

# Research Data Australia Collection Development Policy

The Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) makes Australia's research data assets more valuable for researchers, research institutions and the nation. ARDC's [Research Data Australia](#) is a web-based discovery service that helps you find, access, and reuse data for research from over one hundred Australian research organisations, government agencies, and cultural institutions. Research Data Australia does not store the data itself but provide descriptions of, and links to, the [data from data publishing partners and contributors](#).

## Collection Development: Aims

Through Research Data Australia, ARDC will make available descriptions of data collections which are:

- across a broad range of disciplines including international datasets
- produced by, or relevant to Australian researchers
- connected to the data, researchers, research activities, instruments and institutions

The web pages in Research Data Australia are populated from the Research Data Australia (RDA) Registry which has been established to improve the capability of Australian institutional repositories, archives and data centres to share and enable discovery of collection-level information.

## Policy Scope

This policy defines the scope, nature and source of collection descriptions published to Research Data Australia and appropriate access and licensing for the data to which the collection descriptions refer. The policy outlines ARDC's commitment to sustainability and curation of Research Data Australia.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following **definition** applies:

*Data collection*: an aggregation of physical and/or digital resources which has meaning in a research context. This includes the research process itself and any resources which support that process. It is linked to the scholarly communications cycle with its associated research outputs of publications and published data. Objects from these collections provide context, connection and meaning for each other.

## RDA Registry: Coverage

The web pages in Research Data Australia are populated from the RDA Registry which holds collection description information - metadata about collections and activities, parties and services which relate to collections. The collection description may link directly to the described data, or to a resource or web page that describes how to access the data.

Data collections described in the RDA Registry (including international datasets) are produced by, or relevant to, Australian researchers across a broad range of disciplines and include:

- Data collections produced from the research activities of publicly-funded Australian organisations including universities and public sector agencies
- Data collections produced under the funding of Australian funding bodies including ARC, NHMRC and NCRIS
- Data collections that have significant merit or value to the Australian research community

Collections described in the RDA Registry should be data, forms of data, or directly connected to data. As such, stand-alone print publication outputs, such as theses, journal articles or books, are not within the scope of the RDA Registry. However, stand-alone publications would be considered for inclusion where the published material:

- has been integrated into a collection of unpublished items
- is integral to the use and understanding of other collection materials in Research Data Australia
- is part of a collection where significant value has been added to the collection through mark-up and hyperlinks.

For further information refer to the ARDC Guide, [What is research data](#).

## RDA Registry: Contributors

ARDC will engage with institutions and agencies where possible and not with individual researchers. ARDC is not mandated to engage with private companies or community groups. Collection descriptions submitted for inclusion in Research Data Australia by private companies or community groups are accepted, but ARDC is unable to offer any additional resources (i.e. staff time) to assist with this process. Collections will be proactively sourced and described where this is in the interest of Australian researchers. This activity will be partly informed by

a subject analysis of the current coverage of an institution's collections within Research Data Australia. ARDC will also seek advice from institutions with regard to the data collections that their researchers most require access to.

## Access and Licensing

ARDC's preference is to provide records in Research Data Australia that link to freely-available, publicly-accessible datasets. However there are often embargoes, access controls, permissions or licences associated with data due to a variety of issues such as confidentiality, reuse permissions, commercial interests, etc. This should not be a barrier to discovery through Research Data Australia. The record may link directly to the described data, or to a resource or web page that describes how to access the data. Access to the data is always at the discretion of the custodian.

Rights, licence and access rights information is displayed prominently on Research Data Australia to support researchers in reuse of research collections. Access rights should not be unnecessarily restrictive and should be concomitant with the level of risk. ARDC's preference is for collection records in Research Data Australia to link to datasets in a digital format, however descriptions of accessible physical collections are also included.

## Curation

All collection descriptions in Research Data Australia should be of a quality concomitant with their proposed usage for discovery and well curated over time. This means:

- Collection descriptions that do not meet the requirements of the [Research Data Australia Collection Description Quality Policy](#) or the [Collection Description Integrity Policy](#) will be considered by ARDC for removal or suppression from Research Data Australia if they cannot be upgraded in consultation with institutions.
- Institutions are supported to contribute quality metadata to Research Data Australia by reference to the detailed guidance and examples provided in the [Research Data Australia Content Providers Guide](#).
- Replicate collection descriptions in Research Data Australia (for example, where records are provided by different contributors/data sources but referencing the same datasets) are cross-referenced. The use of identifiers by contributors can assist with this.
- The user experience in Research Data Australia is continually improved, particularly in relation to discovery, and including the development of theme pages and contributor pages to co-locate related collections.

## Change history

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Date	Change history
05 Dec 2019	Page created
05 Dec 2019	v2.2 of the Policy added with references to 'ANDS' updated to reference 'ARDC'