



## Case study 3

# Country Victorians disadvantaged by a line on a map

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The number of voices calling for a review into the ASGC-RA is growing into a chorus as the number of rural towns disadvantaged by anomalous boundary lines defining their ASGC classification is becoming clear. In many cases, the boundary between RA2 and RA3 zones are mere metres from the location of a town's medical practice. There are often less incentives paid to doctors working in smaller rural towns than are paid to doctors in larger regional centres that may only be a 30 minute drive up the road. These anomalous boundary lines are making it even harder for small towns to attract doctors to work in their communities.

### **Town: Inglewood**

**ASGC-RA classification: RA2 (inner regional) – same as Hobart and major regional centres such as Bendigo .... One classification step less remote than Cairns, Townsville and Darwin.**

Inglewood is a small rural town of less than 1,000 people located around 45km north west of Bendigo and 185km northwest of Melbourne. Inglewood was previously classified as RRMA 5 (Other rural centre with urban centre population <10,000). Now Inglewood is RA2 (Inner Regional). The nearby town of Bendigo (a 45 minute drive away), with a population of more than 90,000 is also classified RA2.

The scope of practice for a GP at Inglewood and a GP at Bendigo is not the same. Inglewood Medical Practice is the only practice located in the town and GPs working there provide 24 hour on site accident and emergency care to rural community in and around the town. They also provide 24 hour care to acute inpatients, nursing home and hostel residents.

Inglewood is located on the boundary of RA2 (Inner Regional) and RA3 (Regional) ASGC zones. If the Inglewood Medical Practice moved around 250 metres east, it would be located in a RA 3 region. This would mean that doctors would receive an increase relocation and retention payments that would increase the towns competitiveness against the larger regional centre of Bendigo.

### **Town: Stawell**

**ASGC-RA classification: RA2 (inner regional) – same as Hobart and major regional centres such as Bendigo .... One classification step less remote than Cairns, Townsville and Darwin.**

Stawell is a small community of around 6,000 people located 237 km from Melbourne, 124 km from Ballarat and 68 km from Horsham. Stawell was previously classified as RRMA 5 (Other rural centre with urban centre population <10,000) and is now RA2 (inner regional), the same as Ballarat.

Ballarat has a population of around 96,000 and was previously classified RRMA 3 (Large rural centre / urban centre population 25,000 - 99,999), but is now classified RA2, the same as Stawell. Doctors will now receive the same incentives to work in either of these towns, despite Ballarat being a much larger centre with many more supports for doctors available.

Horsham, a larger regional centre than Stawell with a population of around 14,000, is only 68km away and but classified as RA3 (Regional). Stawell town centre is less than 2km away from the RA3 border.

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