



Australian Government



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST OPEN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2016–18

Draft for consultation

This draft Plan has been prepared for further public consultation and input. The Australian Government will finalise this Plan after these processes have taken place.

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1 Introduction

Australia is a successful and stable democracy, with relatively low levels of corruption and a long, proud history of open government.

In 2015, we were ranked 13th in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, and 9th in The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index.

But in a rapidly changing world – transformed by the digital revolution – it is important Australia boosts its efforts to become even more open, transparent and accountable, and improve public engagement. This is crucial as we seek to:

- build a better society for all Australians and be more responsive to the expectations of the community;
- stimulate economic growth and innovation;
- foster collaboration between government, business, academia, non-government organisations and the community; and
- continue efforts to stamp out corruption, fraud and misconduct.

Governments worldwide are moving towards more open and transparent ways of working, with 70 countries – including Australia – now signed up to the Open Government Partnership.

What is the Open Government Partnership?

The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative established in 2011 that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

Membership requires governments to work with civil society to 'co-create' a National Action Plan every two years, with independent reporting on progress. Civil society is a term used by the Partnership to broadly refer to people and organisations outside of government, including non government organisations, business, academia, community groups and the public.

Importantly, the Open Government Partnership doesn't prescribe standards that countries should follow – rather it aims to bring governments and citizens of each country together to define their own priorities for reform.

The Australian Government confirmed its membership of the Open Government Partnership in November 2015.

This National Action Plan sets out the initial steps the Government will take to achieve the aim of improving and building confidence in Australian institutions and democracy, and to uphold the principles in the Open Government Declaration, including to:

- promote transparency, fight corruption, empower citizens, and harness the power of new technologies to make government more effective and accountable;
- uphold the value of openness in our engagement with citizens to improve services, manage public resources, promote innovation, and create safer communities; and
- embrace principles of transparency and open government with a view toward achieving greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity in our own country and in an increasingly interconnected world.

The Plan sets out an agenda for the next two years across a broad range of important areas:

- Transparency and accountability in business
- Open data and digital transformation
- Access to government information
- Integrity in the public sector
- Public participation and engagement

As our first National Action Plan, it provides a foundation to continue engaging with civil society to identify new initiatives and strengthen our efforts over time. There is also an opportunity going forward to work with state, territory and local governments to improve transparency and integrity at all levels of government.

2 Efforts to date

The Australian Government has already taken a range of steps towards improving transparency, integrity and anti-corruption in recent years, which this National Action Plan will build upon.

Open data and digital transformation of government services are high priorities for the Government and considerable progress has been made in a short space of time.

- The **Public Data Policy Statement**, released in December 2015, commits Australian Government entities to release non-sensitive data as open by default. Since 2013, the number of discoverable resources on data.gov.au has grown from approximately 500 to over 20,000.
- The **Digital Transformation Agency** (formerly the Digital Transformation Office) has been established to lead the online transformation of government services, and provide an integrated policy and strategic capability for whole of government ICT, ICT procurement and digital. The Digital Transformation Agency will implement wide scale change in digital capability across government departments, benefiting the public and other users of government services.

There have been several major initiatives to improve accountability and integrity both within and outside of government.

- The Government commissioned an **independent review of the parliamentary entitlements system** in August 2015, and has given its in-principle support to all of the recommendations of the review.
- The **Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption** reported in December 2015. The Government has introduced legislation to improve the governance and accountability of registered organisations (unions and employer organisations).

Steps have been taken to make government procurement more transparent, and to encourage innovation by making it easier for start-ups and innovative small businesses to sell services to government.

- The National Innovation and Science Agenda committed to establish a new **Digital Marketplace** for procuring ICT products and services, and seeking innovative solutions to policy and service delivery “challenges” through the **Business Research and Innovation Initiative**.

- A public **ICT dashboard** is being developed to improve transparency around Government ICT performance and progress on major new investments.

The Australian Government has also been active (and in many cases a leader) in international anti-corruption and tax avoidance / transparency efforts.

- Australia is a key member of the **G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group**, having led the development of the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan and the subsequent 2015-16 Anti-Corruption Implementation Plan. The G20 High Level Principles on Beneficial Ownership Transparency are also a legacy item of Australia's 2014 G20 presidency.
- Australia was also an active participant in the **UK's international anti-corruption summit** in London in May 2016. At the meeting, the Government endorsed the Global Declaration against Corruption and announced a range of new measures, including joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and holding an annual government business roundtable on corruption.
- In December 2015, the Australian Taxation Office published the first annual ***Report of Entity Tax Information***, which included the Australian total income, taxable income and tax paid of large public and private companies operating in Australia.
- The **Voluntary Tax Transparency Code**, announced as part of the 2016-17 Budget, is a set of principles and minimum standards to guide medium and large businesses on public disclosure of tax information. Adoption of the Code is voluntary, and is designed to encourage greater transparency within the corporate sector.

These new measures build on other actions taken over the last decade to improve access to government information and promote transparency and integrity at the federal level:

- Whistle-blower protections in the public sector were significantly improved by the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*, which commenced in January 2014.
- Freedom of information laws were reformed in 2010, and included the introduction of the Information Publication Scheme (IPS), which requires Australian Government agencies to publish a broad range of information on their websites.
- The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner was established in 2010 to promote access to government information.
- The *Archives Act 1983* was amended in 2010 to reduce the period before which government information and Cabinet documents are released. A Digital Transition Policy and Digital Continuity 2020 Policy have also been established, requiring government information to be created and managed digitally.

- Creative Commons licensing was adopted in 2010 to accommodate access to government information and bring consistency to licensing arrangements.

State, territory and local governments have also undertaken a range of initiatives to promote transparency, integrity and access to information at a sub-national level.

3 Developing this plan

The National Action Plan has been drafted through a process of consultation and collaboration between government, non-government organisations (including the Australian Open Government Partnership Civil Society Network), the public and the private sector.

Over the past year, we undertook a number of activities to explore the breadth of Australian views on the spectrum of open government issues.

- **Raising awareness:** public meetings were held in four capital cities in late 2015 to raise awareness of Australia's membership of the Open Government Partnership and the process to develop Australia's first National Action Plan. Additional awareness raising activities were undertaken through social media, government websites, teleconferences and webinars, and email mailing lists.
- **Seeking ideas:** a formal consultation process ran from December 2015 to April 2016 to seek suggestions on potential commitments for the National Action Plan. This included a formal submission process, teleconferences with stakeholders, and a workshop with over 60 participants in April 2016 to help prioritise potential commitments for the Plan. All timeframes for consultation and submissions were published online.
- **Drafting the National Action Plan:** an Interim Working Group, comprising equal representation of government officials and non-government members, was established in August 2016 to provide input and help inform the drafting of the National Action Plan, building on earlier consultations.

