Embed co-design

**Digital experience policy**

[Digital Service Standard](https://www.dta.gov.au/DigitalServiceStandard) to support a collaborative, human-centred design methodology.

[Framework for the Governance of Indigenous Data](https://www.niaa.gov.au/our-work/evaluations-and-evidence/framework-governance-indigenous-data-gid) will help formalise arrangements for providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people greater agency over how their data is governed within the AP

consistent with Priority Reforms 3 and 4 of the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement).

The Australian Government commits to:

* partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all stages of the data lifecycle to reflect their priorities data about their communities
* building towards organisational and cultural change in the APS to support inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in data governance
* embedding co-design in the Government’s data collection, use and governance activities.

**Embed inclusion and accessibility**

[Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/australias-disability-strategy-2021-2031),

there are considerable benefits to a more inclusive Australia where everyone has the same opportunity to participate – both socially and economically. Some individuals and community groups still have very limited or no access to the internet or are excluded because of a lack of availability, affordability, poor design or digital ability. It is crucial the Government delivers services in a way that recognises these accessibility issues and still meets the needs of their diverse users.

Through consultations, community and advocacy groups, and those who they represent, expressed that they want the Government to deliver safe, inclusive and accessible services which are intuitive and easy to use. The Government will ensure everyone, whether they are living with disability, live in remote and regional communities, are culturally or linguistically diverse, have limited digital ability, or otherwise, can access and engage with the government services and programs they need.

To ensure all people can access and benefit from its services, the Australian Government commits to:

* providing omni-channel service delivery to ensure digitally delivered services are accessible over the phone or face to face
* ensuring all websites and services meet the latest [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/)
* implementing the [Digital Service Standard](https://www.dta.gov.au/DigitalServiceStandard) to embed best-practice service design and accessibility across the APS
* embracing new technologies and leveraging data and insights to increase empathetic service design (e.g., natural language processing to enhance services for non-English speakers).

**Strengthen partnerships**

The [Data and Digital Ministers’ Meeting](https://www.finance.gov.au/government/public-data/data-and-digital-ministers-meeting) (DDMM) is a cross-jurisdictional group working to drive cooperation on data and digital policies and services across Australia, to ensure smarter service delivery and improved outcomes.

[Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing](https://www.finance.gov.au/government/public-data/data-and-digital-ministers-meeting/intergovernmental-agreement-data-sharing),

the [Data Exchange](https://dex.dss.gov.au/)

[National Disability Data Asset](https://www.ndda.gov.au/).

The Government spends on average around $70 billion each year on procurement activities, helping to drive economic, social and sustainability outcomes for Australia. This includes procuring a significant range of data and digital products, services and support from industry – everything from software and hardware, corporate systems, analytics tools and cloud services. This represents an opportunity to partner with industry, through the [Commonwealth Procurement Framework](https://www.finance.gov.au/government/procurement/commonwealth-procurement-rules/procurement-framework), to identify the best solutions to deliver government services. The Framework also helps Government to take advantage of industry innovations, and seek industry’s support to solve emerging problems, through mechanisms like requests for information.

The Government’s [Buy Australian Plan](https://www.finance.gov.au/business/buyaustralianplan) is helping to maximise opportunities for Australian businesses in major projects, create good local jobs including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and open the door to more government work for small and medium businesses by simplifying procurement processes.

The Government already leverages industry innovations, and seeks industry’s support to solve emerging problems, through initiatives like the Department of Industry, Science and Resources’ [Business Research and Innovation Initiative](https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/business-research-and-innovation-initiative) (BRII). The BRII is a challenge-based innovation program which supports startups and SMEs to undertake research and development on new-to-market technologies in partnership with Australian Public Service agencies to solve public policy and service delivery challenges.

