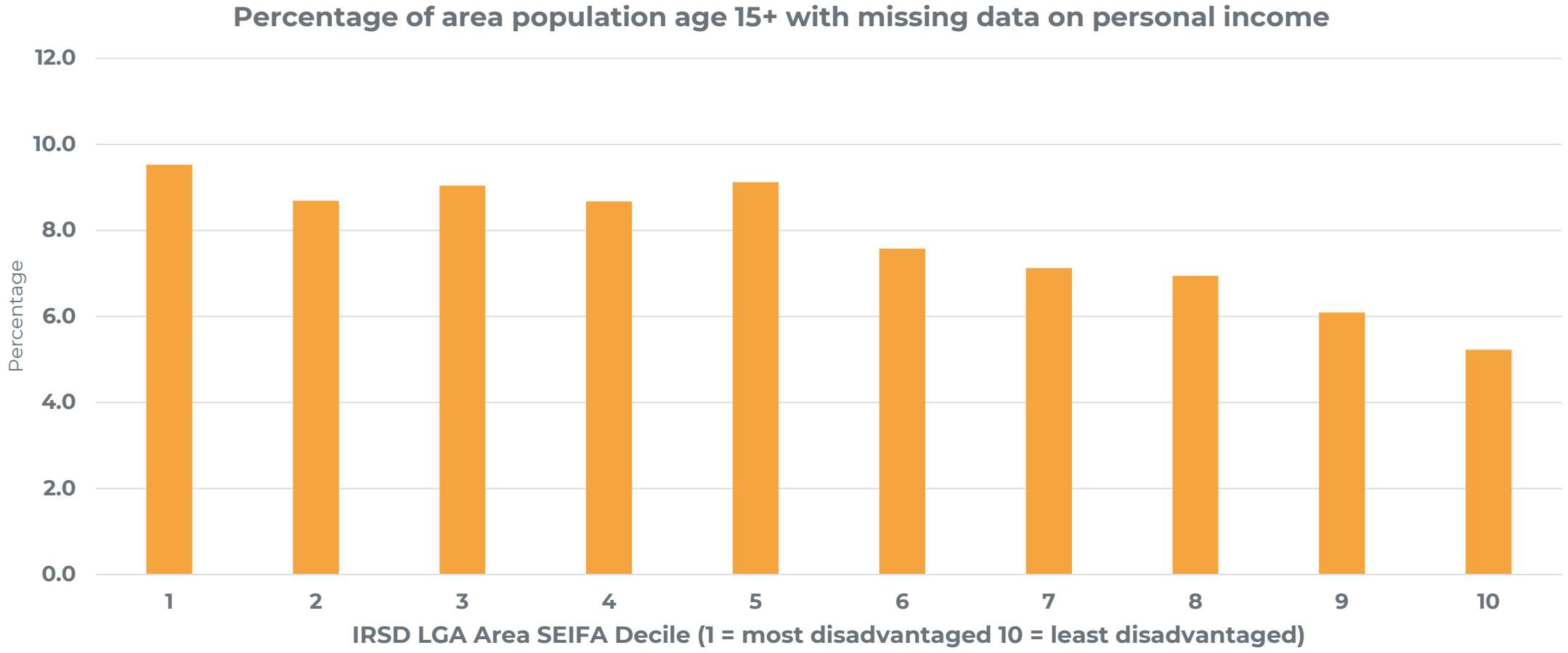
Advantages of Census data

- ABS Census captures data on indicators known to relate to problem experience and legal capability
- Counts are available for a range of geographic structures
- Consistent measures across community groups and locations
- Readily accessible
- Well respected
- Transparent

Disadvantages of Census

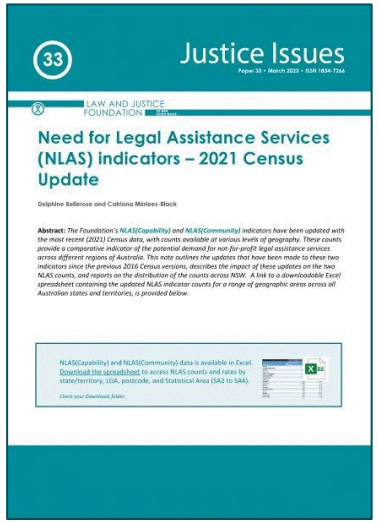
- Census data predominantly measures **static characteristics**, but capability is dynamic
- **Local factors** can impact the experience of legal problems
- Can't say much about the **types of legal problems** that services will have to address
- **Means test criteria** are hard to replicate using Census data
- **Not an absolute count**: better used as a relative indicator between localities (once adjusted for missing data)

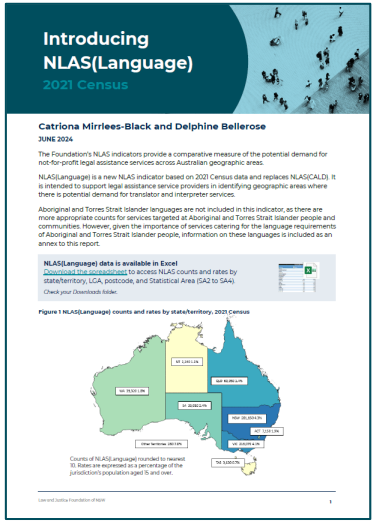
Missing data and area disadvantage



Need for Legal Assistance Services (NLAS) indicators

- The Foundation's has developed a range of indicators to inform public legal assistance planning based on the concept that **relative demand for services** can be estimated from the number of people that are likely to need such services IF they were to experience a legal problem
- All our indicators use **ABS Census** data
- What Census variables we have used to construct our indicators varies according to the **target client group**
- **NLAS(Language)** is an indicator of potential demand from CALD and migrant communities





