National Recovery and Resilience Agency response to BCARR *Consultation Paper - Regional Data Hub: Understanding and responding to regional data needs*

Preamble

The NRRA LGA Profiles ([link](#)) are used by the NRRA to communicate recovery to a broad range of stakeholders. Having more LGA-level data on regions beyond what is currently collected in the LGA profiles would represent a clear value add to the NRRA from the Regional Data Hub.

For visibility, the NRRA maintains a State-Federal Recovery Data Working Group, originally established to assist in recovery after the 2019-20 Bushfire Season. The relevant States and Territories report data to the NRRA on the progress of recovery programs and grants.

There should be awareness that the Australian Climate Service (ACS) has been tasked to support NRRA and EMA in the provision of data relevant to the disaster cycle, so need to ensure data collection activities in that space are done in conjunction.

Below are answers to the questions posed in the consultation paper.

What are the major types of data (e.g. economic, social, industry, demographic) that you use?

The NRRA uses a wide range of data, generally categorised across the 4 Recovery Domains. Below is a subset of the key types of data that the NRRA uses across its products.

Disaster History

- Number and type of disaster declarations

Economic

- Business counts, entries and exits, by industry and turnover size
- Small Area Unemployment Rate
- Job Vacancies
- Personal income
- Tourism Visitations
- Local Government Financial Health
- Federal Government payments and allowances
- Federally funded disaster specific grants and payments
- Fodder stocks

Social

- Health service use (including mental health)
- Community demographics and vulnerabilities
- Educational attainment
- Family and domestic violence
- SEIFA

Environment

- Disaster boundary/footprint
- Land use
- Native title
- Land tenure
- Environmental recovery activities
- Threatened species

Infrastructure

- Damage and destruction of houses, facilities and outbuildings
- Telecommunications programs
- National Freight Data Hub

Are there particular sources (e.g. government) that you would prefer to receive data from?

The NRRA would prefer to receive regional data from a central federal co-ordinating body for regional data.

Would you like to access data by a particular area or location? Examples are by local government area, Indigenous Regions or the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Typically the NRRA uses Local Government Area/SA2 as the primary unit of analysis.

What other information could be included in the Hub, including for release as regular Hub products?

We would like to see hub consolidate and co-ordinate the wide range of other regional profiles currently produced by governments.

There may also be value in composite indices based on the range of available data to provide succinct indications of regional progress.

How do you currently access regional data and information? Please provide examples

The NRRA accesses data from a range of sources. These range from compendium publications to directly acquiring specific datasets. Data from different sources is integrated internally to create a suite of regional data products- having a Data Hub already integrating a full range of regional data would be beneficial for the NRRA.

Examples of how data is accessed:

- ABS Data by Region
- ABS Tablebuilder/ Census QuickStats
- Data.gov.au
- State dashboards and profiles
- PHIDU
- Direct sourcing from data suppliers
- Sourcing from stakeholder dashboards

What other ways would you prefer to access regional data and information?

The NRRA would see value in a central repository of information, which can be accessed and scraped via APIs.

What tools or products would help you to access and use data (e.g. a dashboard, user generated reports, maps, raw data)?

The key value add for the NRRA would be the repository of the raw data which could be downloaded and stored.

However both user generated reports and a dashboard would still be valuable. Maps are not as necessary for the NRRA.

What features would you like to see as part of the Hub to improve your access to regional data?

API and download functionalities are the key features.

What barriers prevent you accessing data?

A hesitancy towards data sharing amongst some custodians can present a barrier towards accessing data.

Differing levels of data maturity amongst custodians can also lead to products being difficult to integrate and extract. This can also lead to limiting metadata making assessment of data appropriateness difficult.

Finally a barrier lies in the ability to be aware of every dataset which is available at any given point, at any given coverage. There is a wide range of data custodians, between the federal government, states, local government and the private sector. This makes it difficult to be aware of and assess the full suite of possible data.

How could the Hub make it easier for you to access data?

The Regional Data Hub would provide a centralised and trusted hub for data, connected to key geographic boundaries. This hub would benefit data users and custodians by providing a central locale to establish ongoing data sharing arrangements with, streamlining the provision of and access to data. This would lead to less work duplication, and alongside the utilisation of API's make regional data collection significantly more efficient.

It could also assist in the harmonisation of data from different jurisdictions and custodians, allowing for more holistic examinations of regional area.

In addition, having a centralised data hub would highlight real gaps in regional data, where it is either unavailable or inaccessible.

What regional data do you hold?

As data custodians, the NRRA largely holds data on disaster related grants and programs.

The NRRA also holds data on regional disaster history, through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements disaster declarations.

What data (either your own or other data) would you like to see shared through the Hub?

The NRRA would like to see as much regional data shared through the hub as is feasible, however priority areas from the NRRA for inclusion in the Hub are identified below.

Economic

- Consumer spending and sentiment
- Detailed tourism data
- Regional skill supply and shortages
- Production volumes by industry
- Local economic activity via bank transaction data
- Agricultural commodities and gross value added
- Farm profitability

Social

- Crime and offending rates
- A nationally agreed vulnerability index
- Health outcomes (including mental health)
- Regional migration

Environment

- Vegetation types/land use
- Disaster risk levels
- Ecological health
- Threatened species and ecological communities
- Invasive species and weeds
- Range of data from 'Australia's Environment Explorer' produced by TERN.

Infrastructure

- Disaster resilience/risk reduction activities
- Information on the repair and reconstruction of dwellings, facilities and infrastructure
- Telecommunications coverage
- Rebuild information
- Insurance claims and callouts
- Locations of sealed and unsealed roads
- Digital connectivity
- Freight movements
- Agricultural transport infrastructure

What would be the benefits of greater data sharing for you or your organisation?

Greater data sharing, and thus more detailed data, would allow for better locally informed and evidence-based decision making. This is an essential component of disaster recovery.