



Guidance on Data Sharing for Australian Government Entities

Australian Government entities collect and produce large amounts of data. However, in order to harness the value of this data, it must be more effectively shared both publicly and between Australian Government entities.

Linking and sharing government data will help solve a myriad of social, economic and environmental problems in an inter-connected digital environment.

The [Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement](#) requires Australian Government entities to securely share data to improve efficiencies, and inform policy development and decision-making.

Currently, the most common mechanism for sharing data between government entities is through Memorandums of Understanding, which can be unnecessarily complicated and time consuming. [The Public Sector Data Management Report](#) found that it can take several years and multiple memorandums to establish data sharing arrangements between government entities. Further, these agreements are not legally binding and incur significant cost in policy, project and legal officer time.

It is important that Australian Government entities streamline data sharing processes to enable greater efficiencies and improve decision making for policy and implementation processes.

To achieve this, Australian Government entities are to:

- › when an entity requires arrangements to be formalised in writing, establish data-sharing arrangements through a letter of exchange between entities (rather than memorandums of understanding or deeds of arrangement);
- › share data by default with other Australian Government entities, unless there are ongoing insurmountable legislative barriers or risks to privacy, security or confidentiality.
- › consult responsible expert groups and the Public Data Branch at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet when determining the extent of legislative barriers and other risks;
- › foster a culture of trust and collaboration between entities; and
- › where possible, provide data in a format that is machine-readable, high quality and complies with agreed open standards, with as few restrictions on use as possible.

Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

March 2016