Language barriers and access to justice

FACTORS THAT INCREASE RISKS OF EXPERIENCING LEGAL ISSUES

- Lack of knowledge of Australian and/or state laws
- Misunderstanding of rules and regulations
- Missing or rejected documentation

FACTORS THAT UNDERMINE ACCESSING SUPPORT

- Not aware of legal rights
- Mistrust of government and/or legal systems
- Visa and other concerns
- Cultural reasons
- Barriers for women in some cultures
- Cost or lack of awareness of public legal assistance providers

➢ **WITH INFORMATION ABOUT LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY LOCALITY, PROVIDERS CAN PLAN FOR TRANSLATED LEGAL AND OTHER INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE INTERPRETERS**

NLAS(Language)

Age 15 and over

Personal income < $52,000 /year

Language other than English

Low proficiency in English

- Access to public legal assistance
- Focus on financially disadvantaged

NLAS(Language)

Age 15 and over

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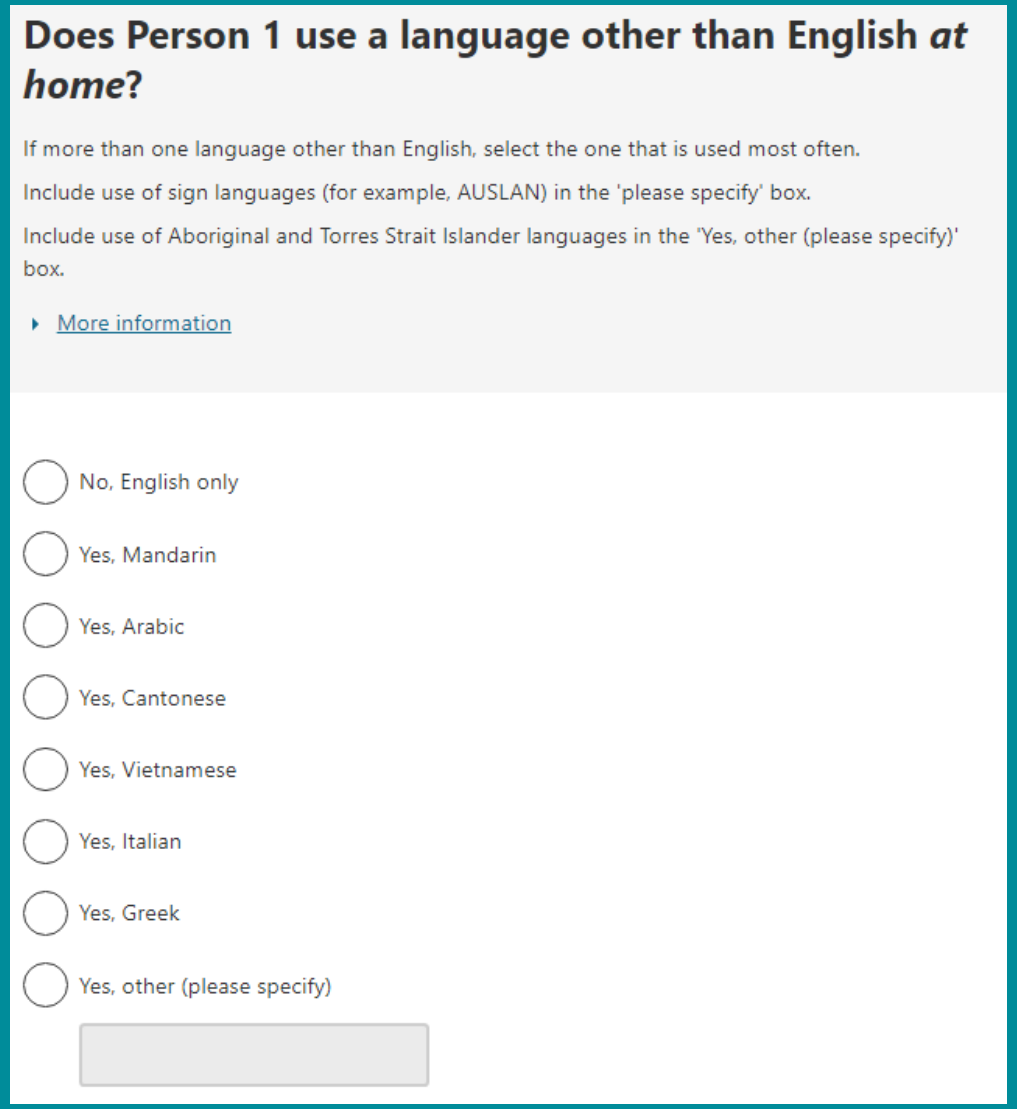
Language other than English

Low proficiency in English

2021 Census – language



- 4.8 million (23.1%) residents aged 15+
- Not asking for 'main' language
- Specify **one** language other than English
- Language other than English that is used most often at home

includes *people who speak English most often, but also speak another language*

- NOT the same as 'main language spoken at home' excluding people who answer 'English'

excludes *people who speak English most often even if they also speak another language*

NLAS(Language)

Age 15 and over

Personal income < $52,000 /year

Language other than English

Low proficiency in English

Languages not included in NLAS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Sign languages
- Invented or inadequately described languages

NLAS(Language)

