

Report on the 2021 Annual Survey of the NRCoP

Survey Highlights

- 189 respondents completed the survey
- 80% of respondents found our webinars to be ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ useful
- 67% of respondents have ‘applied insights’ gained from the NRCoP resources to their work as regulators
- 45% of respondents recommended specific topics to be covered in upcoming webinars
- 61% of respondents reported that participating in the NRCoP has been ‘extremely valuable’ or ‘definitely valuable’ in developing capability and professionalism as a regulator (a further 29% stated this was ‘somewhat valuable’)
- 80% of respondents said they would recommend joining the NRCoP to their colleagues
- The 3 most popular webinar topics proposed for 2022 were:
 - Regulators toolkit: “I’ll show you mine if you show me yours” why we don’t need to reinvent the wheel
 - Best Practice, Better Practice: Striving for improvement
 - Near misses: creating a culture of owning mistakes and embedding continuous regulatory improvement

Main Findings

Who we are and what we do

The National Regulators Community of Practice (NRCoP) is an active network of public sector regulators from all levels of government in Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand and from every regulatory sector, professional background, role and level of seniority. As such, the 189 respondents who completed the 2021 survey represent a cross-section of jurisdictions, regulatory domains, roles and level of government.

<p>Top six jurisdictions were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commonwealth 24% 2. Victoria 19% 3. Queensland 16% 4. Western Australia 13% 5. New South Wales 9% 6. New Zealand 8% 	<p>Top six regulator ‘types’ were identified as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental 13.5% 2. Health 13% 3. Education 7.5% 4. Safety 6% 5. Social 6% 6. Transport 6%
<p>Top seven regulatory ‘roles’ were identified as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operational policy development and implementation/development of strategy 22% 	

2. Policy advice to senior decision makers in department or Minister 12%
3. Inspecting, monitoring, auditing 9.5%
4. Investigations 8.5%
5. Enforcing, sanctioning, prosecution 8.5%
6. Statutory decision making 7.5%
7. Authorising – licensing, permitting, certifying, registering, accrediting 7%

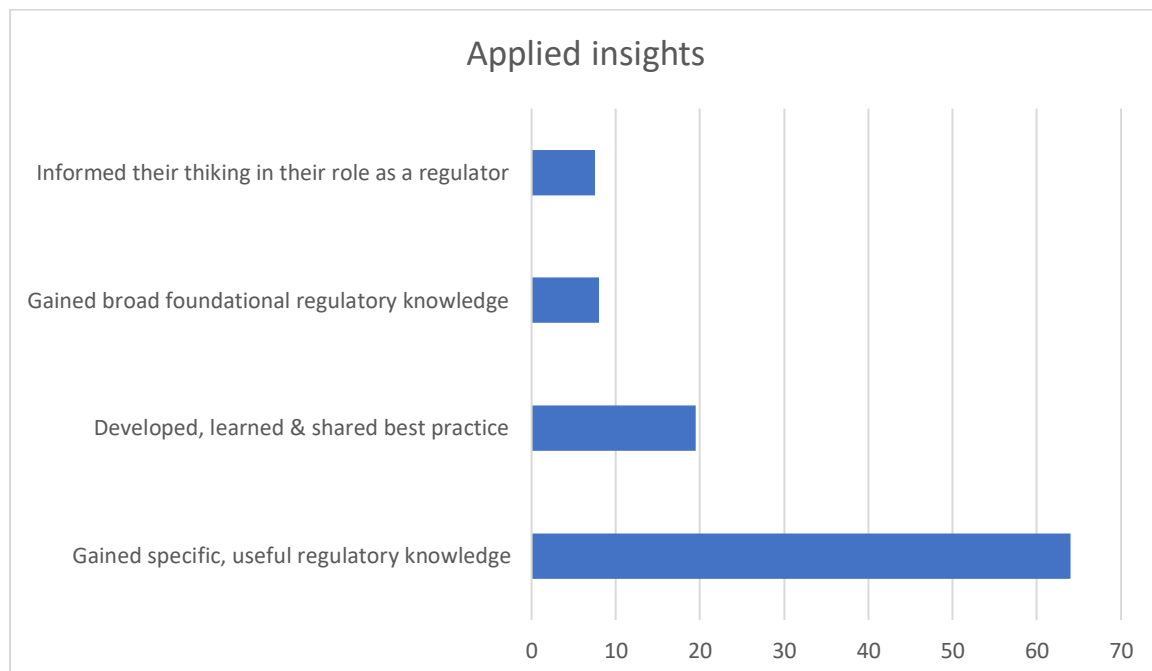
Level of Government:

