

Australia moving up in the world... literally

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Australia's coordinates are currently out by more than a metre and the discrepancy could cause major headaches for new technologies which require precise location data, such as the satellite navigation systems used on smartphones

Australia will adjust its latitude and longitude, a government science body says, to put the vast country into alignment with global navigation satellite systems.

The nation's coordinates are currently out by more than a metre,

Geoscience Australia says, and the discrepancy could cause major headaches for possible new technologies such as driverless cars which require precise location data.

"We have to adjust our lines of latitude and longitude... so that the [satellite navigation systems](#) that we all use on our smartphones these days can align with all the digital map information," Geoscience's Dan Jaksa told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation this week.

Australia currently moves north by about seven centimetres each year due to normal tectonic motion and Jaksa said the change was needed "to keep pace with that".

He said smartphones were already accurate to within 5-10 metres, but shrinking the gap would be crucial in coming years, particularly with greater use of remotely-operated vehicles in farming and mining.

"(And) around the corner, in the not too distant future, we are going to have possibly [driverless cars](#) or at least autonomous vehicles where, 1.5 metres, well, you're in the middle of the road or you're in another lane," he said on Thursday.

"So the information needs to be as accurate as the information we are collecting."

Australia's local coordinate system, the Geocentric Datum of Australia, was last updated in 1994 and officials believe it will be out by 1.8 metres by 2020 unless corrected.

New data on the country's coordinates is expected to be available from 1 January 2017.

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