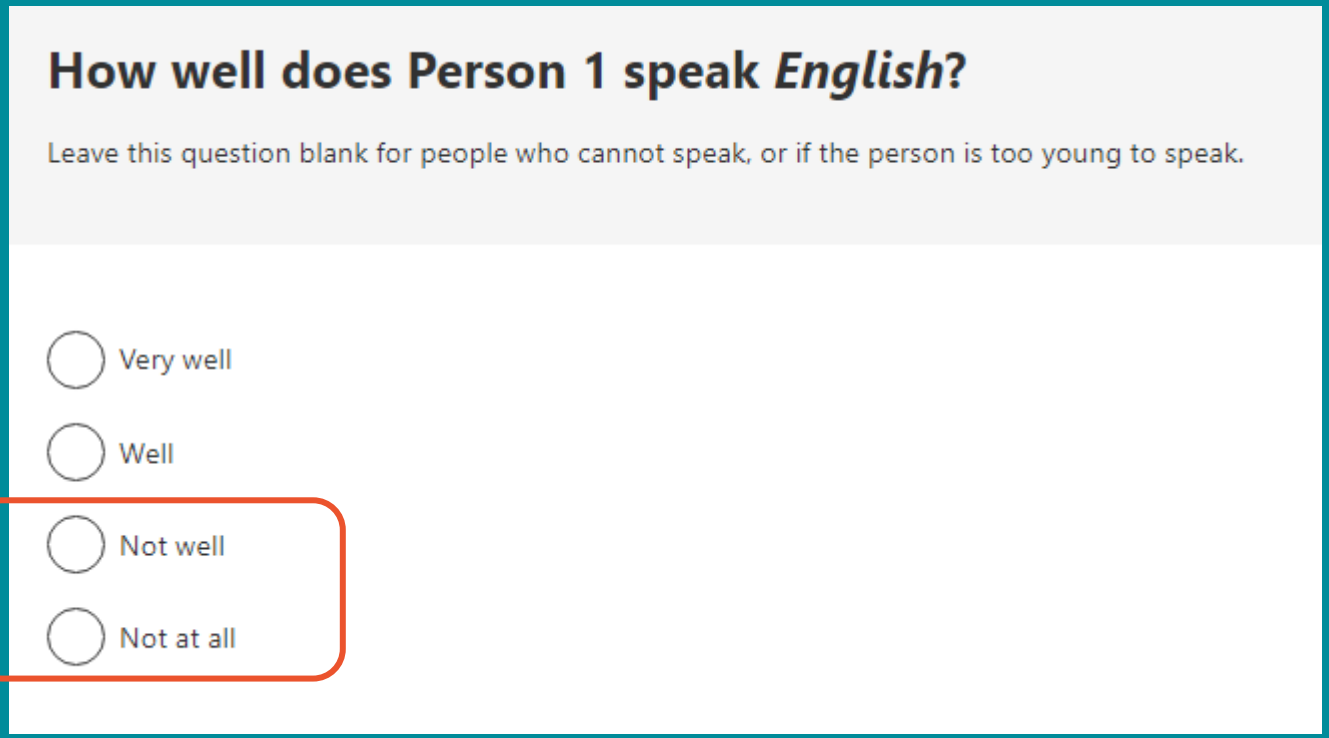
Age 15 and over

Personal income
< $52,000 /year

Language other
than English

Low proficiency
in English

2021 Census – proficiency



Low proficiency

- People reported that they speak English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’.
- 15% of those who speak a foreign language at home.

NLAS(Language)