The Australian Government commits to:

* working with the private sector to improve sourcing and sharing of private sector data to reduce duplication and generate greater insights and serve the needs of people and business
* support more opportunities for small to medium businesses to sell to Government as part of the [Buy Australian Plan](https://www.finance.gov.au/business/buyaustralianplan)
* a Charter of Partnerships and Engagement to guide engagement with people and business, including by highlighting co-design as a pillar of APS engagement, ensuring it remains a trusted partner. The Charter builds on the [APS Framework for Engagement and Participation](https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/aps-framework-engagement-and-participation)
* continue strong engagement with state and territory governments through the DDMM and Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing.

**Maximise value from data**

Data and analytics create value for all people and business and help respond to the priority issues they face. Value is also created by sharing and re-using data, particularly government–held data.

The Productivity Commission’s inquiry on [Data Availability and Use](https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/data-access#report), identified barriers to sharing and releasing data which limit the use and value of Australia’s data. The report recommended moving from a risk-averse approach to one based on transparency and treating data as an asset. Progress has been made to overcome these barriers, however significant opportunity remains to improve how the Australian Government uses and shares the vast amount of data it has access to and manages.

Some data, including personal and sensitive information, must be closely held and only shared where necessary, appropriate and lawful. Meanwhile, other data may be underused or siloed due to a lack of awareness of its existence, a lack of access to the right analytical tools or capabilities, or legislative and other barriers. The Government is removing these barriers to encourage greater data use and sharing in ethical, secure and transparent ways to maximise its value, including through the establishment of the [*Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022* (DATA) Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme).

Making data accessible to the right people and optimising its use through integration, analytics and broad capability uplift will be critical to achieving the Strategy’s vision. Better use of government-held data will generate benefits through developing evidence-based policy, designing and administering policies and programs, and performing more effective research and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Government’s programs and policies. The [Australian Centre for Evaluation](https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/) will help entities generate these benefits by integrating high-quality evaluation into all aspects of program and policy development.

The Government has used integrated data to conduct research, inform decisions and design services for years. Examples include the [Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment](https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-integration/integrated-data/business-longitudinal-analysis-data-environment-blade) (BLADE) and the [Person Level Integrated Data Asset](https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-integration/integrated-data/multi-agency-data-integration-project-madip) (PLIDA, formerly MADIP). In addition, the online geospatial platform, [Digital Atlas of Australia](https://digital.atlas.gov.au/), brings together national location-based data to support place-based analytics and insights.

[The National Disability Data Asset](https://www.ndda.gov.au/) will be Australia’s most comprehensive disability data asset, connecting existing de-identified information from different entities. This new way to connect information will allow governments to improve programs and services, and better measure, track and report on outcomes for people with disability. The National Disability Data Asset represents a step change in efforts to establish a scalable platform for creating high-value national data integration assets to support data analytics across a range of public policy areas. The National Disability Data Asset and its platform also highlights the importance of partnering with states and territories to develop solutions to issues affecting the entire nation. Future partnerships – including those with industry, communities and academia – will be key to continuing to unlock the value of the data held by the Government.

Government-held data has value outside the APS and entities already make some data publicly available by default through platforms such as [data.gov.au](https://data.gov.au/home). Making government-held data more accessible to people and business will help them achieve their own objectives, be it in their local communities, in their organisations or as individuals.

The Australian Government commits to:

* collecting and analysing data to assess whether policies and services are achieving their intended purpose and are being implemented in the best possible way
* harnessing analytical tools and techniques (including machine learning and artificial intelligence) to predict service needs, improve user experience, support evidence-based decisions and gain efficiencies in agency operations
* requiring all government entities to make non-sensitive data open by default in compliance with relevant laws and appropriate privacy, security and ethical controls for sharing sensitive data
* developing the [Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/ndda/australian-national-data-integration-infrastructur) in collaboration with the states and territories to support data sharing, integration and national linkage for the National Disability Data Asset
* continuing to invest in new enabling technologies and streamlining governance and data sharing processes to allow greater access to timely and accurate data
* encouraging all entities to build partnerships and share data across the APS and with state and territory governments, the private sector and non-government organisations
* fostering a culture of data innovation.

