**Postdoctoral Position**

The appropriate background for a postdoctoral Researcher (1 to 1.5 years) depends on the Hub’s research priorities: **public policy & administration** vs **computer science & engineering**. Because the Hub is based in the school of computer science and engineering, it may be easier to recruit a postdoctoral researcher and supervise projects closer to this field.

The Global Trust Index proposes an ambitious long-term project that would involve cooperation with (at first) Australian local, state and federal and (ultimately) international government bodies. A project of this scale would be suitable for a CRC, especially one that is also undertaking research on related themes like government data sharing.

The Hub should consider what type of stand-alone academic contribution relating to the Global Trust Index could be completed by an individual postdoctoral researcher in a 1-1.5 year period, considering the differences between outputs suitable for consulting vs academic work.

An engineering-based project of 1-1.5 year duration may be able to explore technologies related to trust-indexing, for example, identity-verified public engagement systems using local LLMs. A prototype application could potentially be developed and trailed, with one possible trial being for student engagement at UNSW.

**Cooperative Research Center**

Now is a favourable time to make an application for a CRC that appeals to the Australian Government’s Data and Digital Government Strategy (launched in 2023) and accompanying Implementation Plan (released in 2024).

The Strategy’s [2030 Vision](https://www.dataanddigital.gov.au/strategy) encompasses five missions:

* **Delivering for all people and businesses:** *supporting digital literacy, connectivity, service design, and cross-jurisdictional data sharing, particularly for regional and Indigenous communities; removing barriers to ethical and secure data sharing, mandate open access to non-sensitive data, and investing in analytical tools and integration platforms like the Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure.*
* **Simple and seamless services:** *the Australian Public Service operating as a unified enterprise using technology, data, and analytics to deliver simple, accessible services, organised around individuals’ needs, proactively using data to predict service requirements, with cross-jurisdictional collaboration, a national Digital ID system, and unified service experiences like ‘tell us once’.*
* **Government for the future:** *adopting emerging technologies like AI, quantum computing, and digital twins, with strong human oversight, transparency, and guidance to manage risks; requiring all government entities to develop and submit digital and ICT plans as part of the ICT Oversight Framework process*
* **Trusted and secure:** *adoption of a whole-of-government Data Ethics Framework; cyber resilience through initiatives like the 2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy, a strengthened Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme, the secure Digital ID system, the Hosting Certification Framework, the Protective Security Policy Framework; legislative reforms to the Privacy Act, continued review of the Data Availability and Transparency Act; alignment to international privacy standards.*
* **Data and digital foundations:** *managing data as a national asset, requiring entities to appoint senior data leaders and embed best-practice stewardship, ensure data quality, and treat data infrastructure as critical, with a whole-of-government data governance framework supporting consistent management across the APS, with improved data visibility through the Australian Government Data Catalogue and Dataplace.*

A CRC application could emphasise the potential to support the government’s Strategy and Implementaiton Plan over the period to 2030, with a focus on research themes relating to these missions and the related enablers. It can also highlight the potential of the Center to engage with international academic-industry-government bodies (e.g. [OECD Gov2Gov Incubator](https://oecd-opsi.org/work-areas/gov2gov-innovation-incubator/), [International Association for Safe and Ethical AI](https://www.iaseai.org/conference)).

Some potential themes for a CRC application include:

1. **Trust Indexing:** developing indicators for government trustworthiness through measuring the quality of public service provision using objective and subjective indicators made available by digitisation
2. **Government Data Sharing:** the subject of the TDS [*Trustworthy Data Sharing*](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7313780985181917184) whitepaper and a major element of the government’s Data and Digital Government strategy and the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022* – this theme is strongly related to the theme of Trust Indexing, which depends on the integration of data resources across governments.
3. **AI for Public Engagement:** the use of local and open-source LLMs for collecting and processing unstructured feedback; this relates to the subject of trust-indexing, questions of AI sovereignty and the use of agentic AI in government (“G4”); connected to the 2024 [Policy for the Responsible use of AI in Government](https://www.digital.gov.au/policy/ai/policy).
4. **Digital Inclusivity:** addressing the “digital divide” and accessibility for disadvantaged and remote populations; relating to the government’s [Digital Inclusion Standard](https://www.digital.gov.au/policy/digital-experience/digital-inclusion-standard) and in particular the [First Nations Digital Inclusion Plan (FNDIP)](https://www.niaa.gov.au/our-work/employment-and-economic-development/first-nations-digital-inclusion-plan-fndip). (This also relates to trust indexing insofar as accessibility and inclusivity can be measurable trust elements.)
5. **Life Events:** governments worldwide are increasingly adopting a user-centered “life events” approach to government service improvement that considers how individuals interact with government across service, agency, or jurisdictional boundaries and third parties during key life events (e.g. “birth of a child” ). In 2024, Australia’s National Life Events program (a five-year plan for mapping key life events and working with Commonwealth and state/territory governments on a “proof of concept for a life-event-based checklist function in the myGov app”) was moved from the Digital Transformation Agency and placed under the authority of Services Australia, but [without any corresponding transfer of staff or resources](https://www.paulfletcher.com.au/paul-media/innovationauscom-dta-stripped-life-events-services-push), meaning that progress is likely to stall. A CRC could support Commonwealth and state/territory governments in the continued development of this program. Life events is related to the other themes such as digital inclusivity and data sharing, and a life events approach could also be considered for trust indexing.