Age 15 and over

Personal income
< $52,000 /year

Language other than English

Low proficiency in English

Correct for missing data in Census

assuming proportionality in the missing counts

NLAS(Language) population

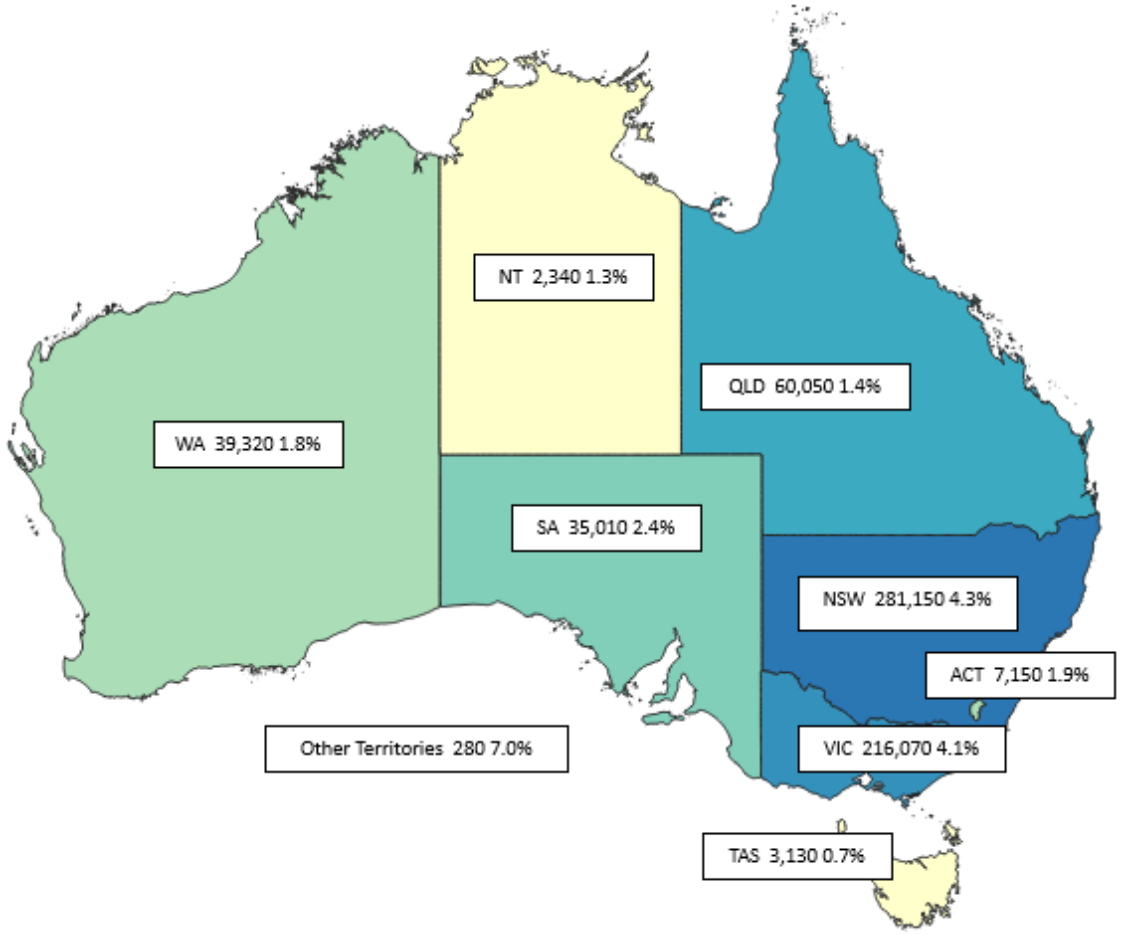
AUSTRALIA

645,160 people

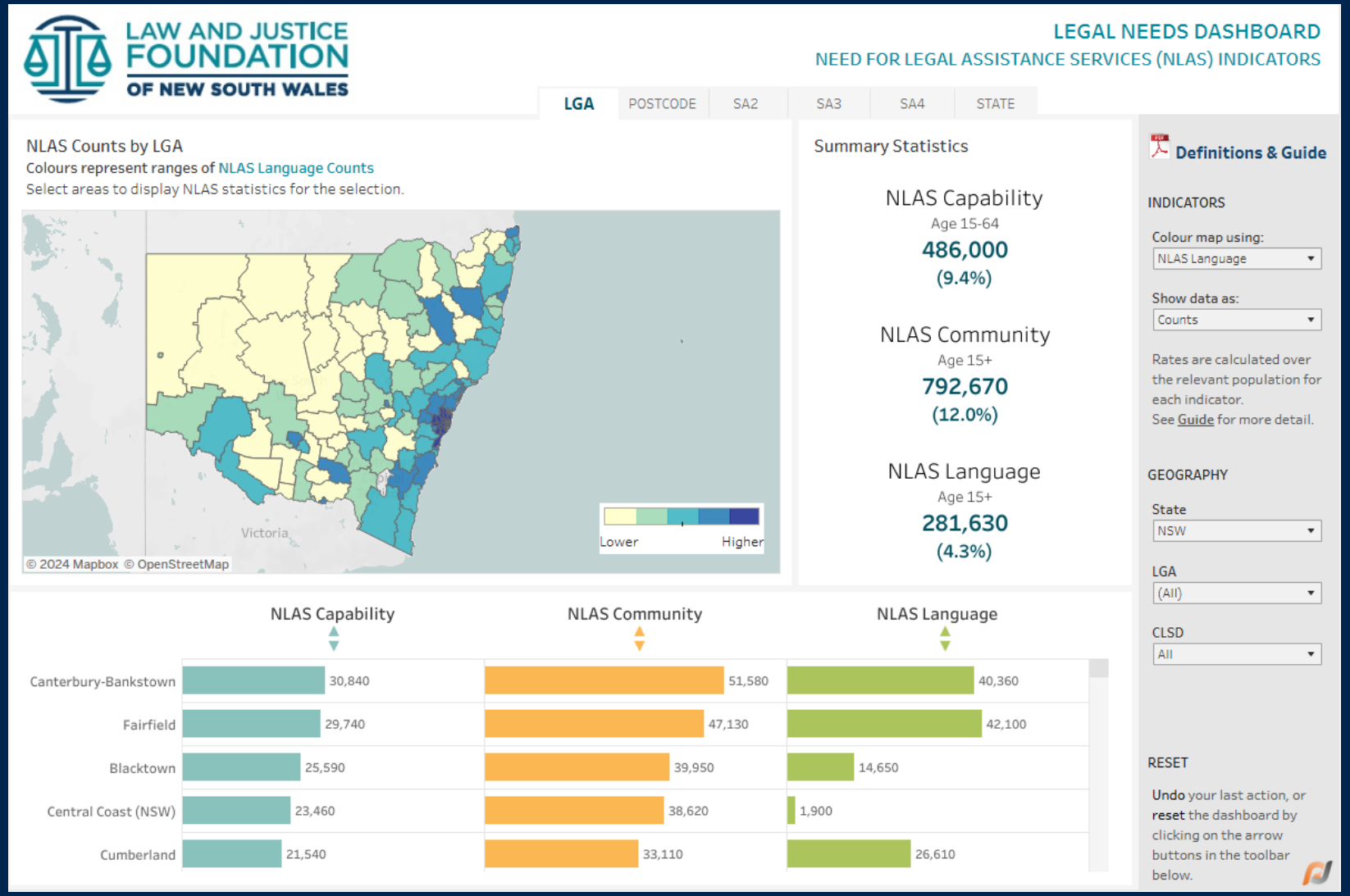
3.1% of 15+ population

NSW

281,150 (4.3%)