By 2030, the APS will work as a single, unified enterprise. It will use technology, data and analytics to deliver simple, accessible services for people and business.

Consultations on the initial Strategy highlighted the need for cross-jurisdictional collaboration on data and digital transformation, improving peoples’ experience of government. Stakeholders supported unified service delivery, such as ‘tell us once’ and life events, while state and territory governments called for stronger progress on a national digital ID system.

The Australian Government will organise and tailor policies and public services to individuals’ circumstances, on an opt-in basis, while the APS will use data and analytics to predict when and where its services are needed.

**Be digital by design**

As use of digital technologies has grown over recent years, people and business expect more from government. Public consultation highlighted the expectation that the Government’s digital services engage people proactively and guide them to the services they might need.

To meet this expectation, the Government will embed a digital by design approach. A nationally consistent approach to [Digital ID](https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/) and identity resilience will also support voluntary, secure, convenient and inclusive access to the Government’s services online.

The Government’s design approach will respond to technological changes. Findings from the [Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme](https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/) highlight the need to be adaptive in the design and use of digital systems, with greater oversight of automated decision making and data-matching programs. The Government will also focus on the next generation of risk management tools and guidance for emerging technologies.

The Australian Government commits to:

* expanding the Government Digital ID system to help keep Australians’ information safe when they are accessing services online
* establishing the foundations to make [myGov](https://my.gov.au/en/about) the primary digital front door for individuals, with a focus on new services, content and account management in addition to scaling the adoption of existing capabilities.

**Deploy scalable and secure architecture**

Parts of the Government’s data and digital ecosystem are constrained by outdated systems, bespoke technologies and architecture solutions designed to solve common issues rather than address whole-of-government needs. The Government will apply a considered and consistent approach to its digital landscape and support entities to align to the Government’s investment direction and resolve legacy platform issues.

The [Australian Government Architecture](https://architecture.digital.gov.au/) is supporting the Government’s digital transformation by bringing together guidance materials to help entities deliver capabilities faster and in a way that is consistent, interoperable, promotes reuse, reduces risk and maximises value for money.

For the Government’s digital ecosystem to be truly flexible and resilient, systems and services must be aligned to agreed foundational infrastructure. This includes a consistent approach to adopting emerging technologies. This will allow the Government to be more adaptable and responsive to changing priorities and support a national approach to developing data assets.

Interoperable platforms and use of standards unlock opportunities for easy data sharing, integration, collaboration and reuse across the APS. They also ensure hardware and software can work together seamlessly. The Government is committed to common data and digital standards and will continue establishing and growing international partnerships. It will focus on adopting and leading implementation of international standards to facilitate cross border data flows that are safe, secure, lawful and ethical.

The Australian Government commits to:

* ensuring technology is scalable, secure, resilient and interoperable, with new systems and infrastructure that supports data access and discoverability
* adopting existing and developing new data and digital standards to improve interoperability and encourage innovation.

**Tell us once**

Australians expect [personalised, integrated and easy to use](https://www.salesforce.com/au/resources/research-reports/trust-imperative-3/) services from government. When people need to advise the Government about changes to their personal circumstances, they often find the experience time consuming and repetitive. [The Survey of Trust in Australian Public Services 2022](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/reports/taps-2022) found around two-thirds of people surveyed would often have to provide the same information to different government services multiple times. The Government will strengthen its use of data and digital technologies and capabilities to enable a ‘tell us once’ approach. Joining up information collected from stakeholders and making it available across the APS and implementing a national [Digital ID](https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/) system will reduce the administrative burden people and business face when engaging with different parts of the Government. Having key milestones such as the birth of a child, captured on government services through life events mapping will allow the Government to work with partners across entities, jurisdictions and third parties to better align government services to an individual’s needs and circumstances.