This engagement has helped shape the National Action Plan and the open government priorities for the next two years. More details about engagement activities are provided at Appendix A.



Image 1 – Interim Working Group Workshop

4 Commitments

This National Action Plan consists of an ambitious package of 14 commitments. Taken together, these actions will advance transparency, accountability, public participation and technological innovation in Australia over the next two years.

The Government will continue to engage publicly to identify new opportunities to promote open government. New commitments may either be added to this National Action Plan, or embedded in our second National Action Plan due in 2018.

THEMES	NO.	COMMITMENT
i. Transparency and accountability in business	1.1	Improve whistle-blower protections in the tax and corporate sectors
	1.2	Beneficial ownership
	1.3	Natural resource transparency
ii. Open data and digital transformation	2.1	Release high-value datasets and enable data-driven innovation
	2.2	Build and maintain public trust to address concerns about data sharing
	2.3	Digitally transform the delivery of government services
iii. Access to government information	3.1	Information management and access laws for the 21 st century
	3.2	Understand the use of freedom of information
	3.3	Improve the discoverability and accessibility of government data and information
iv. Integrity in the public sector	4.1	Confidence in the electoral system and political parties
	4.2	National Integrity Framework
	4.3	Open contracting
v. Public participation and engagement	5.1	Delivery of Australia's Open Government National Action Plan
	5.2	Enhance public participation in government decision making



Transparency and accountability in business

***We will enhance Australia's strong reputation
for responsible, transparent and accountable
business practice.***

Commitment 1.1: Improve whistle-blower protections in the tax and corporate sectors

We will improve whistle-blower protections for people who disclose information about tax misconduct to the Australian Taxation Office. We will also consult on other reform options to strengthen and harmonise whistle-blower protections in the corporate sector with those in the public sector.

Objective: Australia will ensure appropriate protections are in place for people who report tax evasion or avoidance, corruption, waste, fraud and misconduct within the corporate sector.

Status Quo: The prevention of tax evasion or avoidance, corruption, waste and fraud relies upon appropriate protections for people who report these wrongdoings.

Australian public servants who act as whistle-blowers already have significant protection under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (PID Act)*. This is in contrast to Australia's corporate whistle-blower framework, which lags behind the PID Act. Current protections are overly narrow and make it unnecessarily difficult for those with information to qualify for protections.

A research project into public interest whistleblowing, *Whistling While They Work 2*, led by Griffith University, is currently underway and looking into improvements across the public and private sectors.

In the 2016-17 Budget, the Government announced it would introduce whistle-blower protections for people who disclose information about tax misconduct to the Australian Taxation Office.

Ambition: To reduce tax evasion or avoidance, corruption, waste and fraud by protecting people who report such activities.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **public accountability** and **transparency** by:

- encouraging, protecting and compensating whistle-blowers whose information reveals artificial tax structures and misconduct;
- reducing tax misconduct and other forms of corruption, fraud and waste by ensuring whistle-blowers are protected from retribution; and
- ensuring tax and corporate private sector whistle-blowers have similar protections to public sector whistle-blowers.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OGP Grand Challenge		Increasing Corporate Accountability More Effectively Managing Public Resources
Timeframes		December 2016 – December 2017
Lead agency		Treasury
Other actors involved	Government	Australian Taxation Office, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Attorney-General's Department and other relevant agencies
	Non-government	Board of taxation, tax advisors, law and accounting bodies, non-government organisations and academia

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Policy development to introduce tax whistle-blower protections and options to strengthen and harmonise corporate whistle-blowing protections with those in the public sector.	October 2016	December 2016
2	Public consultation on tax and corporate whistle-blower protections.	December 2016	March 2017
3	(i) Development and exposure of draft legislation for tax whistle-blower protections. (ii) Recommendation to Government on reforms to strengthen whistle-blower protections in the corporate sector.	May 2017	July 2017
4	Finalisation of legislation for tax whistle-blower protections.	August 2017	December 2017

Commitment 1.2: Beneficial Ownership

We will consult with the corporate sector, non-government organisations and the public on a beneficial ownership register for companies.

Objective: Australia will work to improve transparency of information on beneficial ownership and control of companies available to competent authorities.

Status Quo: Improving transparency around who owns and benefits from financial arrangements is key to protecting the integrity of our financial systems and preventing the misuse of financial entities for corruption and criminal activity. A beneficial ownership register shows who ultimately benefits from the activities of companies.

Australia currently has tracing powers for beneficial ownership of listed companies and investment schemes but there is room to strengthen these provisions.

Ambition: To ensure that adequate, accurate and timely information on beneficial ownership and control is available to competent authorities in Australia.

To improve regional and international cooperation on taxation, including strengthening information sharing between tax authorities and sharing learnings to increase the transparency of beneficial ownership information. We will use outcomes of the work by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes this year to help develop proposals to improve implementation of relevant international standards on transparency, including on the availability and exchange of companies' beneficial ownership information.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by:

- improving the effectiveness of our legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks;
- preventing the misuse of financial arrangements for illicit purposes such as corruption, tax evasion and money laundering;
- protecting the integrity of the financial system; and
- increasing growth through private sector investment.

COMMITMENT DETAILS				
OCP Grand Challenge		Increasing Corporate Accountability		
Timeframes		Recommendation to Government on improving transparency of information on beneficial ownership of companies available to competent authorities by end 2017		
Lead agency		Treasury		
Other actors involved	Government	Attorney General's Department , Australian Securities and Investment Commission, G20, Australian Taxation Office, regional partners and Australian Accounting Standards Board		
	Non-government	Companies, non-government organisations, reporting entities under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act, FATF, Global Forum, international tax partners		
NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE	
1	<p>Release a public consultation paper seeking views on the details, scope and implementation of a register of beneficial ownership of companies. The consultation will also consider:</p> <p>(i) Recommendations by FATF and the Global Forum on proposals to improve the implementation of the international standards on transparency, including on the availability of beneficial ownership information and its international exchange.</p> <p>(ii) The use of nominee shareholdings to conceal beneficial ownership, including potential solutions.</p>	End 2016	End 2016	

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
2	Public consultation.	End 2016	Early 2017
3	Recommendation to Government on the details, scope and implementation of a register of beneficial ownership of companies.	Mid 2017	Mid 2017
4	Recommendation to Government on other related areas of beneficial ownership transparency considered during consultation.	End 2017	End 2017

Commitment 1.3: Natural Resource Transparency

We will work together to enhance disclosure of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining.