NLAS dashboard



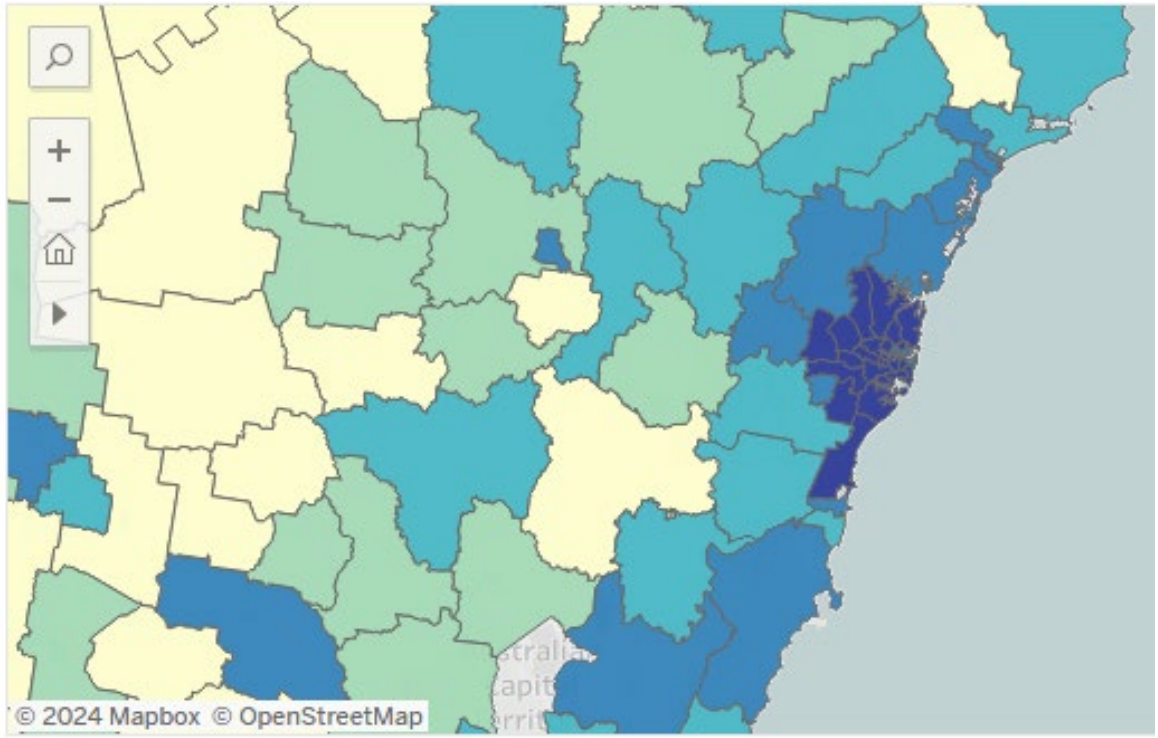
3 indicators
- Capability
- Community
- Language