1. State/Territory government 56%
2. National government 34%
3. Local government 2%

Gaining and Applying insights

A total of 67% of respondents reported being able to ‘apply insights’ gained from the NRCoP, to their job as a regulator. We asked respondents to describe the ‘insights’ they had gained from participating in the NRCoP. These free-text responses were coded and categorised into the following four broad categories:

1. Gained specific, useful, regulatory knowledge (64%)
2. Developed, learned, and shared best practices (19.5%)
3. Gained broad foundational regulatory knowledge (8%)
4. Informed their thinking in their roles as regulators (7.5%)



Examples of free-text responses and coding:

Gained specific, useful, regulatory knowledge (64.5%)

Gained broad foundational regulatory knowledge (8%)

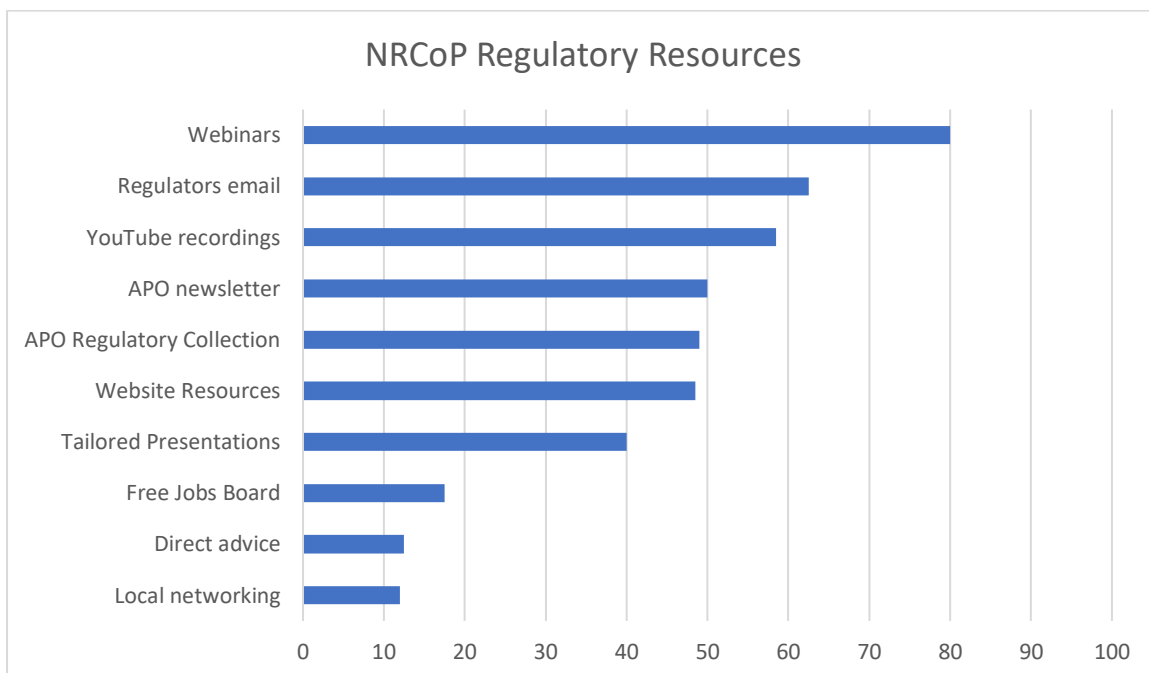
... general insights into how regulators work