The Government will strengthen its processes to enable informed consent when personal information is collected and provide strong safeguards around storing, sharing and using personal information held by the Government.

Once information is collected, the Government will apply strong and secure data sharing practices, supported by the [DATA Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme), to reduce the need to collect the same information multiple times. The Government will support these data sharing practices by connecting the Government’s digital platforms under the [Digital Service Standard](https://www.dta.gov.au/DigitalServiceStandard), making it easy, secure and consistent for people and business to provide information once when dealing with different parts of the Government.

The Australian Government commits to:

* strengthening the use of data and digital technologies and capabilities to enable a ‘tell us once’ approach for people and business
* implementing a national [Digital ID](https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/) system to enable identity verification across government, state, and territory and private sector services.

By 2030, the Australian Government will use data and digital technologies in innovative ways.

Consultations on the initial Strategy demonstrated support for improving service delivery by using emerging technologies, in a safe and responsible manner. Stakeholders recognised the need for the Government to explore new ways to invest in data and digital technologies to achieve the Strategy’s vision.

The Government will take advantage of opportunities, respond to emerging priorities and promote new funding models to deliver secure, ethical and modern data and digital technologies.

**Adopt emerging technologies**

The rapid development of data and digital technologies creates significant opportunities to improve APS processes. They also create risks, and ethical and strategic challenges. Without appropriate human oversight, reliance on technology can cause issues, and impact government policies and services. The APS must monitor and actively manage opportunities, risks and impacts of emerging technologies it chooses to use.

The Government will be transparent in how it explores and uses new technologies. It will also equip entities to safely engage with emerging data and digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing and digital twins, as part of their operations, including releasing guidance for entities on government use of generative AI platforms. The Government will work closely with industry to develop digital solutions and leverage the best of industry innovation to solve common problems. New technologies will be deployed in a safe and responsible manner, supported by best practice processes and advice functions.

One example is the [List of Critical Technologies in the National Interest](https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/list-critical-technologies-national-interest), which outlines the technologies that can impact Australia’s national interest. This list supports entities to engage appropriately with critical technology fields, including AI, advanced ICT and quantum technologies.

The Government will continue to use its procurement profile (approximately $9 billion per annum) to better position entities to adopt critical and emerging technologies whilst contributing to the broader digital economy and supporting [Australia’s Cyber Security Strategy](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/cyber-security/strategy/2023-2030-australian-cyber-security-strategy). Investments in research and development will continue to support the growth of government capability in critical technologies, ensuring they remain contemporary while boosting activity in the broader economy. Building APS data and digital capability complements these efforts, including work in areas such as skills, support for research and development and targeted industry support programs.

The Australian Government commits to:

* developing whole-of-government policies and frameworks to guide government entities on how to safely engage with emerging data and digital technologies
* fostering a culture of data and digital innovation.

**Modernise investment approaches**

Increasing the Government’s use of new and emerging data and digital technologies requires smart and sustainable investments.

The Government will explore new data and digital funding models and strengthen oversight and contestability during development and implementation. It will increase cross-agency collaboration, assurance, benefits management, prototyping and experimentation practices. This will enable phased delivery to provide opportunities for new ideas and feedback to inform project changes mid-flight. Allowing entities to explore interoperability with other APS platforms and adjustments and improvements to systems will minimise the impact of technical debt and reduce the risk of technology becoming obsolete once operational.

The Government is committed to finding new ways to ensure decision makers have the right information and advice when considering new data and digital investments for the APS. The Government will strengthen data and digital investment advice and governance in the APS, including through the [Digital and ICT Oversight Framework](https://www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/digital-and-ict-investments) (IOF), to inform consideration of investment proposals and assurance of projects.