6 levels of geography

NLAS counts and rates

NLAS(Language) Greater Sydney

By LGA

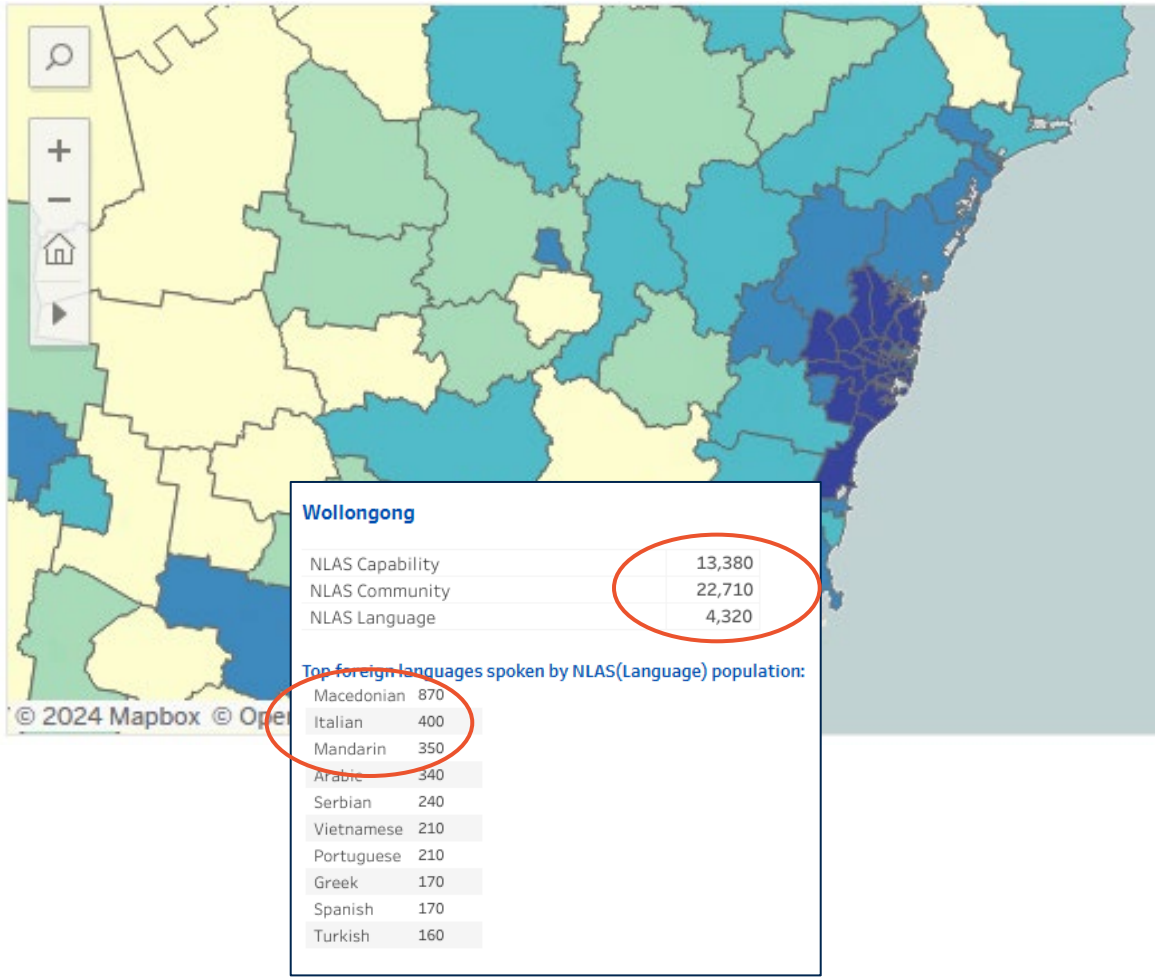


NSW LGAs with highest NLAS(Language) counts

LGA	Rate (% of 15+)	Count
Fairfield	24.6	42,100
Canterbury-Bankstown	13.6	40,360
Cumberland	14.1	26,610
Liverpool	10.1	18,380
Parramatta	8.5	17,960

NLAS(Language) Greater Sydney

By LGA



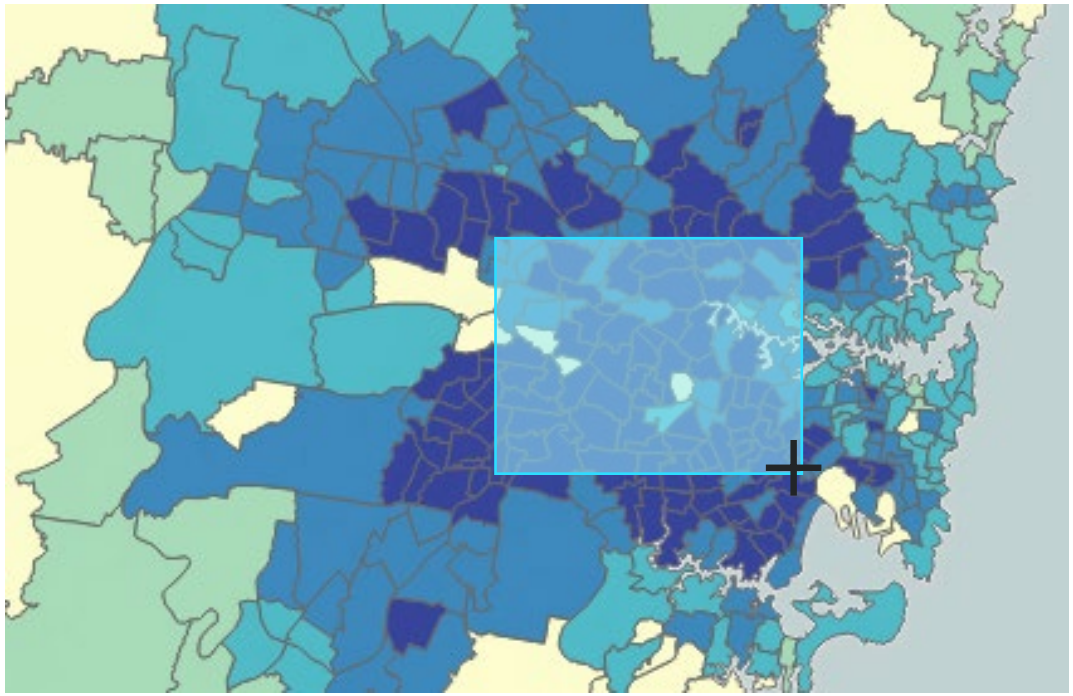
Wollongong LGA: 4,320
Macedonian, Italian, Mandarin

