

# Enabling a rapid COVID border pass solution

## Overview

As the COVID-19 pandemic ramped up in 2020 and 2021, there was an urgent need to close Australia's state and territory borders to limit the spread of infection. With closed borders, governments tried to balance the high risk of infection while helping families reunite and keep the economy running.

**Border permit solutions** needed to be developed quickly for the safety of the Australian public.

With very little time and constant changes to government policy, the goal was to keep people safe and to stop the potential spread of infection.

Multiple jurisdictions developed applications using crucial address information to assess the anticipated movements of people and align this understanding to current health messaging and to support contact tracing.

Geoscape's highly accurate and reliable location data – in the form of an API – supported the applications.

## Highlights:

- National location data that didn't stop at the border.
- APIs provided to governments to support cloud-based apps. Teams could implement the data within 24 hours of receiving the API key.
- One NSW platform was created within 36 hours.
- **Geoscape API data** was used by governments in ACT, NSW, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.



### Challenge

State and territory governments typically have access to location data for their jurisdiction. The challenge for border closures was the need to access other state and territory location data to verify entry, and to ensure the data was nationally accurate and consistent. The addresses also needed to be easily built into online platforms to meet the needs of users wanting to apply for a COVID Border Pass.

During emergencies, there is no time to download the publicly available [G-NAF \(Geocoded National Address File\)](#) and remove unwanted duplication to make the geocoded data fit for national use. While [G-NAF](#) is an excellent source of location data, it is updated quarterly, so there could be a 3 month lag in address data, with up to 50,000 new addresses being added every quarter.

### Solution

Geoscape moved quickly to provide nationally consistent location data in the form of an API ready for use by state and territory governments. This involved developing new pipelines to conflate and prepare addressing data while integrating it with G-NAF. It was a new way of moving from scaled on-premises solutions to cloud-based solutions, so the APIs would work seamlessly with new cloud-based Border Pass application platforms for the public to use directly.

Each jurisdiction rolled out its own system, which provided an immediate solution for those seeking passes to travel. This was service delivery at record speed and scale, with multiple jurisdictions concurrently leveraging the same set of standardised national data services.

Geoscape's APIs also assisted Australian businesses to manage workforce planning at local government levels. For instance, when workers were unable to move outside their local government area (LGA), a big fast-food chain used Geoscape's APIs to ensure that their staff were living in the same LGA as the store.

### Results

Geoscape's up-to-date address data made it easy for the public to apply for border passes using an efficient, citizen-focused service developed by state and territory governments.

National location data enabled people to interact more readily with governments in other jurisdictions. The location enablement using geocoded data allowed for place-based policies to be developed and delivered, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

According to a [Digital NSW article dated 14 October 2020](#), more than 500,000 permits had been issued with a customer satisfaction rating of 96.9%. Not bad for a digital permit solution that was built within 36 hours.

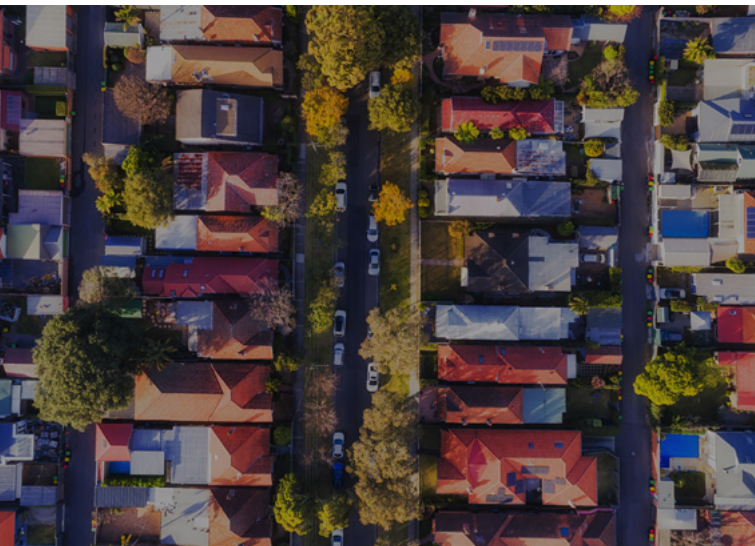


## About Geoscape Addresses data

Australia has a recognised geocoded national dataset called G-NAF, which is publicly accessible. Over 50 million contributed addresses are distilled into more than 15.2 million G-NAF addresses. Geoscape has created and produced this file since 2004.

The mechanics of building a national address dataset are still surprisingly complex. It includes collecting officially recognised addresses that are approved and allocated by land agencies in each state and territory of Australia. Then the data is independently examined and validated, matched textually and spatially, and assigned a geocode to place the address on a map.

Geoscape has spent years creating a process that combines the latest addressing data feeds from jurisdictional custodians together with other extensive national mailing addresses. Recently Geoscape launched [G-NAF Core](#), a more accessible G-NAF that makes accessing geocoded addresses easier.



*With over 50,000 new addresses created every quarter, our work is extensive, and our address databases are updated almost daily, meaning ours are some of the most up-to-date and accurate in the country.*

## About Geoscape

**Geoscape** Australia is an independent, self-funded data-as-a-service (DaaS) company owned by the governments of Australia.

Geoscape is the digital Australia – the big picture with every detail. We enable industry and government with the power of location data.

Geoscape's trusted location data delivers a clear picture of our complex cities, regional centres and rural communities as they change. We combine data derived from satellite and aerial imagery with data from private and public sources, including the governments of Australia. Our data is continually updated and available in a variety of formats for easy integration and flexibility of use.

## Sample Geoscape data today.