The Government will use its data and digital investments to support its broad national policy objectives and deliver better outcomes for people and business. This includes a focus on the achievement of value for money as required by the [Commonwealth Procurement Framework](https://www.finance.gov.au/government/procurement/commonwealth-procurement-rules/procurement-framework). Value for money is not simply a consideration of price, it includes consideration of quality, fit-for-purpose, a supplier’s experience and performance, and environmental sustainability amongst other things. The Government’s [Buy Australian Plan](https://www.finance.gov.au/business/buyaustralianplan) includes a commitment to boosting the procurement and contracting capability of the APS to better engage with industry, including Australian businesses, and deliver value-for-money procurements.

[BuyICT.gov.au](https://www.buyict.gov.au/sp) provides a direct platform for industry to showcase products and services, bid for projects and find government clients. It allows Government entities and businesses to partner to develop innovative solutions to problems and help build industry capability.

Better data and digital investments can also support progress towards the Government’s [Net Zero 2050 plan](https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction/net-zero). The [Data Centre Panel](https://www.dta.gov.au/blogs/new-data-centre-panel) will support the Government’s move towards net zero by strengthening the measures for data centre providers to manage and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The Australian Government commits to:

* exploring new data and digital funding models to support the APS’s data and digital transformation
* requiring all government entities to develop and submit digital and ICT plans as part of the IOF process, to further improve long term strategic planning and investment outcomes.

By 2030, the Australian Government will partner with people and business to make decisions and deliver services which are trusted, transparent and ethical, and support people’s choices when engaging with public services.

Robust privacy and security settings and a culture of integrity and accountability will give people and business confidence their data is safe.

Through consultation on the initial Strategy, stakeholders recognised the importance of the Government having the right frameworks, accountabilities, and culture in place to support trust, privacy, and security. Community stakeholders were particularly interested in the Government being more transparent about data collection and use, and improving the ways people can give and withdraw consent. APS stakeholders considered public trust the most important factor for the Strategy’s success and emphasised the Government’s role in being an exemplar in data use and management.

**Build and maintain trust**

Digital services are increasingly the face of modern government. When done well, they build public trust in government. When they fail, frustrate, exclude people or put them or their information at risk, that trust is eroded. This can also have significant impacts on people’s safety and wellbeing.

The Government’s [Survey of Trust in Australian Public Services](https://www.apsreform.gov.au/resources/reports/taps-2022) provides transparency of people’s experiences and interactions with the APS. Survey results guide digital service delivery by identifying the types of services and interactions that work and the weak points in trust and customer experience. The APS can use those results to make changes to existing digital services and design new ones.

People trust government to collect, manage and use their data well. Providing people and businesses with more control over how their data is used and being transparent in how the Government uses the data it collects, is critical to building and maintaining public trust.

The [Building Trust in the Public Record](https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/information-management-policies/building-trust-public-record) policy helps entities manage their information assets to better support, protect and serve the community. The [DATA Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme) delivers strong arrangements to build trust and transparency when sharing data. Commitment to the [Open Government Partnership](https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/australias-open-government-partnership) will support new ways to engage with the Government and promote accountability using data and digital technologies.

The public expects personal information collected by the Government and other organisations to be kept safe and secure by appropriate and enforceable protections. Privacy and cyber security breaches damage trust that organisations, including the APS, can adequately manage and secure personal information.

The Government has made significant investments to safeguard the security and privacy of government-held data. Cornerstones of this investment include the secure environment of data centres and associated infrastructure that provide hosting services for entities. The [Hosting Certification Framework](https://www.hostingcertification.gov.au/) helps entities identify and source hosting services that meet enhanced privacy, sovereignty and security requirements, including by requiring sensitive information to be stored within Australian borders. The Government is also investing in the [Notifiable Data Breaches](https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/notifiable-data-breaches) Scheme to ensure greater responsiveness, transparency and accountability when data breach incidents occur.

The [2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/cyber-security/strategy/2023-2030-australian-cyber-security-strategy), the appointment of a dedicated Minister for Cyber Security and the creation of a National Coordinator for Cyber Security, will further improve Australia’s national resilience to cyber threats as well as responses to cyber incidents. The [*Online Safety Act 2021*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021A00076) strengthens and expands existing laws for online safety, making internet service providers more accountable for the safety of their users.

