

Research Data Australia

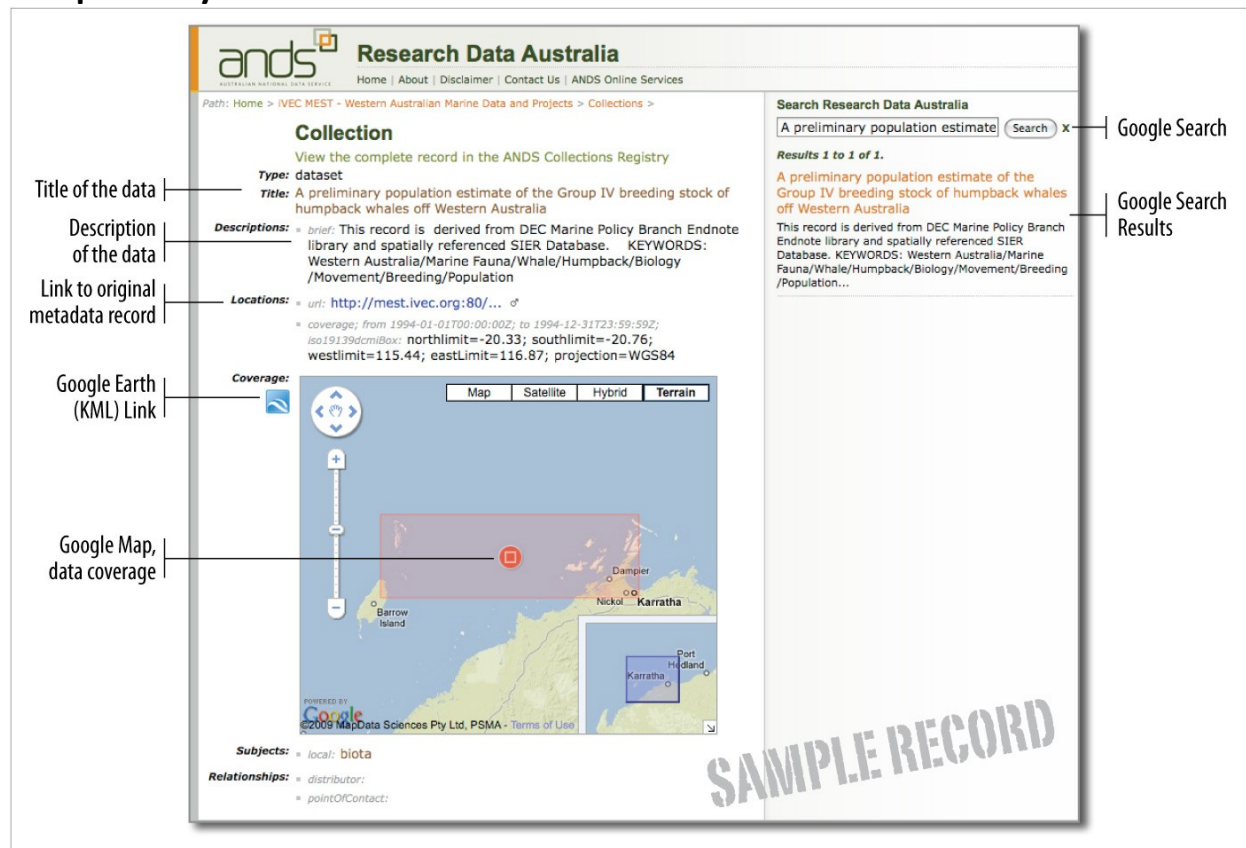
Who should read this?

This document is aimed at potential contributors to *Research Data Australia*.

What is *Research Data Australia*?

Research Data Australia (<http://services.ands.org.au/pages/>) is a set of web pages describing data collections produced by or relevant to Australian researchers. It is designed to promote visibility of research data collections in search discovery engines such as Google and Yahoo, to encourage their re-use. It is the face of the ANDS *Register My Data* service.

Sample entry



What do we mean by research data collections?

Data may be digital or non-digital. Examples of the kinds of data of interest to researchers include survey results, data collected automatically from computer programs, sensors or instruments, images, audio and video, text corpora, even web pages and blogs. Some of this data will be irreplaceable, perhaps because it is part of a time series like much meteorological data, or because it relates to a particular event which has occurred only once in a specific time and place, such as the eruption of a volcano. Some may be costly to duplicate, perhaps because of the special instrumentation required or the difficulty of the experiment.

All data is valuable, at least for the duration of a project. Some of the data might be raw data, the unprocessed observations of particular phenomena. Some might be processed data, the data produced when raw data has



been calibrated or corrected. Some might be derived data, which present a summary or specific view of the raw data. Some might be textual data, the publications which result from a research project or the textual data (texts, bibliographies, surveys etc.) which forms the basis of a research project.

A good quality data collection can be enhanced by the inclusion of contextual information. This might include, for example, information about the study, observation or investigation. It may also include information about the structure of the data itself. This contextual information gives re-use value to what might otherwise be simply an unusable set of numbers.

The issues

It is increasingly recognised that data is as important an output of research as publications. The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>) says that the responsible conduct of research includes the proper management and retention of the research data. Section 2 of the *Code* outlines the responsibilities of institutions and of researchers and encourages making research data widely available where possible.

Access to original data allows for re-use in often unexpected ways. It also allows for verification and checking. The challenge is making that data discoverable, accessible and shareable. It can be argued that this will enhance scholarly activity.

Research Data Australia gives researchers a way of addressing these issues by making their data public.

How it works

Owners, managers or creators of data sets can register descriptions of data collections with ANDS. These descriptions include related people, organisations and projects, as well as how the collection can be accessed. ANDS publishes these descriptions as *Research Data Australia*. The *Research Data Australia* web site is designed to be easily indexed by big search engines such as Google. ANDS also has reciprocal publishing arrangements with other data collection registries and discovery portals in Australia and internationally.

In all cases the data itself remains with the custodians. Only the descriptions are published on *Research Data Australia*, and access to the data is always at the discretion of the custodian.

For further information:

Research Data Australia: <http://services.ands.org.au/pages/>

Documentation for *Register My Data*: <http://ands.org.au/services/register-my-data.html>

If you are interested in registering your data for inclusion in the ANDS Collections Register and *Research Data Australia*, please write to services@ands.org.au.



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