Objective: Australia will work towards compliance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) standard and continue to support the application of EITI principles around the world.

Status Quo: The sustainable development of natural resources (oil, gas and minerals) requires transparent and accountable management of revenue received from these industries, including taxes, royalties and other payments.

The EITI is a global standard to promote the open and accountable management of natural resources. The Australian Government has been a major supporter of the EITI, committing more than A\$20 million since 2007.

Australia announced its intention to seek EITI compliance on 6 May 2016, following a pilot to test the applicability of EITI rules and principles to Australian conditions between 2011 and 2014. This requires us to report annually on governance and payments in the oil, gas and mining sectors.

The oil, gas and mining industries face increasing scrutiny. Our commitment to the EITI standard will help to build the public trust necessary for an enduring and sustainable industry.

Ambition: To enhance transparency and accountability in the extractive industries sector.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by:

- providing timely, reliable, publicly available and independently verified data on the extractives industries' contribution to the Australian economy;
- encouraging EITI adoption in resource-rich countries and support a level playing field for Australian companies seeking to invest in those markets;
- demonstrating Australia's commitment to global transparency, anti-corruption and tackling tax avoidance; consistent with current domestic and international trends; and
- supporting the extractive industries' social licence to operate, demonstrating its commitment to transparent and accountable operations.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OGP Grand Challenge		Increasing Corporate Accountability More Effectively Managing Public Resources
Timeframes		September 2016 – Mid 2019
Lead agency		Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
Other actors involved	Government	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury, Australian Taxation Office, state and territory governments
	Non-government	EITI International, Transparency International, Publish What You Pay and a range of relevant non-government groups, Minerals Council of Australia, Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association and extractive industries companies

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Establish a Multi-Stakeholder Group (representing industry, non-government organisations and government) to oversee the implementation of the EITI standard in Australia.	November 2016	Ongoing
2	Submit a formal application for EITI candidacy.	March 2017	June 2017
3	Produce Australia's first EITI report.	Mid 2018	End 2018
4	Commence validation to become EITI compliant.	Early 2019	Mid 2019



Open data and digital transformation

We will advance our commitments to make government data open by default and to digitally transform government services.

Commitment 2.1: Release high-value datasets and enable data-driven innovation

We will work with the research, not-for-profit and private sectors to release high-value public datasets and drive social and economic outcomes.

Objective: Australia will continue to make more public data openly available and support its use to launch commercial and non-profit ventures, conduct research, make data-driven decisions, and solve complex problems.

Status Quo: Public data is a valuable national resource and its use and reuse can help grow the economy, improve service delivery and transform policy outcomes.

While significant progress has been made to advance the public data agenda within Australia, further work needs to be done to harness the full value of this resource. Ongoing engagement is required to identify the characteristics of high-value datasets and discover barriers to accessing and sharing data.

The public, research, not-for-profit and private sectors can innovate with this data in order to generate new business, develop new products and services, and create social value.

The Government has provided some support to date, including through the Open Data 500 Australia¹ and the DataStart initiative.² There is now the opportunity to build and expand on these pilot initiatives to encourage the use of public data for social and economic outcomes.

In the Government's policy for *Better and More Accessible Digital Services*,³ the Government committed to working with research, not-for-profit and private sectors to identify high-value public datasets for release. This will be supported by a public registry of significant non-sensitive datasets yet to be published on data.gov.au. The Government is also establishing a \$50 million Smart Cities and Suburbs Program to incentivise local councils to open up their data and collaborate with communities, local business, not-for-profits and research institutes to create innovative solutions to urban problems.⁴

The Productivity Commission is undertaking an inquiry into data availability and use that will also identify the characteristics (and provide examples) of

¹ See: www.opendata500.com/au

² See: www.datastart.com.au

³ The Government's policy for *Better and More Accessible Digital Services*, June 2016

⁴ The Government's policy for *Smart Cities*, June 2016

public datasets that would provide high-value to the public, research and private sectors, as well as the community.

Ambition: To develop an open dialogue between government and non-government sectors to identify high-value datasets and to stimulate greater use and re-use of public data in innovative ways.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information**, **technology and innovation** and **public participation** by:

- identifying and prioritising high-value datasets for priority release;
- understanding how Australian businesses and not-for-profits are using public data;
- stimulating use and re-use of public data in innovative ways;
- encouraging the use of public data to create social value;
- identifying, facilitating and addressing barriers impeding the sharing of and access to data; and
- fostering a dialogue on how public data can be made more useful.

COMMITMENT DETAILS		
OGP Grand Challenge		More Effectively Managing Public Resources Improving Public Services
Timeframes		December 2016 – July 2018
Lead agency		Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Other actors involved	Government	Commonwealth Government agencies and state and territory governments
	Non-government	Research, not-for-profit and private sectors

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Review and publicise the outcomes from the pilot DataStart initiative.	October 2016	December 2016
2	Roundtable discussion with the research sector.	October 2016	October 2016
3	Roundtable discussion with the private sector.	November 2016	November 2016
4	Roundtable discussion with the not-for-profit sector.	Feb-March 2017	Feb-March 2017
5	Undertake the second round of the Open Data 500.	January 2017	July 2017
6	Expand the DataStart initiative.	July 2017	July 2018
7	Broader consultation through surveys, social media and blog posts.	October 2016	March 2017
8	Develop the High-Value Dataset Framework.	March 2017	End 2017
9	Provide support and mentoring at GovHack events.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Commitment 2.2: Build and maintain public trust to address concerns about data sharing

We will develop an ongoing and collaborative conversation with the community to build public trust around data sharing and integration.

Objective: Australia will actively engage with the community regarding how public data is being used to provide more targeted and effective policy, service delivery and program evaluation.

Status Quo: In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, effective policy responses require investment in joined-up data that can provide a strong evidence-base for policy decisions.

The New Zealand Government has invested in both a whole-of-government Integrated Data Infrastructure and enhanced analytical capability with positive results in terms of reduced government spending and improved public policy outcomes in areas such as human rights, law enforcement, health, education and justice.

While the Australian Public Service (APS) has made some progress in this area, we need to better inform the community about the benefits of data sharing and address public concerns, including perceived values, risks, and attitudes towards privacy.

The *Privacy Act 1988* underpins the open data agenda and helps build public trust in data-sharing activities. The Government has introduced a Bill to amend the Act to make it an offence to deliberately re-identify personal information from open government data.