By setting a best practical example, the Government can support public trust in emerging technologies and their safe and responsible adoption in the broader economy.

The Australian Government commits to improving and maintaining trust in its use of data and digital technologies through:

* adopting a whole-of-government Data Ethics Framework
* adopting robust and appropriate privacy and security settings to keep peoples’ information safe
* securing networks, systems and hardware
* engaging transparently and meaningfully on government data collection and use
* supporting the APS to embody best practice engagement by putting in place the right settings and infrastructure to build and maintain public trust, and embedding safety by design
* developing common data and metadata standards and data structures
* adopting AI technologies in safe, ethical and responsible ways.

**Modernise legislation**

Australia’s legislation and regulations have not always kept pace with data and digital technologies and their uses. This is partly because legislative reform requires time and consideration and because data and digital issues develop rapidly and are complex. They can cross traditional legislative and jurisdictional boundaries, particularly as they relate to privacy.

The Government is committed to ensuring legislation is fit-for-purpose, can appropriately protect the public from emerging cyber and other threats, and allow for the effective use of data and digital technologies. The Government will continue to review and update relevant legislation to respond appropriately to data and digital developments. Several recent reviews, including the [Review of the *Privacy Act 1988*](https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/consultations/review-privacy-act-1988) (Privacy Act), the [Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme](https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/), the [myGov User Audit](https://my.gov.au/en/audit) and the [Tune Review](https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/publications/tune-review), have recommended potential reforms to laws related to privacy, data sharing, data security, digital ID and information management.

At the Commonwealth level, rules relating to use, sharing and management of information largely stem from the [*Archives Act 1983*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00179), the [*Freedom of Information Act 1982*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2023C00298), the [*Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00269) (PGPA Act) and, most recently, the [*Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/legislation)(the DAT Act).

Government entities are also subject to a range of legislation that govern their data collection, use and sharing. The Government’s [Protective Security Policy Framework](https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/) (PSPF) helps entities protect their people, information and assets, both at home and overseas. The PSPF is regularly reviewed with updated guidance for entities to meet their public data stewardship responsibilities under the PGPA Act.

A range of Commonwealth, state and territory laws combine to create a set of privacy rights for Australians and obligations for those who hold personal information. The Privacy Actis the principal Commonwealth legislation governing the protection of personal information. The [Review of the Privacy Act](https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/consultations/review-privacy-act-1988) released in 2023 prompted reforms to strengthen the act’s principles-based approach to protecting personal information. These reforms will help bring Australia more into line with international data protection standards such as the European Union’s [General Data Protection Regulation](https://gdpr-info.eu/). The Government will also engage with the states and territories to work towards harmonising key elements of Commonwealth, state and territory privacy laws.

The DAT Act establishes a new, best practice scheme for sharing Government data underpinned by strong safeguards and efficient processes, including in-built process requiring periodic reviews, with the first review scheduled to start in 2025. These reviews will support the Government to ensure the DAT Act remains fit-for-purpose and will provide opportunities to refine the [DATA Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme)’s scope and operation to best serve the public interest by promoting better and simpler availability of government-held data.

The Government will also explore opportunities and challenges of emerging data and digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, through its legislative and regulatory frameworks to ensure Australians continue to have confidence in the Government’s use of data and digital technologies.

The Australian Government commits to:

* responding to the recommendations of the Review of the Privacy Act to strengthen the protection of Australians’ personal information
* periodically reviewing the operation of the DAT Act to ensure the DAT Act remains fit-for-purpose.

**Connect data, digital and cyber security**

Data, digital and cyber security are closely intertwined. The Government must foster a culture of privacy, security, and proactive monitoring across the APS, including for partners that operate within and access the Government’s data and digital ecosystem. Entities must collaborate and share information and expertise to actively manage the privacy and security of the ecosystem (including with industry partners) to support alignment and consistency, reduce unnecessary duplication, and protect the community from inappropriate access or use of their personal information.

