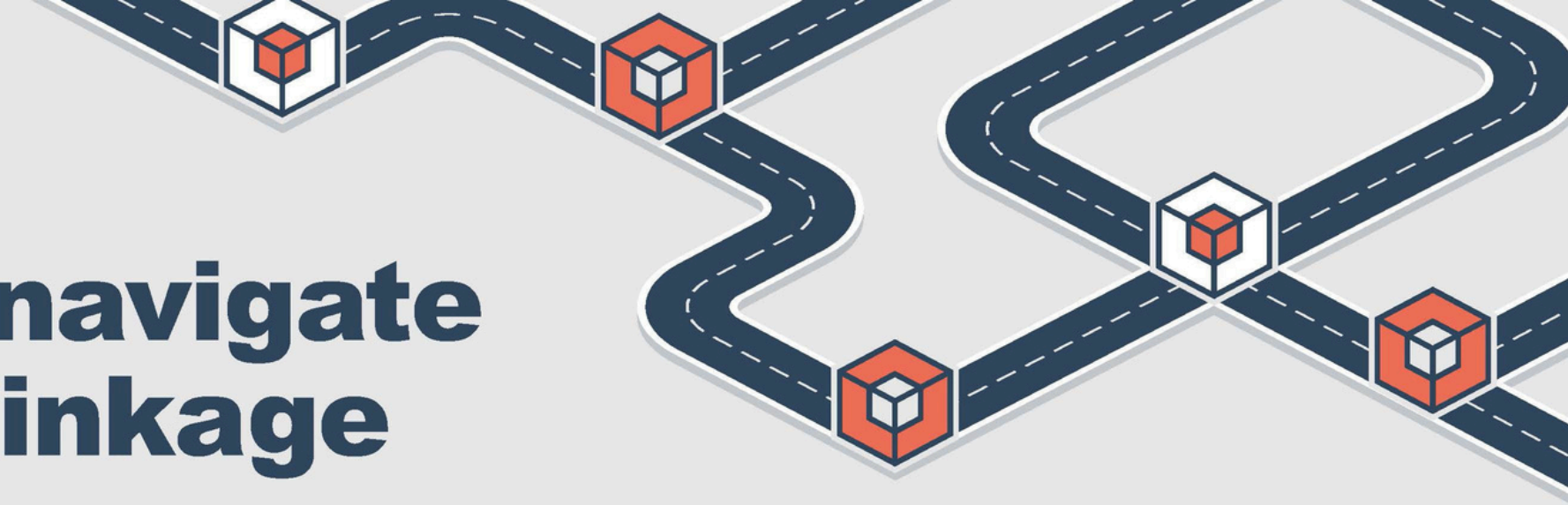
DATA CONNECT AUSTRALIA

NCRIS National Research Infrastructure for Australia An Australian Government Initiative



Let's navigate data linkage

Data linkage is the connection of records within and between data sources that are thought to relate to the same individual.

Data linkage is managed by data linkage units across Australia. If you want to access linked data in your research, you'll need to work closely with the relevant data linkage unit. No matter which one you work with, there are several phases in a data linkage journey.

Consultation

During the consultation phase, you'll work closely with the relevant data linkage unit to scope out the feasibility and requirements of your project.

Application

In the application phase, you'll prepare and submit your data linkage application and human research ethics application.

Approvals

The approvals phase will involve getting data custodian, ethics and any other necessary approvals.

Data linkage

The data linkage phase will see the data linkage unit coordinate the linkage of the approved data sources before delivering safely and securely to you, ready for research.

What can you do to make your data linkage project a smooth and pleasant journey?

- Get in touch early with the relevant data linkage unit to discuss your project before you start – they'll help you understand what you need to do.
- Invest time upfront and create a detailed project plan so you know where you're going and how you're going to get there.
- Be realistic about the time it will take to complete your project. After all, journeys take time.
- Familiarise yourself with what datasets are available and be as specific as possible when requesting data.
- Complete all forms with as much detail as possible; remember, you need to educate the reader on your research topic.
- And lastly, don't be afraid to ask questions: the data linkage unit is there to guide you on your journey and help you arrive at your linked data destination.