Data literacy across the APS is also critical. In August 2016, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet released *Data Skills and Capability in the Australian Public Service* to help build skills and knowledge in publishing, linking and sharing public data.

Ambition: To build trust about the use of integrated data and actively respond to community concerns about data sharing. To comply with international best practice on open data principles and participate in global fora on data.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **transparency** and **public participation** by:

- providing greater transparency on how government is using the data it collects and protecting personal information;
- enabling the community to engage with government and raise issues of concern;
- enabling experts outside of government to inform public debate; and
- providing more targeted and effective policy, service delivery and program evaluation.

COMMITMENT DETAILS		
OGP Grand Challenge		Improving Public Services Increasing Public Integrity
Timeframes		December 2016 – End 2017
Lead agency		Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Bureau of Statistics and Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
Other actors involved	Government	Attorney General's Department, Treasury, Fair Work Ombudsman, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Department of Social Services, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Australian Taxation Office and Australian Federal Police
	Non-government	Open Data Institute Queensland and digital rights organisation

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Adopt the International Open Data Charter.	December 2016	Early 2017
2	Establish an expert panel to advise government and to help communicate value and utility of data sharing and integration.	December 2016	Mid 2017
3	Develop an engagement process to demonstrate public-value examples and enable an ongoing dialogue with the community.	December 2016	End 2017
4	Work with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner to improve privacy risk management capability across the Australian Public Service.	November 2016	Ongoing
5	Participate in the International Open Data Stewards Group.	Ongoing	Ongoing
6	Responsive, targeted and ongoing engagement regarding public data use and integration.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Commitment 2.3: Digitally transform the delivery of government services

We will continue to invest in digital technologies to make government services simpler, faster and cheaper.

Objective: Australia will harness digital technologies to make it easier for the public to work and interact with government.

Status Quo: The Digital Transformation Agency is an executive agency within the Prime Minister's portfolio. Its mission is to lead the transformation of government services to deliver a better experience for Australians.

Innovative use of digital technologies supports the open government agenda, through the provision of faster, cheaper and more accessible government services. While some progress has been made, there is an opportunity to seize the benefits of the digital revolution to improve the way government interacts with the public.

The Digital Transformation Agency will work with government agencies to deliver a roadmap for the digital transformation of government services and will use public dashboards to measure its performance, which will be benchmarked against best practice in the private sector.

Ambition: To use digital technologies to promote transparency and public participation in government service delivery, engaging early and often with users throughout, so that government services meet the needs of the people who use them.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **technology and innovation** and **transparency** by:

- increasing public access to government services;
- making government services more efficient and cheaper; and
- increasing transparency around performance of government service delivery.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OCP Grand Challenge		Improving Public Services
Timeframes		December 2016 – Ongoing
Lead agency		Digital Transformation Agency
Other actors involved	Government	The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
	Non-government	N/A

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Deliver a whole-of-government digital transformation roadmap.	November 2016	Early 2017
2	Release agency-level digital transformation roadmaps.	Early 2017	Late 2017
3	Release a live version of the Digital Marketplace for ICT procurement following public consultation on the beta version.	August 2016	Ongoing
4	Release and promote a live dashboard measuring the performance of government services.	July 2016	Ongoing



Access to government information

***We will improve and modernise the way
in which the public accesses government
information.***

Commitment 3.1: Information management and access laws for the 21st century

We will ensure our information access laws are modern and appropriate for the digital information age.

Objective: Australia will consider options for reforms to the framework for managing and accessing government information, including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), the *Archives Act 1983* (Archives Act) and, where relevant, the *Privacy Act 1988* (with primary focus on the Archives Act and FOI Act), as well as policies and practices relating to information access and management.

Status Quo: In 2010, the Australian Government passed reforms to the FOI Act as part of a broader plan to improve transparency and to encourage public engagement in decision making. The 2010 reforms also included the introduction of the Information Publication Scheme, which requires agencies to provide a broad range of information on their websites, and amendments to the Archives Act to reduce the open access period for Commonwealth records from 30 to 20 years over a 10 year period.

There have since been a number of reviews recommending changes to the FOI Act, including Dr Allan Hawke's *Review of Freedom of Information Laws* and the *Belcher Red Tape Review*. Among other things, the *Belcher Red Tape Review* recommended the Attorney-General's Department "begin work with relevant entities to scope and develop a simpler and more coherent legislative framework for managing and accessing government information during its life-cycle in a digital environment through staged reforms, commencing with legislation regulating archives."

The core frameworks of Australia's information access laws (in particular the FOI Act and the Archives Act) have not been substantially altered since enacted in the early 1980s, when government operated in a paper-based environment. It is therefore appropriate to consider how access to government information is best managed into the future within the context of digital government.

Ambition: To develop a simpler and more coherent legislative framework for managing and accessing government information within the context of digital government, supported by efficient and effective policies and practices.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by:

- ensuring government information access laws are modern and capable of meeting the demands of the digital age;
- increasing awareness of public access rights to government information; and
- improving efficiency of processing access to information requests.

COMMITMENT DETAILS		
OGP Grand Challenge		Increasing Public Integrity Improving Public Services
Timeframes		Early 2017 – Mid 2019
Lead agency		Attorney-General's Department
Other actors involved	Government	The National Archives of Australia, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
	Non-government	Non-government organisations, archivists, academics and researchers, journalists, Law Council of Australia and state/territory information commissioners

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Develop options paper setting out alternative models for information access laws.	Early 2017	Mid 2017
2	Public consultation on options paper.	Mid 2017	Mid 2017
3	Propose preferred model for framework informed by consultation outcomes.	Late 2017	Late 2017
4	Implementation of proposed model (if required).	Late 2017	Mid 2019

Commitment 3.2: Understand the use of Freedom of Information

We will work with states and territories to collect and publish uniform data on public use of freedom of information access rights in Australia.

Objective: Australia will develop uniform metrics to better measure and improve our understanding of the public's use of rights under freedom of information laws.⁵

Status Quo: The Commonwealth, states and territories already collect data and produce statistics about applications to access government information in each jurisdiction. For example, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner currently releases statistics on access requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* through data.gov.au.

However, the data collected is not uniform across jurisdictions, making it difficult to compare and analyse how freedom of information rights are used across the country. The development of consistent metrics will assist in building a more complete picture of freedom of information rights in Australia and could help governments improve processing of information access requests. Metrics could include the type of applicant, application rates per capita, release rates, review rates and refusal rates.