<p><i>... Improvements in communication, managing staff and record keeping</i></p> <p><i>... Reg Tech</i></p> <p><i>... toolkit of regulatory options</i></p> <p><i>... Regulating "virtually" during the pandemic</i></p> <p><i>... Compliance planning mind map.</i></p>	<p><i>... really valued getting an understanding of the fundamentals of regulatory craft/practice, and hearing from other regulators that we all face similar issues</i></p>
<p>Developed, learned, and shared best practices (20%)</p> <p><i>...A broader view of how regulators work outside my sector (and indeed, outside Australia.)</i></p> <p><i>...Particularly through COVID 19, I found others (including more of a global perspective) views and ways of managing helpful.</i></p> <p><i>... Best practice applied by other regulators, use of AI in moving forward with regulation</i></p>	<p>Informed their thinking in their roles as regulators (7.5%)</p> <p><i>...I would read emails and articles etc and that would help my thinking, discussions and decision making.</i></p> <p><i>... know I always leave the seminar with some ideas for how things could be approached differently or areas I had not previously considered that were worthy of a more in-depth analysis</i></p>

What has been ‘most useful’ to you in your job as a regulator?

We asked respondents to reflect on the range of resources provided and how ‘useful’ these were to them. Respondents could rate each regulatory resource along the following scale: extremely useful, very useful, somewhat useful, a little useful and not at all useful.

The following results group the responses of ‘extremely useful’ and ‘very useful’ together and demonstrates the strength of positive opinion amongst respondents.



The NRCoP webinars were judged to be the most useful of our resources (80%) followed by our monthly regulators email (62.5%) and ANZSOG/YouTube recordings (58.5%). The monthly APO Newsletter (Regulation, Policy & Practice), regulatory resources on the ANZSOG website and the regulators collection on the APO site all scored in the region of 50% with respondents. A total of 40% of respondents reported that a tailored presentation from ANZSOG/NRCoP support staff to be 'extremely useful' and 'very useful'. A further 17.5% reported the free Jobs Board as the most useful resource.

Reflecting on what we *could* have done better

We asked our members to reflect on what we could have done better in the previous 12-month period. The majority of responses stated that there was nothing the NRCoP could have done better.

- *I think the NRCoP has done a good job. Not sure what else you could have done.*
- *Nothing comes to mind*
- *I have found all the material really useful, so I am not sure at this stage I have any improvements to add*
- *Quite happy with NRCoP's offerings over the past 12 months*
- *If I can't attend webinars / in person sessions, it's really great having recorded resources to return to at any time. I'd like to see more recordings of sessions available.*
- *Doing a great job. Nothing to add*

