

# Indigenous Australian settlement patterns

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity58>

## Engage

### *Indigenous populations by state and territory*

- Click on the Lesson Map URL above to open the map. In the 'Details' pane, under 'Content', turn on the *Non-indigenous population by state and territory – 2016* layer.
- ? List, in descending order, the 3 states/territories with the highest non-indigenous populations. Click on each state to bring up its population number. [*NSW – 7,746,173; VIC – 6,115,405; QLD – 4,623,876.*]
- ? What state or territory has the lowest population? [*NT – 171,132.*]
- In the 'Details' pane, under 'Content', turn off the *Non-indigenous population by state and territory – 2016* layer. Turn on the *Indigenous populations by state and territory – 2016* layer.
- ? List, in descending order, the 3 states/territories with the highest indigenous populations. Click on each state to bring up its population number. [*NSW – 265,685; QLD – 221,276; WA – 100,512.*]
- ? Identify and explain two anomalies between the two layers of data. [*(1) Despite Victoria being the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest state for a non-indigenous population and for population overall, it ranks 5<sup>th</sup> largest when it comes to an indigenous population. (2) Despite the Northern Territory having the smallest population overall in Australia it has the 4<sup>th</sup>-largest indigenous population.*]

## Explore

### *Numbers don't like but they can be deceiving*

- In the 'Details' pane, under 'Content', turn off all layers. Turn on the *Distribution (%) of Indigenous population by state* layer.
- This layer shows that of the 798,365 Indigenous Australians in Australia, more than half of that number is distributed in Queensland and New South Wales. More than

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time  
30 minutes

### Activity

Investigate the distribution of Indigenous peoples across the Australia

### Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Analyse the distribution of Indigenous Australians at a state/territory level
- Analyse the distribution of Indigenous Australians at a regional level
- Identify and explain anomalies in data

### ACARA Curriculum Link

[Year 12 Geography | Managing population change: Population challenges in Australia](#)

### Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact [education@esriaustralia.com.au](mailto:education@esriaustralia.com.au)

### Acknowledgements:

All data was sourced from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#).

80% of Indigenous Australians reside in either NSW, QLD, WA or the NT.

- In the 'Details' pane, under 'Content', turn off all layers. Turn on the *Indigenous population as a percentage of the total population* layer.
- This layer depicts each state/territory's indigenous population as a percentage of the state/territory's total population. Almost 1 in every 3 people in the Northern Territory are either Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both. This is in stark comparison to every other state, where, at most, 6 in every 100 people are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.
- ? What state/territory has the lowest proportion of Indigenous people? *[Victoria has the lowest proportion of Indigenous people who make up less than 1% of the state's population.]*
- ? What state/territory, other than the NT, has the highest proportion of Indigenous people? *[Other than the Northern Territory, Tasmania has the highest proportion of Indigenous people who make up 5.5% of the state's population.]*

## Explain

### *Indigenous populations by region*

- In the 'Details' pane, under 'Content', turn off all layers. Turn on the *Estimated Indigenous population by region 2016* layer.
- ? What are the three largest Indigenous populations – by region – in Australia? *[NSW Central and North Coast – 85,169; Sydney – Wollongong – 81,685; Brisbane – 84,454.]*
- ? What spatial distribution becomes apparent with the larger Indigenous populations? *[The larger Indigenous populations are generally distributed around the Australian coastlines.]*
- ? Are there any exceptions to this pattern? If so, explain why they may exist? Perform some quick research if necessary. *[Yes. When looking at the map, two exceptions are evident: Dubbo (red circle) and Victoria excluding Melbourne (orange circle). Dubbo and the surrounding areas may have a high number of Indigenous people because it is a regional centre servicing the surrounding towns and cities. The second exception – Victoria excluding Melbourne – should not be considered as a single region as it includes the entire state other than Melbourne. Therefore, Indigenous peoples are most likely spread throughout the state, but particularly along coastal areas.]*

## Extend

*Who is living in more remote areas?*

- View the table below. It depicts the percentage of Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations that live in each remoteness area.

Remoteness Area	Indigenous population	Non-Indigenous population
Major cities	37.4	72.7
Inner regional	23.7	17.8
Outer regional	20.3	8
Remote	6.7	1
Very remote	11.9	0.5

- ? Why may there be a higher distribution of Indigenous Australians living in outer regional, remote and very remote areas? *[Answers will vary but may include: Indigenous people have a significant spiritual connection to the land; traditionally their way of live was semi-nomadic; they've learnt to live off the land and in harmony with it.]*
- ? In comparison, why may there be a higher distribution of non-Indigenous Australians living in major cities? *[Non-Indigenous Australians have a very different relationship to the land. Whilst we enjoy its fruits, we often view it from an economic, social or recreational viewpoint, rather than a spiritual or cultural one. Cities present greater economic, social and recreational services, which may explain the higher concentration of non-Indigenous Australians in city areas.]*

## Next Steps:

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