Ambition: To raise awareness about the public's rights to access government information under freedom of information laws and enable quantitative analysis of data across jurisdictions. This will improve understanding of utilisation of access rights, government processes and practices, and better align with established international metrics including the World Justice Project Open Government Index.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by:

- increasing awareness of public access rights to government information;
- enabling comparison of freedom of information access rights across

⁵ Freedom of information is used generally to cover legislated public access right to information schemes across all jurisdictions. For example, in New South Wales the relevant legislation is the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW).

jurisdictions and internationally; and

- improving freedom of information access practices and efficiency of processing access to information requests.

COMMITMENT DETAILS			
OCP Grand Challenge		Increasing Public Integrity	
Timeframes		September 2016 – December 2017	
Lead agency		Australian Information Commissioners and Ombudsmen	
Other actors involved	Government	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	
	Non-government	N/A	
NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Agree and publish metrics on information access rights.	September 2016	December 2016
2	Undertake pilot for data collection and validation for the 2014/15 financial year.	January 2017	June 2017
3	Data collection and validation for the 2015/16 financial year.	July 2017	November 2017
4	Publicly release dataset on 2015/16 metrics.	December 2017	December 2017

Commitment 3.3: Improve the discoverability and accessibility of government data and information

We will make it easier for the public to find and use government data and information through central portals and digital platforms.

Objective: Australia will establish platforms and tools to improve the discoverability and accessibility of government information and public data.

Status Quo: The creation, preservation, management and public use of government information is fundamental to open and transparent government. The availability of government records and data improves public access to information, while also driving efficient business outcomes by facilitating use and reuse of these valuable resources.

It is not enough just to make these resources open; information and public data must be easy to find and accessible in order for it to be useful. Some specific examples of areas where the government is seeking to improve public access to information include:

- **Public data:** Data.gov.au is the Australian Government's open data platform. It has enabled the open release of over 20,000 public resources used to grow the economy, improve service delivery and transform policy outcomes for the nation. As the number of datasets on data.gov.au grows, Australia's public data infrastructure needs be upgraded to meet the demands of data users. This includes improving search and discovery, enhancing support for collaboration, developing a quality framework to assist publishers, and developing more robust publishing processes.
- **Grants:** There is no central point to identify and apply for Australian Government grant opportunities and find consolidated information about grants awarded. The Department of Finance is building GrantConnect, a central whole-of-government system that will forecast and publish grant opportunities, automatically notify public users of grant opportunities of interest, and publish information on grants awarded.
- **Corporate and administrative reporting:** Corporate and administrative reporting information is currently located on individual agency websites or in hard copy, making it difficult to compare and contrast

documents. The Department of Finance and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet are working with the Digital Transformation Agency to make reporting information more discoverable and accessible through the digitisation of this information.

- **Archived records:** The most significant records of the Australian Government are held by the National Archives of Australia. To facilitate citizens' access to these records through digital and online channels, the Archives will continue to lead the transition from paper to digital information practices in Australian Government agencies, digitise paper records of high research value and increase the number of records available for public access.
- **Environmental information:** The Department of the Environment and Energy compiles significant data to produce its State of the Environment report and meet its other responsibilities (such as research into the impacts of coal and coal seam gas developments on ground water). The Department will make the 2017 State of the Environment report and its underlying data more accessible through SoE Digital (an innovative and interactive online platform) and data.gov.au. It will use data visualisation tools to help publish the results of its coal and coal seam gas bioregional assessments.

Ambition: To make it as easy as possible to find, access and use government information and data.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **technology and innovation** by:

- promoting a consistent approach to information governance across Australian Government entities;
- increasing transparency of government decision-making and policy development;
- enabling information and data reuse for economic and social benefits;
- protecting the rights and entitlements of Australians to access government information;
- increasing the accessibility, usability and discoverability of public data; and
- improving the quality of data.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OGP Grand Challenge		<p>Improving Public Services</p> <p>Increasing Public Integrity</p> <p>More Effectively Managing Public Resources</p>
Timeframes		Mid 2016 – Mid 2018
Lead agency		Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), Department of Finance (Finance), National Archives of Australia (Archives) and Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE)
Other actors involved	Government	All Commonwealth entities
	Non-government	Data61

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	PM&C to work with Data61 to conduct research and discovery into data consumption (to better understand user behaviours and needs) and publishing (to improve quality, timeliness and value of published data).	Mid 2016	Mid 2017
2	PM&C to work with Data61 to create, circulate and gather feedback on design concepts and prototypes for improved search functionality and user experience on the data.gov.au platform.	Late 2016	Late 2017
3	<p>Finance to implement Phase One of the GrantConnect platform to enable public users to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> register to receive notification on grant opportunities that match their self-defined profiles; watch forecast opportunities as they move 	Late 2016	Late 2017

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
	<p>from planning to requests for applications; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access grant guidelines for each opportunity and be notified about changes to grants processes. 		
4	Finance to launch the pilot of the digital corporate and administrative reporting platform.	Late 2016	Late 2017
5	Archives to lead the transition to digital information practices in Australian Government agencies to ensure robust information governance and report to the Prime Minister in 2018.	Mid 2016	Late 2018
6	Archives to increase the number of archival records available in digital formats, including World War II service and passenger arrival records.	Mid 2016	Late 2018
7	Archives to make additional groups of archival records of high research interest available for public access.	Mid 2016	Mid 2018
8	PM&C to deliver live platform elements for data.gov.au, including integration with NationalMap to provide a more efficient workflow for the publishing and discovery of spatial data.	Early 2017	Late 2017
9	<p>PM&C to design and prototype further data.gov.au platform capabilities, including:</p> <p>functionality to promote examples and collaboration using public data; and</p> <p>integration with other platforms for open data projects and third party open data platforms.</p>	Early 2017	Mid 2018

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
10	DoEE to launch a map-based tool to visualise Bioregional Assessment results.	Early 2017	June 2017
11	DoEE to publish the State of the Environment report through an online information publishing and reporting platform and release the underlying data on data.gov.au.	November 2016	February / March 2017



Integrity in the public sector

***We will improve transparency and integrity
in public sector activities to build public
confidence and trust in government.***

Commitment 4.1: Confidence in the electoral system and political parties

We will work with the parliament and the public to investigate the conduct of the 2016 election, use of technology in elections and the framework of donations to political parties and other political entities.

Objective: To enhance integrity and confidence in Australia's electoral system.

