Australian National Data Service: Creating a national research data asset

Objectives
The Australian National Data Service (ANDS) is working to add value to Australian research data collections that can be reused to help solve the major challenges of our times. ANDS' strategy is to take a coordinated national focus while working in partnership with research and government institutions to help them achieve their research data aims. ANDS has been collaborating closely with and providing national services to a range of stakeholders including data-intensive research infrastructure facilities, eResearch infrastructure providers, eResearch support organisations, publicly funded research organisations, and public sector data providers. ANDS also engages with Government to ensure Australia's research data are as open for reuse as possible. ANDS supports the development and adoption of a coherent set of Australian research institution data access policies.

The above transformations are making Australian research data collections more valuable across all disciplines. They enable:

- richer research
- more accountable research
- more efficient use of research data, and
- improved provision of data to support policy development.

The outcome is that Australia's research data as a whole becomes a national strategic asset.

The Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy Program and the Education Investment Fund (EIF) Super Science Initiative supports ANDS.

Ongoing activities
ANDS is delivering on four programs of work:
Institutional Engagement to support data management infrastructure at Australia’s major research organisations to meet researcher and institutional needs.
National Services to deliver national research data services including registration, publication, discovery, and advisory services.

To ensure research data are findable, ANDS has created Research Data Australia, ANDS’ flagship service. It is an Internet-based discovery service designed to provide rich connections between data, projects, researchers and institutions, and promote visibility of data used by and produced by Australian researchers.

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National Collections to deliver coherent access to collections of government, institutional, discipline and national facility data. We aim to help build collections of research data assets that demonstrate the following characteristics:

- richly described
- well connected
- available through open licensing
- easily cited
- well curated

International Collaboration with data infrastructure providers to ensure that Australian research data infrastructure is compatible with international approaches and to enhance research data partnerships.

Results
Since 2009, ANDS has funded and collaborated on more than 200 projects in Australia’s publicly funded research institutions. The aim of these projects has been to improve data management and data infrastructure in Australia.

These projects have produced the following outcomes:

- More than 30 Australian research institutions now have data management approaches in place and are feeding data descriptions to ANDS
- More than 70 data capture tools across a range of research settings have been developed and are currently in use
- 25 different innovative tools are demonstrating the value that is unlocked when data is brought together.
- Research Data Australia reached 87,000 collections on 30 July 2013, and more collections are being added regularly.
- ANDS currently has more than 30 staff spread across Australia’s major state and territory capitals.

ANDS received additional Australian Government funding in August 2013 to carry it through until mid-2015. This is testament to ANDS’ and its partners’ achievements in Australia’s research data space thus far.

In 2013, Australia was invited to help form the Research Data Alliance as a foundation member. Staff from ANDS are currently serving on the Council, the Technical Advisory Board and the Secretariat.

URL: ands.org.au