Australian Government
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Ecological Monitoring System Australia (EMSA) Data Access Statement

This statement covers all data submitted by Regional Delivery Partners (RDPs) to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) as part of reporting for on-ground Natural Resource Management (NRM) programs. Data may be provided directly through the Monitor App, or via other approved mechanisms, such as the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Tool (MERIT). Programs and/or sub-programs covered by this statement include specifically the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funded Recovery Actions for Species and Landscapes; World Heritage Protection and Ramsar Wetland Protection programs. Other programs may also be covered by the statement, depending on their included data ownership provisions. Additional programs and/or sub-programs may be added over time.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the DCCEEW Policy on accessing and sharing biodiversity data and, for RDP service providers, the *Deed of Standing Offer for a Panel of Regional Delivery Partners for Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Services (the Deed).*

Data ownership

The Deed of Standing Offer identifies that all on-ground data collected through the NHT RDP program is owned by the Australian Government (AG). Data owned by the AG is available for use by the AG for decision-making, policy development, planning and reporting. The Deed also grants the RDP that collected the data rights to use that data for whatever purpose they see fit.

The AG has an open data policy, making all non-sensitive data open by default for public benefit. By preference, any data submitted through Monitor, and/or to MERIT or the Biodiversity Data Repository (BDR) should be made available to the public to ensure data re-use is maximised.

Sensitive data

Access to sensitive data depends on the data and user type.

EMSA classifies sensitive data into four types. Table 1 summarises these types and their default (public) access restrictions.

Location restrictions are to protect ecologically sensitive species and communities from threats, such as trampling, plant removal, and/or poaching. Further data restrictions may be assigned to culturally sensitive data as deemed relevant, and in consultation relevant Traditional Owner group/s. Private

property locations may be restricted for privacy purposes. All data may be restricted for scientific embargo purposes, for a defined period.

Type of sensitive data	Definition	Default access restriction
Ecologically sensitive	A listed species or ecological community under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and/or listed in a State/Territory.	Precise locations are restricted based on the obfuscation process used in the State or Territory where the record occurs.
Culturally sensitive	As defined by the relevant Traditional Owner group.	Location and other data deemed relevant are restricted on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the relevant Traditional Owner group/s.
Scientific purposes	Collected as part of a project but with the intent to publish.	Data can be embargoed for a period of up to three years to allow for publication, with yearly extensions being possible on application.
Private property	Collected as part of a project on private property.	Location restrictions are considered on application, on a case-by-case basis.

Table 1 EMSA sensitive data types and access restrictions.

Types of data users

Table 2 sets out EMSA user types and data access. As data owners, the AG can access all data. Access outside Government is tiered, classified into access by State and Territory governments, researchers and environmental organisations, and public access.

User type	Data type and access		
	Threatened species	**Embargoed data**	**Culturally sensitive**
Public	Obscured/no access	No access	No access
Researchers and environmental organisations	By written request.	By written request.	By written request, and in consultation with relevant Traditional Owner group/s.
State and Territory Governments	Full access.	By written request.	By written request, and in consultation with relevant Traditional Owner group/s.
Australian Government	Full access.	Full access.	Full access.

Table 2 EMSA user types and data access.

How to apply for data access or a change in data classification

Please contact the Department through the Long Term Monitoring Program inbox, ltmp@dcceew.gov.au giving your reasons for classification level, access and use.

Policy Review

This policy will be subject to review and change as EMSA and the Monitor App evolves. If any changes to the policy have significant consequences for pre-existing data arrangements, pre-existing arrangements will remain in place.