Status Quo: The Government has asked Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JCSEM) to investigate a range of matters relating to the conduct of the 2016 federal election, with particular attention to:

- the potential application of new technology to casting, scrutinising and counting votes, and whether current authorisations requirements could be applied to all forms of communication; and
- donations to political parties and other political entities, including the extent of donations being received from foreign sources and the options available to Parliament to regulate these types of donations. JCSEM will also be asked to look at the current donations disclosure regime and suggest any alternative approaches.

Ambition: To ensure that public confidence in Australia's electoral system continues to be strong.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **accountability**, **transparency** and **access to information** by:

- reducing the risk of undemocratic behaviour and conduct, which leads to the perception or reality of corrupt behaviour by politicians and political parties; and
- increasing public confidence in Australian democracy.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OCP Grand Challenge		Increasing Public Integrity	
Timeframes		September 2016 – 2017	
Lead agency		Department of Finance and Australian Electoral Commission	
Other actors involved	Government / Parliament	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters and the Parliament of Australia	
	Non-government	Political parties and non-government organisations	
NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	JSCEM inquiry and report.	September 2016	2017 (subject to Committee reporting)
2	Government considers recommendations.	2017	2017 (subject to Committee reporting)
3	Parliament and other relevant stakeholders address Government decisions.	2017	Ongoing

Commitment 4.2: National Integrity Framework

We will collaborate with the corporate sector, non-government organisations and the public to strengthen our national anti-corruption and integrity framework.

Objective:

Australia will strengthen our ability to prevent, detect and respond to bribery and corruption. As part of this, we will regularly review the jurisdiction and capabilities of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) and the Australian Federal Police's Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre to ensure they can focus on protecting Commonwealth agencies from risks of corruption.

Status Quo:

The Government takes a multi-faceted, multi-agency approach to combating corruption, under which a range of agencies play a role in preventing, detecting and responding to corruption. We have strong laws applying to bribery and corruption which carry significant penalties.

ACLEI is responsible for preventing, detecting and investigating serious issues of corruption in agencies within its jurisdiction. ACLEI's jurisdiction focusses on protecting environments that are most at risk of criminal compromise—namely, border regulation and law enforcement.

The Integrity Commissioner considers the nature and scope of corruption revealed by investigations, and reports annually on any patterns and trends in corruption in Australian Government law enforcement and other government agencies which have law enforcement functions. Accordingly, ACLEI collects intelligence about corruption in support of the Integrity Commissioner's functions.

ACLEI also aims to understand corruption and prevent it. Where the Integrity Commissioner identifies laws of the Commonwealth or administrative practices of government agencies that might contribute to corrupt practices or prevent their early detection, he or she may make recommendations for these laws or practices to be changed.

As a practitioner agency, ACLEI engages actively with other government agencies and civil society (nationally and internationally) to collect and share information to strengthen anti-corruption arrangements in Australia and abroad. ACLEI's dissemination program of Information Reports is one means by which the Integrity Commissioner transmits timely intelligence to relevant agencies, such as to police and other integrity agencies. ACLEI and the AFP

Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre (FACC) also cross-refer information to one another, and assist one another with corruption prevention activities.

In 2014, the Government established the FACC located in the AFP headquarters to bring together a range of Commonwealth agencies to assess, prioritise and respond to serious fraud and corruption matters, including across Commonwealth services, programs and employees. The FACC draws on the collective knowledge of agencies to provide sound contemporary advice in relation to potential fraud threats relevant to new government funding initiatives prior to their implementation. In April 2016, the Government provided an additional \$15 million to the FACC to enhance its capacity to detect and investigate corruption, bribery and serious economic crime.

Between the FACC and ACLEI, there is significant coverage of fraud and corruption across Australian Government agencies, with a particular focus on areas of high-corruption risk.

The Government has reviewed ACLEI's jurisdiction on a number of occasions in the past and extended its jurisdiction where a need was demonstrated.

In May 2016, the Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity reported on its inquiry into ACLEI's jurisdiction. Many public submissions have advocated extension of its coverage to the entire public sector. The Committee recommended the Government extend ACLEI's jurisdiction to include the entire Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, and examine the feasibility of including the Australian Taxation Office within ACLEI's jurisdiction. The Government is considering the report's recommendations.

The Government is also exploring new responses to corruption and corporate crime. In March 2016, the Government released a public discussion paper on a possible deferred prosecution agreement scheme in Australia. An effective deferred prosecution agreement scheme could help encourage companies to self-report criminal behaviour and provide enforcement and prosecutorial agencies with a new tool to identify and bring corporate offenders to justice.

Ambition:

To aim to improve Australia's score on Transparency International Corruption Perception Index.

To regularly review the jurisdiction and capabilities of ACLEI and FACC, and extend these on an as-needs basis.

To consult closely with industry, non-government organisations and the public

to ensure that our law, policies and frameworks for responding to corruption are effective, including through holding the first government business roundtable on corruption in 2017. We will also consult publicly on the implementation of recommendations from the Statutory Review of the *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006* and associated Rules and Regulations.

To ensure that our laws applying to the bribery of foreign public officials facilitate effective prosecution.

To assess whether a deferred prosecution agreement scheme would facilitate more effective and efficient responses to bribery and corporate corruption by encouraging companies to self-report.

Relevance:

This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by:

- improving the effectiveness of our legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks; and
- protecting the integrity and transparency of the execution of public policy and management.

COMMITMENT DETAILS		
OGP Grand Challenge		Increasing Public Integrity
Timeframes		End 2016 – 2019
Lead agency		Attorney-General's Department
Other actors involved	Government	ACLEI, Australian Federal Police, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, Treasury and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
	Non-government	Industry, organisations outside of government and international partners

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Review laws applying to foreign bribery.	End 2016	Early 2017
2	Respond to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ACLEI's inquiry into the jurisdiction of ACLEI.	May 2016	End 2016 / Early 2017
3	Respond to the consultation on a possible Australian deferred prosecution agreement scheme and consult on possible models.	End 2016	Mid 2017
4	Consult publicly on the implementation of recommendations from the Statutory Review of the <i>Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act 2006</i> and associated Rules and Regulations.	October 2016	2019
5	Hold the first Government business roundtable on corruption.	First half of 2017	First half of 2017
6	Consider options arising from the roundtable.	Mid 2017	Mid 2017
7	Ongoing review of jurisdiction and capabilities of ACLEI and FACC.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Commitment 4.3: Open Contracting

We will undertake a public review of the Australian Government's compliance with the Open Contracting Data Standard.

Objective: Australia will review compliance with the Open Contracting Data Standard and continue to support the Open Contracting Global Principles.