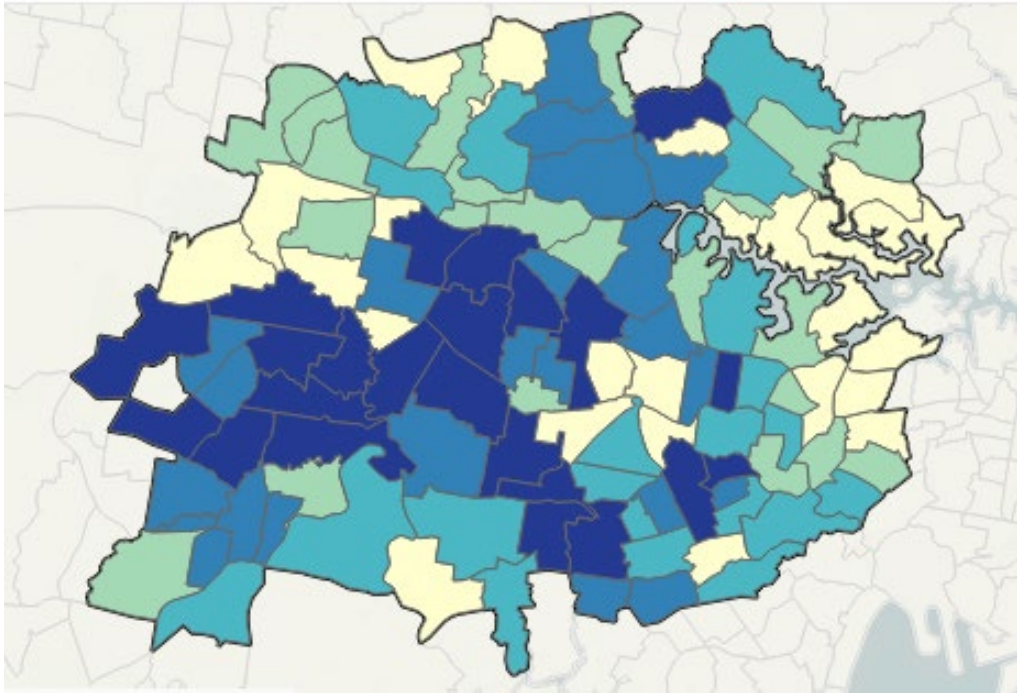
Coffs Harbour LGA: Punjabi, Kurdish

Griffith LGA: Gujarati, Italian

NLAS(Language) Greater Sydney

By SA2

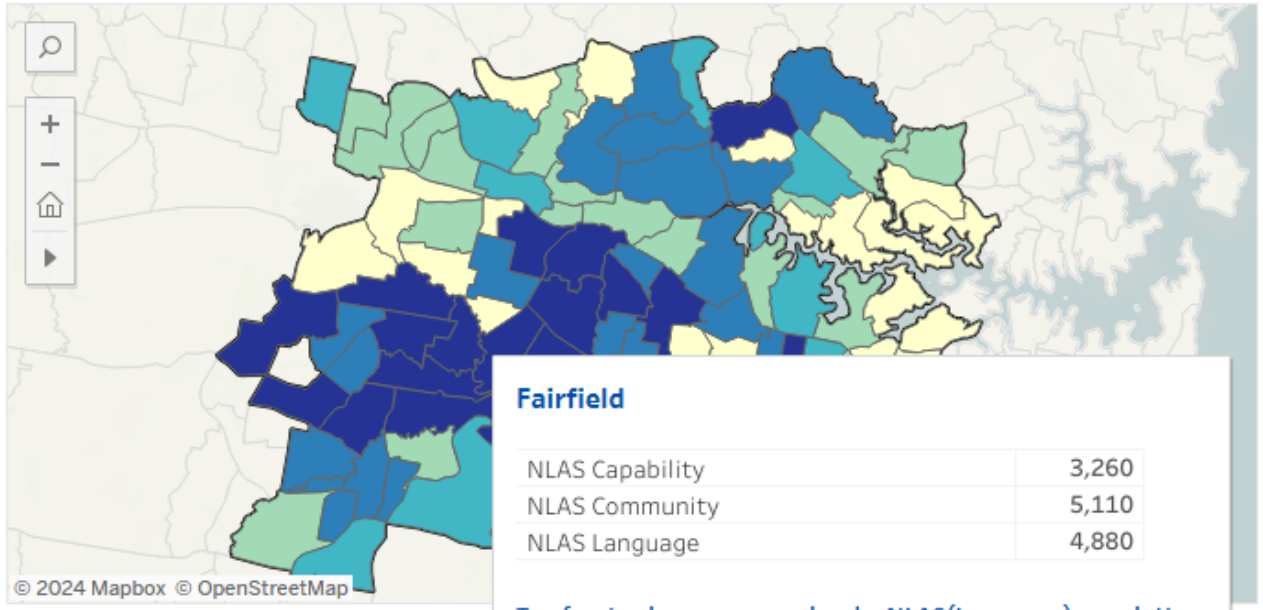




NLAS Counts by SA2

Colours represent ranges of NLAS Language Counts

Select areas to display NLAS statistics for the selection.



Fairfield

NLAS Capability	3,260
NLAS Community	5,110
NLAS Language	4,880

Top foreign languages spoken by NLAS(Language) population:

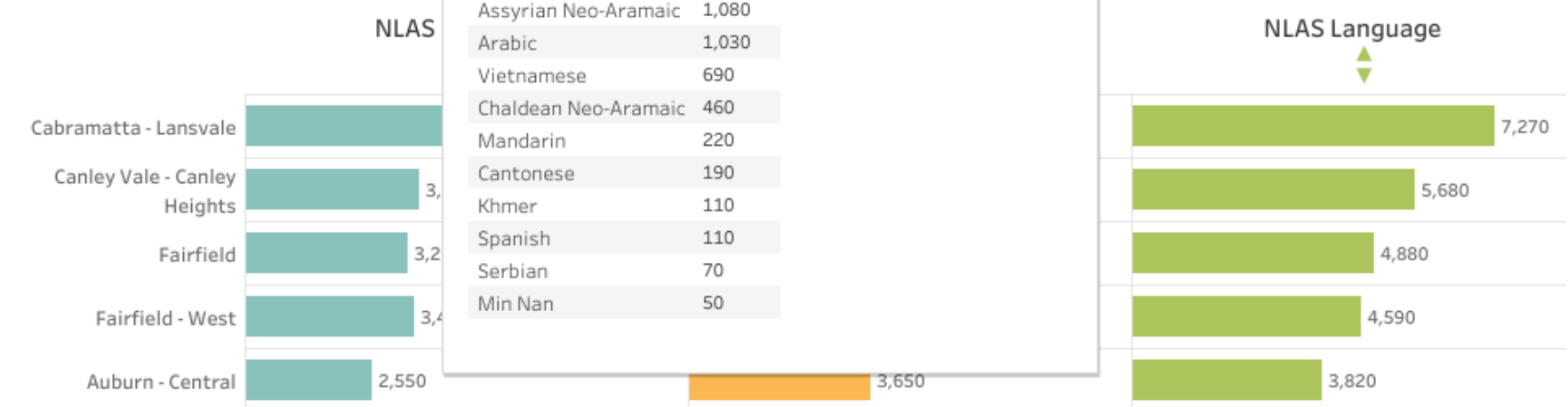
Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	1,080
Arabic	1,030
Vietnamese	690
Chaldean Neo-Aramaic	460
Mandarin	220
Cantonese	190
Khmer	110
Spanish	110
Serbian	70
Min Nan	50