The Australian Signals Directorate’s [Annual Cyber Threat](https://www.cyber.gov.au/about-us/reports-and-statistics/asd-cyber-threat-report-july-2022-june-2023) reports acknowledge the increasingly contested cyber environment and the need to build national cyber resilience. Monitoring and acting on security threats and challenges to protect the community requires collective cyber uplift effort from all departments and agencies.

While focusing on improvements in the APS, the Government has an equally important role to play in raising awareness about the need for improved cyber security practices and habits in the community. ASD’s [Australian Cyber Security Centre](https://www.cyber.gov.au/) provides advice and information to help people and business protect themselves online. ASD also works with business, government and academic partners and experts in Australia and overseas to investigate and develop solutions to cyber security threats.

The [2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/cyber-security/strategy/2023-2030-australian-cyber-security-strategy) will help the Government achieve its vision to be a world leading cyber secure and resilient nation by 2030. It will be accompanied by a Commonwealth Cyber Security Uplift Plan which will drive a strategic and pragmatic approach to enhancing collective cyber resilience, building capabilities and lifting cyber security to help Australian people and business with cyber incidents. This Strategy aligns with the Cyber Security Strategy by improving Australia’s digital inclusion, and ensuring all people have access to the information and tools they need to stay safe online and protect their private data.

The Government’s work to expand and legislate the digital ID system will help to improve cyber enabled ID fraud and privacy protections, including for people accessing government services online. [Digital ID](https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/) protects Australians online, reduces the amount of personal information Australians need to share to access services and helps businesses keep their customers’ data safe.

The Government is also improving cyber security and privacy protections by strengthening investigation and enforcement actions under the [Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme](https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/notifiable-data-breaches), supporting the establishment of the [National Anti-Scam Centre](https://www.accc.gov.au/national-anti-scam-centre), launching the [National Strategy for Identity Resilience](https://www.ag.gov.au/national-security/publications/national-strategy-identity-resilience) and ongoing rollout of the [Hosting Certification Framework](https://www.hostingcertification.gov.au/) and the [PSPF](https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/).

The Australian Government commits to:

* continuing to protect individual privacy and maintain security of sensitive information when expanding data capability and sharing
* incorporating secure-by-design principles in APS technological solutions
* expanding the digital ID system and enshrining it in legislation to improve cyber enabled ID fraud and privacy protections.

By 2030, the APS will adopt the right capabilities, practices, standards and culture and make effective use of data and digital technologies to operate as a seamless government.

The APS will measure and track the data and digital maturity of entities and the workforce and use this information to drive continuous improvement.

Through consultation on the initial Strategy, stakeholders called for the Australian Government to lead by example on transparency, management and governance of data and digital systems. State and territory governments supported national systems and platforms that can be used by all jurisdictions to deliver services. Stakeholders called for an uplift of APS data and digital capabilities.

**Manage data as a valuable national asset**

Data is one of the most valuable assets the Government holds and must be managed like other high value assets. The Government expects entities to establish and invest in appropriate mechanisms, infrastructure and practices to support data curation, storage, protection and use. Treating data as an asset will require entities to recognise its value and importance to their operations, devote suitable resources to its collection, maintenance and use, and unlock its full potential, including by making data-driven decisions.

The Government is continually improving how it manages its data, including building the [Australian Government Data Catalogue](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/find-data), ensuring inventory completeness and compliance with agreed metadata standards, reusing existing infrastructure and capabilities, and strengthening governance arrangements with state and territory jurisdictions. The Government will also develop a whole-of-government data governance framework for consistent data management across the APS.

The [DATA Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme) expands use of the Government’s data, with eligible entities expected to participate as much as possible. Participants and the public will be able to use the [Australian Government Data Catalogue](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/find-data) and [Dataplace](https://www.dataplace.gov.au/) to learn what data is held, who holds it and how to access it.