Status Quo: The Open Contracting Data Standard sets out key documents and data that should be published at each stage of government procurement and is seen as the international benchmark. The Standard enables disclosure of data and documents at all stages of the contracting process by defining a common data model. It was created to support organisations to increase contracting transparency, and allow deeper analysis of contracting data by a wide range of users.

In line with the *Commonwealth Procurement Rules*, Australian Government entities are required to report all procurement contracts with a value of \$10,000 or more on AusTender. However, there has not been a formal assessment of the extent to which current practice meets the requirements of the Open Contracting Data Standard.

At the UK Anti-Corruption Summit in May 2016, the Australian Government stated its support of the Open Contracting Data Standard and noted the role that the Standard could play in encouraging machine-readable open data formats across all areas of government.

Ambition: To enhance transparency and accountability of public money in delivering public contracts.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **access to information** and **public accountability** by demonstrating transparency and accountability in relation to the procurement of goods and services on behalf of the Government.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OGP Grand Challenge		Increasing Public Integrity More Effectively Managing Public Resources
Timeframes		February 2017 – August 2017
Lead agency		Department of Finance
Other actors involved	Government	All Commonwealth entities
	Non-government	Transparency International Australia and Publish What You Pay

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Undertake review of compliance with the Open Contracting Data Standard.	February 2017	April 2017
2	Publish review.	May 2017	May 2017
3	Receive public comment on the review.	May 2017	May-June 2017
4	Implement measures to improve compliance with the Open Contracting Data Standard (if required).	June 2017	August 2017

A large, stylized white letter 'V' logo, positioned to the left of a vertical white line.

Public participation and engagement

We will improve the way the Australian Government consults and engages with the Australian public.

Commitment 5.1: Delivery of Australia's Open Government National Action Plan

We will ensure that Australia's Open Government National Action Plan is a platform for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and open government reform.

Objective: Australia will establish a permanent dialogue mechanism with civil society, which includes a multi-stakeholder forum. The multi-stakeholder forum will track the implementation of commitments, ensure commitments continue to be relevant and ambitious, inform the drafting of future National Action Plans and raise awareness about open government in the broader community.

Status Quo: OGP countries are required to establish a multi-stakeholder forum to consult with the public and organisations outside of government on the implementation of the commitments included in their National Action Plan. Detailed guidance on establishing a multi-stakeholder forum is outlined in the OGP's handbook.⁶

OGP countries have taken different approaches to establishing their multi-stakeholder forum. Some models adopted in other countries include:

- Civil society network: Coalition of non-government organisations and individuals.
- Single forum: Convenes government, the public and organisations outside of government in one formally established, central committee for co-ordination.
- Hub-and-spoke: Network of smaller forums (broken down by sector, thematic area or commitments etc.), which may be coordinated by a central committee.

The Government will work in partnership with civil society to determine the structure, role, governance and membership of the OGP multi-stakeholder forum. This may include setting up or continuing interim structures until a permanent forum can be established.

It is also important that Australia's commitments remain relevant and ambitious throughout the National Action Plan cycle. This will be achieved through ongoing review of milestones, with updates made (as necessary) in partnership with civil society. The Government will also work with the public to

⁶ See: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/9907>

identify any additional commitments that could be included in the National Action Plan over the two year cycle.

Ambition: To identify, develop and implement ambitious open government commitments through ongoing partnership with civil society.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **public participation** and **accountability** by:

- ensuring commitments remain relevant and ambitious throughout the National Action Plan cycle;
- keeping government accountable for the implementation of National Action Plan commitments;
- raising awareness about the Open Government Partnership and open government matters in Australia and the region; and
- ensuring participation by a broad and diverse range of organisations and the public in the development of National Action Plan commitments.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OGP Grand Challenge		All Grand Challenges addressed
Timeframes		December 2016 – July 2018
Lead agency		Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Other actors involved	Government	All Commonwealth entities
	Non-government	Australian Open Government Civil Society Network, other non-government organisations, private sector and the public

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Partner with the public and organisations outside of government to determine the structure, role, governance and membership of the OGP multi-stakeholder forum.	December 2016	Early 2017
2	<p>Establish a permanent multi-stakeholder forum, with (at a minimum) the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop and co-create future National Action Plans; track and report on implementation of National Action Plan commitments; facilitate broader community engagement and conduct awareness activities that foster informed participation; and document decisions and publish reports. 	Early 2017	July 2018
3	Review the National Action Plan and update milestones and commitments (as necessary) to provide further clarity and ambition for plan.	November 2016	July 2018

Commitment 5.2: Enhance public participation in government decision making

We will work together to improve public participation in government decision making for better policy development and service delivery outcomes.

Objective: Australia will work towards improving public participation and engagement to enhance policy and service delivery outcomes for Australians.

Status Quo: Government is comprised of a diverse range of organisations, with approaches to participation varying considerably across different departments and agencies. High barriers to participation and piecemeal or unpredictable approaches to consultation can lead to an inefficient and dissatisfying experience. The current mechanisms for consultation, which are adapted from other online processes, often do not fully meet the Government's practical requirements for policy and program development. In addition, current mechanisms can be ineffective in enabling 'co-design'.

Numerous reviews have highlighted scope for improvement in the way the Australian Public Service engages with the public when developing policies and programs. For example, Peter Shergold's Learning from Failure recommended that "the APS should promote new forms of civil participation, including digital and deliberative democracy techniques, in order to enhance consumer-directed care, improve customer service, encourage greater public engagement and inform the public economy".

There is a need to identify and disseminate information on good practices and help peer exchange between government agencies and across different levels of government. Digital technologies also open up new opportunities for engagement and there are a range of innovative techniques that could be further explored at the Commonwealth level (e.g. policy hacks, online challenge platforms and citizen juries). In addition, there has been a lack of investment in social media and on-line tools relevant to public participation in government decision-making.

The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 also requires Commonwealth entities to work cooperatively with others to achieve common objectives, where practicable.

Ambition: To design and adopt a whole-of-government framework that embeds meaningful, open, public and multi-stakeholder participation into the business of policy development and service delivery.

Relevance: This commitment will advance the OGP values of **transparency**, **accountability** and **public participation** by:

- facilitating informed public participation;
- improving policy development and service delivery;
- enhancing transparency around government decision making;
- encouraging an ongoing sharing of information and views across interest groups that builds consensus on broad policy directions; and
- creating more engaged private and community sectors, and public.