Summary Statistics

NLAS Capability
Age 15-64
119,570
(10.3%)

NLAS Community
Age 15+
193,880
(13.9%)

NLAS Language
Age 15+
166,300
(11.9%)



Cabramatta-Lansvale

7,270

- Vietnamese
- Cantonese

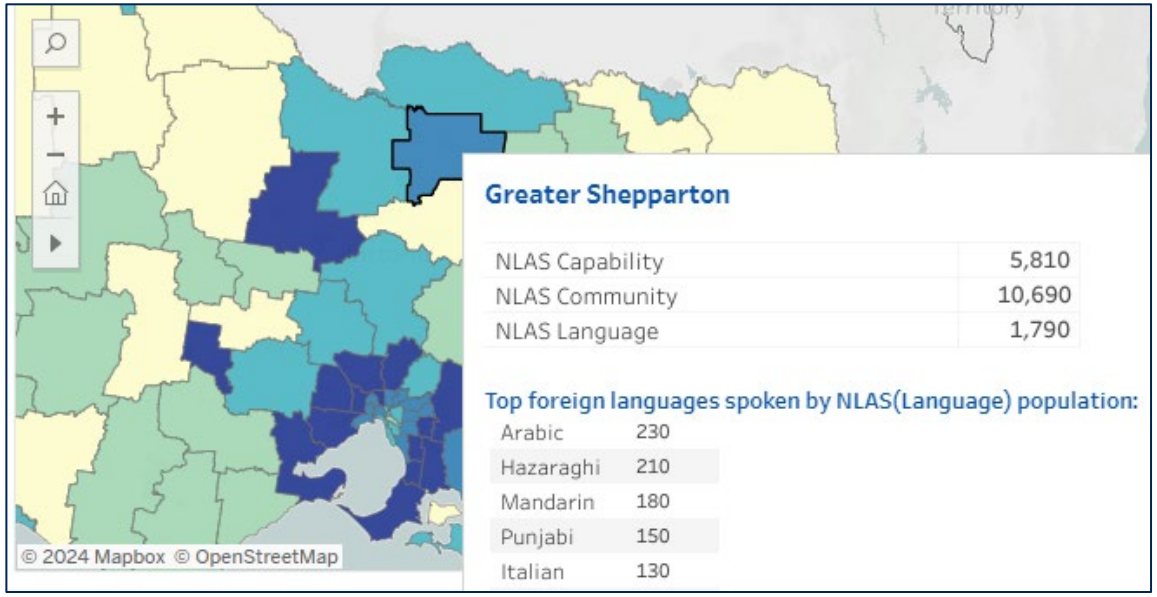
Fairfield

4,880

- Assyrian
- Arabic

Service planning

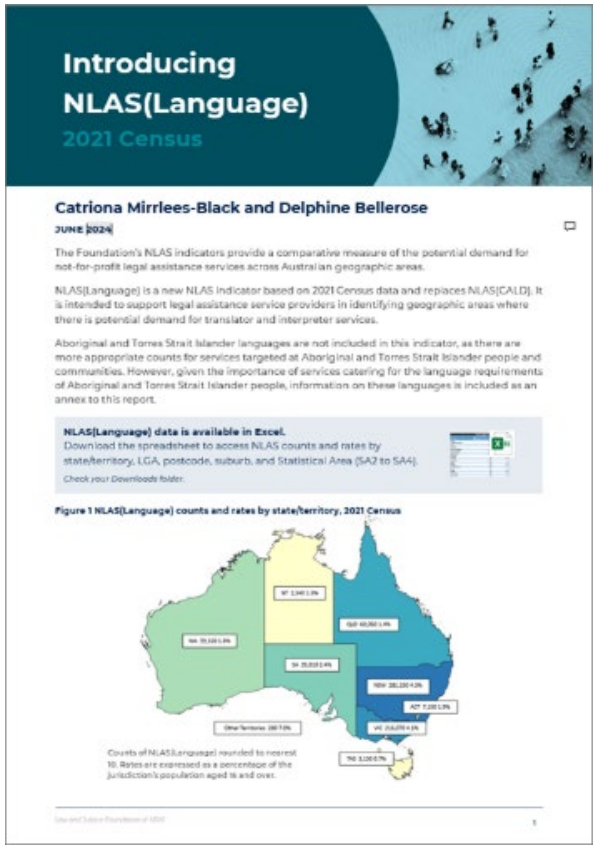
- Local knowledge is key to understanding demand
- Census offers readily available information to help support the planning and delivery of services



VIC: Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese

Thank you

NLAS dashboard



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