The Australian Government commits that all government entities will:

* appoint an appropriate senior leader to be responsible for the organisation’s data
* educate their staff on the importance and appropriate use of data
* adopt best practice data collection and use to create data assets that support policy development and decision making; for example, the use of gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis to support the Government’s gender equality priorities
* adopt an organisation specific plan for using data, including identification of data assets, to achieve their organisational objectives
* incorporate appropriate data management and stewardship approaches, including identifying roles with specific responsibilities for these functions
* embed data standards into all data asset management functions, focusing on data quality: accuracy, completeness, auditability, consistency, and timeliness
* embed infrastructure maintenance plans into ICT schedules, to ensure the integrity and protection of data.

**Build a data and digital-capable APS**

Further investments in the capability of the APS are essential to achieving the Government’s ambitions and commitments in this Strategy. The Government recognises the need for a variety of skills and capabilities to support the implementation of data and digital technologies across the APS. Leaders and champions need to build technical learning expertise but also foster and develop core soft skills such as communication, co-design and embedding of inclusion and accessibility to operate as a government of the future in line with the APS Reform agenda.

Recent reviews, including the [2023 myGov User Audit](https://my.gov.au/en/audit), acknowledge the record high demand for digital capabilities. However, a highly competitive labour market, a history of outsourcing and the size of the existing data and digital skills gap make meeting this demand difficult. The [APS Audit of Employment](https://www.finance.gov.au/publications/reviews/australian-governments-report-audit-employment) will help the Government’s efforts to reduce reliance on a contingent workforce while sourcing niche capabilities where appropriate.

The Government will continue to build and uplift data and digital expertise of the APS leadership and workforce to ensure the APS attracts, engages, develops and retains people with the necessary skills. To support this, the Government has established the [APS Data and Digital Professions](https://apsprofessions.gov.au/home) to focus on increasing workforce data and digital capabilities.

Success will rely on improving the gender balance in the APS data and digital workforce. In 2022, [only 41%](https://www.apsc.gov.au/employment-data/aps-employment-data-30-june-2022) of APS employees working in data and digital job roles were women (AustralianPublic Service Commission, December 2022). Capability uplift driven under this Strategy will build on existing efforts to strengthen gender representation in STEM through the [Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021-26](https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/australian-public-service-gender-equality-strategy-2021-26) and [Women in STEM Decadal Plan](https://www.science.org.au/support/analysis/decadal-plans-science/women-in-stem-decadal-plan), and the [Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review](https://www.industry.gov.au/science-technology-and-innovation/diversity-stem-review).

To attract and retain people with the right skills and remain adaptable and flexible in a data and digital age, the Australian Government commits to:

* uplifting APS capability to ensure staff can effectively engage with data and digital technologies to produce useful insights, advice and operate more productively
* increasing the gender diversity of those working in digital and ICT roles in the APS
* developing a whole-of-APS Digital Workforce Plan
* improving pathways for entities to share technical expertise
* engaging with industry and global experts to stay informed of the latest tools, technologies and methodologies in data and digital capability development
* ensuring further development of data and digital skills.

**Grow APS maturity**

Data and digital maturity vary between entities, slowing the standardisation of platforms and services, and the delivery of outcomes.

A standardised approach to tracking maturity delivers upon the intent of the [Independent Review of the Australian Public Service](https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/independent-review-australian-public-service), to better monitor maturity and progress toward a digitally enabled Australian Government by 2030.

The Government will develop maturity assessment tools for entities to help them understand their data and digital management and use practices, identify capability gaps and better target investments.

To help uplift APS maturity, the Office of the National Data Commissioner is developing education and materials to support best practice data handling and sharing under the [DATA Scheme](https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/the-data-scheme). The [Australian Centre for Evaluation](https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/)’s work to integrate high-quality evaluation into all aspects of program and policy development will support and build on efforts to grow APS data and digital maturity.