COMMITMENT DETAILS

OCP Grand Challenge		Improving Public Services
Timeframes		Late 2016 – July 2018
Lead agency		Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
Other actors involved	Government	All Commonwealth entities
	Non-government	Research, not-for-profit and private sectors

NO.	MILESTONE	START DATE	END DATE
1	Undertake and publicly release a stocktake of current approaches to public participation to determine best practice activities (including international and domestic examples, user experience research and relevant standards, such as IAP2).	Late 2016	Early 2017
2	Work with government agencies, the public and organisations outside of government to develop and implement a whole-of-government framework (with guidance / principles and potential initiatives) for improving public participation and engagement across the Commonwealth.	Early 2017	Mid 2017
3	Undertake pilot public participation initiatives, including working with the Digital Transformation Agency to more effectively use digital channels for engagement.	Mid 2017	July 2018
4	Review processes and iterate as necessary.	Ongoing	Ongoing

5 Australia's leadership internationally

This National Action Plan focuses on domestic initiatives, but Australia also plays an important role in promoting more effective governance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

We will continue to support countries in our region to build institutions that promote stability, inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction and gender equality. We will also maintain our support for strengthened dialogue between governments, non-government organisations, the public and the private sector, so that they can make legitimate demands of their governments.

Australia's development cooperation program supports a diverse range of countries, from highly populous Indonesia to the micro-states of the Pacific. Australia therefore tailors its cooperation to address the varied economic, political and social factors constraining effective governance in each country context, including through:

- reducing opportunities for corruption by strengthening checks and balances, access to information and complaints processes;
- assisting partner governments to reform tax policy and administration and improve public financial management;
- strengthening regulatory and legal environments so that businesses have greater certainty and predictability;
- supporting the public and businesses to resolve disputes through formal legal systems, alternative mechanisms or institutions that combine both;
- promoting gender equality and enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building; and
- building coalitions and opportunities for discussion across government, business, non-government organisations and the public to improve public policy and government accountability.

Australia is committed to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. The National Action Plan will support the achievement of the SDGs in Australia and globally, in particular Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective institutions. Australia strongly advocated for this goal, which will be critical for the success of the entire 2030 Agenda.

Australia will also endorse the *Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which commits us to transparency, openness and accountability in our domestic and international implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a member of the Open Government Partnership, we also note our responsibility to work globally to fight corruption, empower citizens and enhance transparency and integrity. We will continue to work with other countries to help achieve these goals, including through our support for the effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in Australia, our region and beyond.

Australia will also continue to participate actively in forums such as the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group and OECD Development Assistance Committee networks on governance, conflict and fragility.

Appendix A: Consultation and engagement activities

Consultation and engagement on the National Action Plan commenced in November 2015. *engage 2* (a professional stakeholder engagement consultancy) was engaged by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to help design and lead the consultation process up until April 2016.

A summary of the consultation and engagement activities is provided below. A more detailed report on engagement activities is available on the OGP Australia blog (ogpau.govspace.gov.au).

Public meetings and other awareness raising activities

- Four public information sessions were held in November 2015 to provide an overview of the Open Government Partnership and the process to develop Australia's first National Action Plan. The sessions, held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra, were attended by a total of 162 people, with a further 45 people watching the livestreams online.
- The OGP Australia blog and an email distribution list were established to provide public updates on progress and to inform stakeholders of engagement opportunities.
- The hashtag #OGPau was created to discuss the project on social media, including through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Twitter account.

Seeking ideas for the National Action Plan

- A wiki (ogpau.wikispaces.com) was created to provide an interactive and collaborative forum for stakeholders to suggest commitments that could be included in the National Action Plan. Almost 1000 people visited the wiki between February and May 2016, and around 200 suggestions were put forward (all available online on the wiki and blog, including a summary).
- On 12 April 2016, a workshop was held in Canberra to discuss and prioritise the suggested commitments put forward by stakeholders. The workshop was attended by 63 people, with a mix of government, civil society, OGP Support Unit and other participants.
- 14 commitment templates were drafted during the workshop, covering areas such as open data, anti-corruption, whistle-blower protection, beneficial ownership, public participation and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. The templates were further considered within government and informed the drafting of the National Action Plan.

Government engagement

An Inter-Departmental Committee was established to ensure the interests of Australian Government agencies were considered in the development of the National Action Plan. This Committee was chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet with participation from high level officials from the following agencies:

- Attorney-General's Department
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Australian Public Service Commission
- Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Department of Communications and the Arts
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Employment
- Department of the Environment and Energy
- Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- Department of Social Services
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Treasury
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Digital Transformation Agency
- National Archives of Australia
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

The Committee met four times and also considered material out-of-session, including the suggested commitments put forward by stakeholders. Government ministers were also briefed on commitments that fall within their area of responsibility and on the Open Government Partnership more broadly.

Interim Working Group

An Interim Working Group was established in August 2016 to provide input and help inform the drafting of the National Action Plan. The Group comprised equal representation of senior government officials and stakeholder representatives:

- Dr Steven Kennedy (co-chair): Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- Ms Fiona McLeod (co-chair): President-elect of the Law Council of Australia;
- Dr Stein Helgeby: Deputy Secretary, Department of Finance;
- Mr Iain Anderson: Deputy Secretary, Attorney-General's Department;
- Mr Timothy Pilgrim: Australian Privacy Commissioner and Acting Australian Information Commissioner;
- Ms Meghan Quinn: First Assistant Secretary, the Treasury;
- Ms Anne Lyons: Assistant Director-General, National Archives of Australia;
- The Hon. Dr Ken Coghill: Deputy Chair and Treasurer of the Accountability Round Table;
- Ms Maree Adshead: CEO of Open Data Institute Queensland;
- Mr Peter Timmins: Interim Convenor of the Australian OGP Civil Society Network;
- Mr Mark Zirnsak: Director of Justice and International Mission, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia; and
- Ms Katherine Szuminska: Co-Founder and Director of the OpenAustralia Foundation.

The NSW Information Commissioner, Ms Elizabeth Tydd, also sat as a non-voting jurisdictional member, reflecting the Commonwealth's desire to build stronger relationships with the states on open government matters.

The group worked together to identify and explore in detail the potential commitments for the National Action Plan, building on ideas put forward from earlier consultations. The group also considered the text of other parts of the National Action Plan, and the approach to broader consultation and engagement on the draft Plan. Members also facilitated targeted consultation with their wider networks throughout the process.

In addition to regular teleconferences and email correspondence, the Group held three face-to-face meetings in Canberra, and a workshop in Sydney, which included an hour discussion with the Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, the Hon Angus Taylor MP.

Agenda papers, meeting minutes and the outcomes of discussions with the Group have been posted regularly on the OGP Australia blog.