



Prime Minister Scott Morrison

# Renewed call to connect Australia

“Fires, floods and pandemics don’t stop at state borders – and they don’t respect local government territories.”  
– Esri Australia  
Group Managing Director  
Brett Bundock

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-2020 bushfires and the 2021 East Coast floods – the chorus of voices calling for a national spatial data infrastructure (NSDI) is growing louder.

The need for an NSDI has shifted on and off the national agenda for the past four decades – and Boustead Geospatial Technologies and Esri Australia group managing director Brett Bundock says Australia cannot afford to wait for the next crisis to strike before leaders move to connect the country.

“Government and commercial leaders have been in vehement agreement regarding the need for this critical piece of infrastructure for years – yet little progress has been made,” Mr Bundock said.

“In the digital age, we need information highways. In terms of a national infrastructure project, the establishment of an NSDI would be as significant to this nation as the Snowy River Hydro project and the great Inland Rail.”

Mr Bundock said in the past, legislators and government leaders have cited technology limitations as an excuse for NSDI inertia – but those days are long gone.

“The New South Wales and Queensland governments are making significant inroads in establishing state-wide federated spatial systems and the nation’s largest critical

asset management group, Dial Before You Dig, will shortly shift to a next-gen referral service which enables information to be exchanged freely between members and network providers.

“We have the technology, the data and the know-how to make this happen. The digital bedrock is in place and we simply have to press the ‘on’ switch to light up government, community and commercial decision-makers with new insight.”

Insight that, according to ANZLIC, could improve our ability to digitally innovate to the tune of \$315 billion over the next decade. Insight that could create jobs and boost national productivity and income by up to A\$2.2 trillion.

“Fires, floods and pandemics don’t stop at state borders – and they don’t respect local government territories,” said Mr Bundock.

“Policy and law-makers have all engineered artificial spatial boundaries which have invited inefficiency in government, put communities at risk and taken our economy to the brink.

“What are we waiting for? It’s time to take action and break these barriers down.” ■

*To register your interest in participating in an NSDI ‘think tank’ forum, visit: [esriaustralia.com.au/connect-australia](https://esriaustralia.com.au/connect-australia)*  
*Information provided by Esri Australia.*