Questionnaire: IBM – Confluent

MN-10001

Deadline to respond: 12 February 2026

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (**ACCC**) is currently assessing International Business Machines Corporation's (**IBM**) proposed acquisition of 100% of the shares in Confluent, Inc (**Confluent**) (the **Acquisition**).

For further information about the ACCC's assessment of the Acquisition, see the ACCC's [Acquisitions Register](#).

The ACCC is assessing the impact of the Acquisition on competition and is seeking your views. The ACCC invites you to provide submissions or information in response to the questions below by **12 February 2026** via email to mergers@accc.gov.au with the title *Submission re: IBM – Confluent.* The ACCC must complete its assessment within strict statutory timelines which also impacts the time available for consultation.

If you would prefer to speak to a member of the ACCC case team, please email mergers@accc.gov.au with the title *Request for call re: IBM – Confluent*. Someone from the case team will contact you to find a suitable time for a call.

Please note that:

- This request is made in accordance with section 51ABZZD(2)(a) and (c) of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) (the **Act**). This means that while the ACCC may take into account submissions or information received after the due date, it is not required to do so.

- In responding to the questions below or when providing a submission, please highlight and/or mark any confidential information and indicate why the information is confidential (as brief reasons in footnotes in your response or submission, or in a separate document such as the ACCC's [confidentiality claims template](#)). The standard terms on which the ACCC accepts confidential information are outlined at the end of this document.

Questions

In this questionnaire:

Event Stream Processing Software refers to software that facilitates the real-time handling of event information, transporting it to various destinations.

Integration Software refers to middleware which allows the integration of and communication between two or more applications, to coordinate requests, and connect applications to databases.

1. Provide a brief description of your organisation, including any existing commercial relationships with IBM and/or Confluent.

2. Are IBM and Confluent close competitors? If so, for which products/services?

Questions for customers of Event Stream Processing Software and Integration Software

3. Provide a brief description of the:

   a. Event Stream Processing Software products/services that you currently use and which providers they are from.

   b. Integration Software products/services that you currently use and which providers they are from (eg, IBM webMethods Hybrid Integration Platform and IBM MQ).

   c. Products or services for developing AI models that you currently use and which providers they are from (eg, watsonx or equivalent products).

4. What features are important to your organisation in an Event Stream Processing Software solution?

5. Describe how your organisation procures Event Stream Processing Software products and services. Does your organisation independently procure Event Stream Processing Software or procure it as part of a bundle with other products (if so, which products and from which supplier)?

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6. List any Event Stream Processing Software products you acquire from Confluent for which there are no effective substitutes available from alternative suppliers (considering your requirements, for example, in relation to functionality, performance or cost). Please explain why.

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7. In the event that Confluent's Event Stream Processing Software was only available when used with other related IBM software, for example its Integration Software (ie, Confluent's software was not available on a standalone basis), would this affect your choice of provider of that other related software? Explain why/why not, including any barriers to changing providers.

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8. What would be involved in switching 1) Event Stream Processing Software providers (including to open-source Apache Kafka) and 2) Integration Software providers? Please consider factors such as costs to switch, data ownership and interoperability/neutrality.

Questions for suppliers of Event Stream Processing Software

9. Please describe your Event Stream Processing Software product(s), how they function and their intended users.

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10. Please identify the IBM and/or Confluent Event Stream Processing Software products with which you compete.

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11. Please describe what is involved in entering and expanding in the supply of Event Stream Processing Software in Australia. Do you consider IBM's acquisition of Confluent will change this? If known, please include any examples of recent entry or expansion in the supply of Event Stream Processing Software in Australia.

Questions for suppliers of Integration Software

12. Explain the extent to which interoperability with Confluent's Event Stream Processing Software is important for your Integration Software.

Other issues

13. To what extent do you consider that the Acquisition may impact competition in the supply of products used to create AI models (such as IBM's watsonx)?

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14. Provide any additional information or comments that you consider relevant to the ACCC's assessment of the Acquisition, including any views on the effect of the Acquisition on competition in Australia.

Confidentiality of responses

During the ACCC's assessment of a notified acquisition, the ACCC may receive information that is properly regarded as being confidential, and which is provided to the ACCC in confidence. The ACCC is committed to treating this information responsibly and in accordance with the law. The ACCC understands the importance of confidentiality to parties involved in a notified acquisition, as well as to third parties that provide information to the ACCC.

The standard terms on which the ACCC accepts confidential information are:

• there is no restriction on the internal use, including future use, that the ACCC may make of the confidential information consistent with the ACCC's statutory functions

• confidential information may be disclosed to the ACCC's external advisors and consultants on condition that each such advisor or consultant will be informed of the obligation to treat the information as confidential, and

• the ACCC may disclose the confidential information to other third parties if compelled by law or in accordance with section 155AAA of the Act. This includes disclosures

made in the performance of official duties or functions, which include transparency requirements which are part of the merger control regime.

For further information on confidentiality, see the ACCC's [interim merger process guidelines](#)**.**