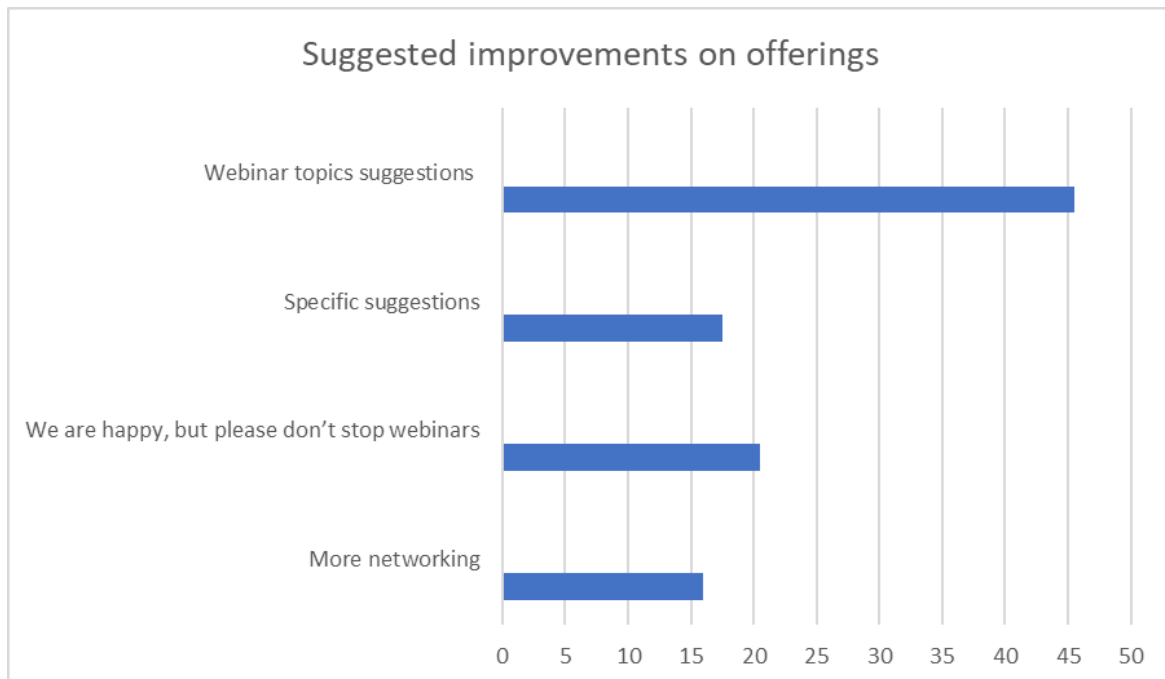
Where respondents did provide other responses, these tended to relate to suggestions for future webinar topics and events and the desire to get back to face-to-face events.

- *Not could have done better, but I note that we haven't had any in person opportunities due to COVID. Looking forward to that changing in 2022. Also looking forward to the regulatory training program you're developing. It would be nice to have more contact between participants so we can develop networks and have people we can bounce ideas off between webinars and formal events. This is important not just for senior decision makers but also early career staff.*

Improvements for NRCoP offerings and engagement

We asked our members to consider the range of offerings the NRCoP provided to members and our engagement activities over the coming 12-month period. A total of 69 respondents responded to the question on improvements to offerings over the coming 12 months, using free-text responses. Responses were coded and categorised into the following four broad categories:

1. Webinar topics suggestions (45.5%)
2. Specific suggestions (17.5%)
3. We are happy, but please don't stop webinars (20.5%)
4. More Networking (16%)



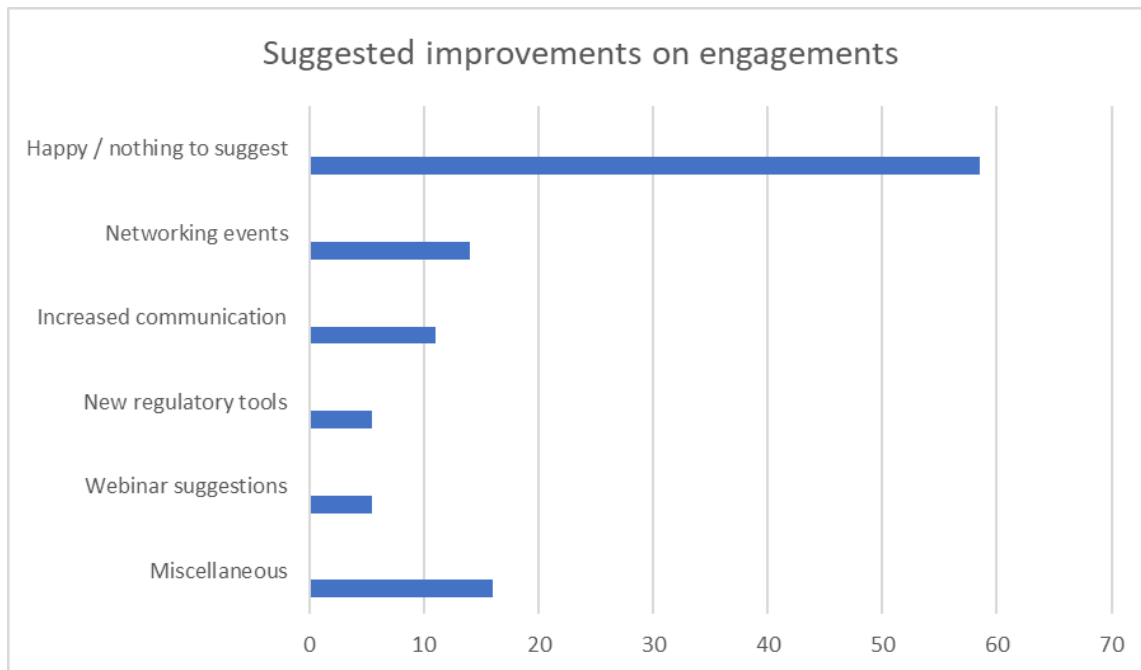
Examples of free-text responses:

<p>Suggested Topics (45.5%) <i>...More on capture, human rights, power, social justice. Hear from people who access regulatory systems and have critiques of those systems</i> <i>...How to package up operational observations about how the law is working on the ground into advice about regulatory reforms for policy teams</i> <i>...Tackle some practical issues</i> <i>...Enforcement decision making Problem solving regulatory harms</i></p>	<p>Specific suggestions (17.5%) <i>...Papers and Discussion Papers</i> <i>...Consider accessibility for neurodiversity and also invisible disabilities including offering face to face options to enable increased participation.</i> <i>...Perhaps we could look at and share more formally what each state is doing in terms of strategy and operations</i> <i>...More offerings to build skill development, including offerings that are not just aimed at executives but at skill development for staff at varying levels.</i> <i>...Mentoring opportunities</i></p>
<p>We are happy, but please don't stop webinars (20.5%) <i>...continue to offer different modes of delivery</i> <i>...I think the format and offering is great as no longer in city and often working from home so webinar format perfect</i> <i>...please continue with the webinars. These are always valuable and accessible (and can be caught up on later if missed)</i> <i>...I am finding the short Blogs and articles the most convenient and engaging way of receiving information. So more of those. ...many of our</i></p>	<p>Networking (16%) <i>...an ability to meet with other regulators and discuss issues through a conference or face to face sessions</i> <i>...a conference</i> <i>...it would be great if in the next 12 months we are able to go back to having the annual conference as I have found these provide great networking opportunities in the past.</i> <i>... so looking forward to increased networking opportunities</i></p>

staff plan to watch the webinars but this does not happen.

A total of 36 respondents responded to the question on improvements to engagement over the forthcoming 12 months, using free-text responses. Responses were coded and categorised into the following broad categories:

1. Happy / nothing to suggest (58.5%)
2. Networking events (14%)
3. Increased communication (11%)
4. New regulatory tools (5.5%)
5. Webinar suggestions (5.5%)
6. Miscellaneous (5.5%)



Examples of free-text responses:

<p>Happy / nothing to suggest (58.3%) <i>... keep doing what you are doing</i> <i>... keep doing current activities</i> <i>... Engagement is fine</i> <i>... I am satisfied with present approach</i></p>	<p>Networking events (13.9%) <i>... I'd love networking opportunities in Queensland</i> <i>... Opportunities for face-to-face engagement</i> <i>... Possible options for networking face to face (1 per year at least) and bring back the annual workshop</i></p>
<p>Increased communication (11.1%) <i>... Does NRCoP do podcasts? If not, maybe something to think about. Even audio recordings of the webinars would be useful.</i></p>	

... increased level of communication

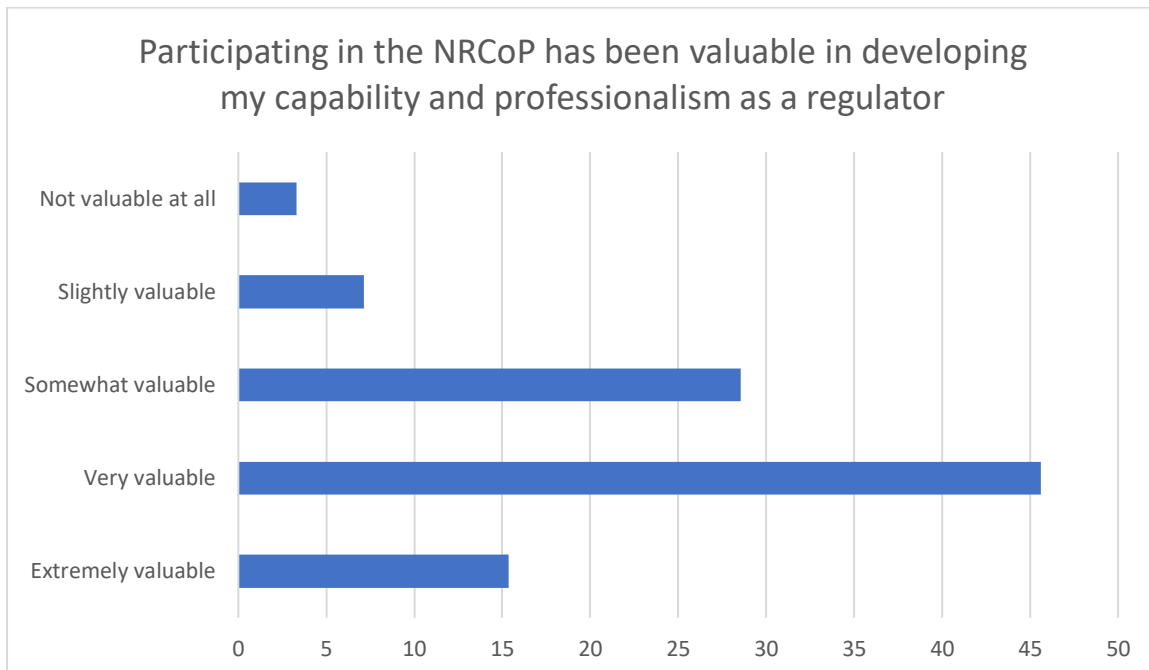
Webinar topics

Respondents were asked to list their preferences for different webinar topics. The results below present the preferences of the top eight webinar topics for 2022:

1. Regulators toolkit: “I’ll show you mine if you show me yours” why we don’t need to reinvent the wheel (13%)
2. Best Practice, Better Practice: Striving for improvement (11.5%)
3. Near misses: creating a culture of owning mistakes and embedding continuous regulatory improvement (11%)
4. Outsourcing regulatory reform/functions: what role ‘should’ third parties play? (10%)
5. Thinking about the people in the communities we regulate: customers, consumers and the public at large (10%)
6. Regulatory Capture: how to know if and when capture happens and what to do about it. (9.5%)
7. Regulatory legitimacy: what is it and how do we operate when we don’t have it? (9%)
8. Royal Commissions, Commission of Inquiry, Productivity Commissions: are we outsourcing regulatory reform? (7.5%)

The benefits of participating in the NRCoP

Respondents were asked to consider how they had benefitted (at the individual level) from participating in the NRCoP and whether they judged it to have developed their capability and professionalism as a regulator. Respondents were asked to rate this participation on the following scale: extremely valuable, very valuable, somewhat valuable, a little valuable and not at all valuable.



The following results group the responses of ‘extremely valuable and ‘very valuable’ together and demonstrates the strength of positive opinion amongst respondents in relation to this question.

- 61% of respondents reported that participating in the NRCoP has been ‘extremely valuable’ and ‘very valuable’ in developing their capability and professionalism as a regulator
- A further 29% stated this participating in the NRCoP was ‘somewhat valuable’ in developing their capability and professionalism as a regulator

We asked respondents whether they would recommend their colleagues join the NRCoP and the response was overwhelmingly positive:

