# Vision

## *Better, faster, more open data*

NSW Government agencies:

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|---|---|
| **Better** | Release **better** data in accessible, consumable formats with metadata and quality statements |
| **Faster** | Release data **faster** using automated processes, standard data categories and trusted user models |
| **More** | Release **more** data and make it discoverable through central portals |
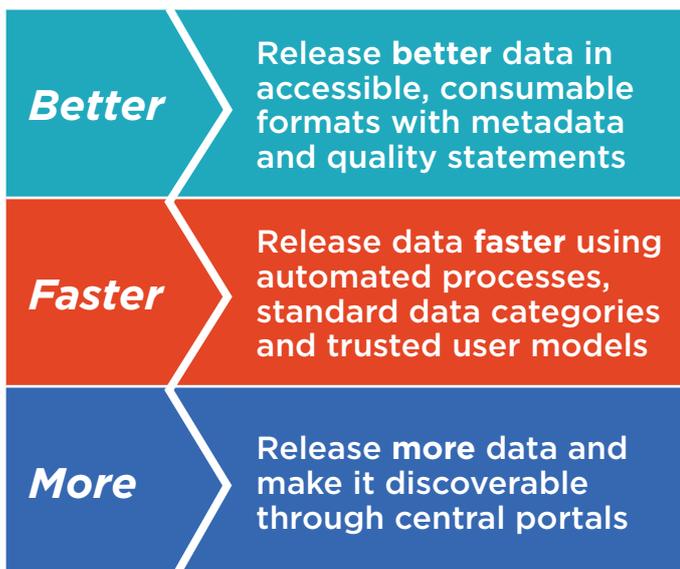
# Why open data?

Open data is a tremendous resource. It provides the intelligence for insight, invention and exploration that translate into better products and services that improve everyday life and encourage business growth.

Research shows that open data has a significant impact in four key areas:

• improving government

• empowering citizens

• creating opportunity

• solving problems.

The NSW Open Data Policy has contributed to improved outcomes for vulnerable populations protecting the environment, good government, and road safety.

The review of the policy in 2016 renews the NSW Government commitment to open data to support; transparency, innovation, and new knowledge and insights from combined data sources.

# Introduction

## The Open Data environment

This policy is part of the data environment underpinning Government initiatives which are leading to business growth and to improvements in everyday life. Open Government, Smart Cities, the Data Analytics Centre and the NSW Open Data Advocate are some of these initiatives.

### Open Government

A smart government is transparent and accountable, and understands that solutions to policy challenges can come from outside government. It collaborates with community and industry partners, encourages participation in the policy formulation and decision making process, and encourages innovation from employees and external stakeholders.

Public service agencies are now more open and collaborative as a result of the reforms commenced under the Strategy. By 2014, the amount of information the NSW Government published online had more than doubled, more agencies conducted customer satisfaction surveys than in previous years, and most NSW Government agencies now had social media policies in place to better engage with customers. This shows a deeper involvement with the community and a commitment to ensuring that there are multiple contact points within government for customers.

### Smart Cities

Smart cities are generally considered in terms of using technology to connect infrastructure such as transport, health, energy and water, generating data that can be used for better services and better planning. Open data makes this information available to everyone, from families to retailers, commuters to investors. Open data allows everyone to understand and interact with our cities, to contribute to their growth and development.

### NSW Data Analytics Centre (DAC)

The DAC facilitates data sharing between agencies and manages whole-of-government analytics projects. It does that by leveraging internal and external partnerships so that the right capabilities, tools and technologies are applied.

The DAC works with data from a variety of sources, including open data, to derive insights that support strategic decision making, evidence based policy development and improved service delivery.

The DAC advises agencies on how data can be opened to the public in line with the Open Data Policy, including de-identification.

### NSW Open Data Advocate

The Information Commissioner promotes public awareness and understanding of the object of the GIPA Act: to open government information to the public including authorising and encouraging the proactive public release of information by agencies.

The Information Commissioner has taken on the role of NSW Open Data Advocate. The Open Data Advocate will play a key role in ensuring that the new Open Data Policy is successfully implemented. Activating the role of Open Data Advocate will provide assistance to citizens making a request to access information, and provide advice to agencies to streamline processes for data release.

The Information Commissioner may investigate and report on the exercise by agencies of their functions under and compliance with the GIPA Act, and can investigate complaints made about an agency's conduct in carrying out its functions under the GIPA Act. This independent regulatory oversight role promotes accountability and public confidence in the release and management of data by government sector agencies.

The Information Commissioner oversees the transparency obligations of agencies in the GIPA Act including that:

• agencies must make information publicly available as open access information under Part 3 Division 1 of the GIPA Act

• disclosure logs where agencies must record information that has been requested formally and which the agency decides may be of interest to other members of the public (Part 3 Division 4).

The obligations of agencies are outlined in Part 3 Division 2 Agency Information Guides.

## Progress to date

In 2009, the Government Information Public Access Act (GIPAA) established NSW Government's commitment to opening government information, proactively and responsively, to the public. Data NSW was launched as the first State level open data catalogue in the world. In 2013, the Open Data Policy was introduced to support simple and efficient compliance with GIPAA and encourage the release of high value datasets for use by industry and the community. The Policy aimed to assist agencies in embedding open data principles in their operations.

Data NSW now receives between 3,000 and 5,000 visits every month. The site contains approximately 350 catalogue entries which provide access to over 50,000 government datasets, which are published on agency portals. This approach allows open data to be searched in a central location, but also made available alongside data on the same subject – such as education, health or environment. Data NSW has also been federated with open data portals from other jurisdictions so that a search will provide links to datasets from South Australia, Queensland and the Commonwealth Government.

NSW Government has adopted an open access licensing framework to support the release and reuse of public information. We have also adopted the Australian Bureau of Statistics framework for standard data quality reporting.

The 2016 policy drives the release of more data, in better open formats, using automated processes for faster publication. The newly established Open Data Rolling Release Schedule indicates agency targets to improve the openness of their published data and to release new, high value datasets.

## Case studies

Progress is demonstrated by the following three case studies.

Transport for NSW established the NSW transport data exchange (TDX) program. Data is available in a range of machine-readable, spatially enabled formats. TDX provides real time data on:

• timetables, routes and stops
• where your train, bus, ferry or light rail service is right now and estimated arrival times
• live traffic updates and incidents
• travel times
• scheduled road work.

Land and Property Information is now providing spatial data, such as the NSW Cadastre, imagery and administrative boundaries, as web services. The NSW Address Location Service web service allows the user to enter an address and pinpoint the location of that address. The web services allow users to access the most up to date information without having to store and maintain it in their own systems or applications. The web services can be used in multiple ways e.g. direct use, mashups, mobile apps and spatial systems.

The NSW Education Datahub is a searchable central repository of publically available data with a range of video tutorials on using it. Department of Education is also a partner in the Code for Australia fellowship program. The Fellowship Program pairs civic-minded technologists, designers and community organisers with a government agency for a 12-month collaboration. For example, to develop a service that uses education and location data to make it easier for parents and carers to select a school for their children.

## Information Management Framework

The NSW Government Information Management Framework (the IM Framework) establishes a common approach to managing government data and information.

The IM Framework is made up of policies, standards and guidance for managing data and information consistently across the sector. It enables agencies to appropriately protect, share and publish data and information in ways that support better services, and to derive the best value from investments in data, information and technology.

This policy forms part of the IM Framework.

# Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to assist NSW Government agencies to:

- release data for use by the community, research, business and industry
- accelerate the use of data to derive new insights for better public services
- embed open data into business-as-usual
- use data to inform the design of policy, programs and procurement
- support the use of data by the NSW Data Analytics Centre for research and evidence-based decision making
- advance citizen engagement with government and the work of government
- support the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act)* and promote simple and efficient compliance with the requirements set out in that Act.

# What is open data?

This policy focuses on datasets as an aspect of information defined in the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act).*

A dataset is an identifiable collection of government held information or data. Most commonly a dataset corresponds to the contents of a single database table, or a single statistical data matrix. The term can also be used to refer to the data in a collection of closely related tables. A dataset may comprise a smaller grouping (or subset) of data which, though limited by some constraint or feature type, is located physically within a larger dataset.

Data is open to the extent that its management, release and characteristics meet the principles of openness outlined in this policy. Open data should be both technically available and usable, and have licensing frameworks in place to facilitate its release and use.

# Scope

This policy applies to all NSW Government agencies including cluster agencies, Departments, Statutory Bodies and Shared Service Providers. In accordance with *Premier's Memorandum M1999-19 Applicability of Memoranda and Circulars to State Owned Corporations*, the Policy is not mandatory for State Owned Corporations, although it is recommended for adoption. NSW Government funded research data must also be made open under this policy.

Target audiences for this policy include government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), academia, industry (including ICT developers) and members of the public who are interested in or have a specific use for government data.

# Open Data Principles

Open data principles lead to more responsive and smarter government, and better service delivery. To meet the obligations of this policy, agencies must manage data as a strategic asset to be:

- Open by default, protected where required
- Prioritised, discoverable and usable
- Primary and timely
- Well managed, trusted and authoritative
- Free where appropriate
- Subject to public input.

# Agency responsibilities

## Open by default and protected where required

Agencies will start from a position of data openness, favouring the release of data, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure *(Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act)*.

A Rolling Release Schedule for agencies' plans to publish open data is available on Data NSW. The Rolling Release Schedule targets improved formats for data and identifies new high value datasets for release.

Agencies must:

- Create and collect data in ways that support downstream processing and release
- Incorporate open data into project, program, service, system and policy design
- Make data available without reference to its potential end use by other parties
- Ensure they own all intellectual property rights in the dataset, or that they have a sufficiently broad licence to permit its release
- Comply with NSW Government policies for information security (e.g. NSW Government Digital Information Security Policy) and other relevant NSW Government information security and privacy policies, state and federal legislations and guidelines) and the management of privacy for the individual
- Apply information labels and security classifications which indicate whether data is protected, in line with the *NSW Government Information Classification, Labelling and Handling Guidelines*
- Ensure safeguards are in place to manage and assess the release of sensitive datasets
- Apply managed methods to support the release of otherwise sensitive data such as: redacting, consent, ethics approval, aggregating and third party brokerage (mediator or integrator).

## Prioritised, discoverable and usable

High-value datasets will be prioritised for release, in line with demand from the public and industry, as a result of stakeholder consultation, or where the release of the datasets will contribute to better service delivery in NSW.

Data will be in a format that makes it easy to use, transform and reuse. Commonly accepted open data standards, are published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to enhance data usability.

When procuring or upgrading systems according to the *ICT Investment Policy and Guidelines*, agencies will consider the use of technologies that enable data to be consumed by other systems, without the need for manual intervention.

Metadata allows datasets to be found, understood, controlled and managed. It will be published with all datasets. It will define or describe content, quality, format or structure of a dataset, the system, location and context in which the dataset was produced, collected, processed or stored.

Agencies must:

- Release data which supports a range of outcomes, including; social, enhanced service delivery, agency core business, economic opportunity, generates efficiencies or reduced costs, supports evidence based research or policy
- Prioritise the release of datasets in response to public requests
- Link datasets to Data NSW for discoverability and availability
- Ensure datasets are technically open (machine readable)
- Apply creative commons licensing (default CC-BY) to facilitate the reuse of data, making it legally open
- Apply the correct data standards to manage their data. See the Information Management Framework
- Publish metadata with all datasets and the details of a contact person in their agency. Data NSW can assist with this and may be contacted through the contact form on the site
- Assess the quality of their datasets prior to release with the *Data Quality Standard*. The standard can be used to report whether datasets meet the above requirements.

## Primary and timely

Data will be released as collected at the source, with a high level of granularity, and not in aggregate or modified forms unless required to safeguard confidential or personal data. Reuse will acknowledge the source and include the metadata.

Agencies must:

- Implement mechanisms that enable automated, ongoing or periodic regular release of data, without the need for manual intervention
- Publish live, real-time feeds where it enhances the utility of the dataset
- Include timestamps or other information for users to identify the currency of the data
- Make newer, replacement data available to users in a timely manner.

## Well managed, trusted and authoritative

Users will be alerted to the quality and limitations of the data to ensure confidence that it is trustworthy and authoritative.

Data governance arrangements will be established and maintained in accordance with NSW Government's information management principles and the *Data and Information Custodianship Policy.*

Agencies must:

- Manage data in accordance with legislative and legal requirements, including those for data security and protection of personal information, intellectual property, business confidentiality and legal professional privilege
- Apply sound archival practices to preserve data.

## Free where appropriate

Access to open data will be free by default. The widespread use of data for innovation will be encouraged to achieve the maximum value from the data for the people of NSW, and to enhance transparency of government.

Agencies must:

- Provide data free of charge
- Establish standard parameters for cost recovery (only for specialised data services).
- Publish any fees for data use.

## Subject to public input

Agencies will engage with and are informed by the community, research sector and industry on the design of new datasets and data portals, and in deciding what data to publish and about publication practices.

Agencies must:

- Provide data in a way that is relevant to the transaction being undertaken or service being used
- Participate with activities across jurisdictions to share and integrate data at the national level.
- Publish community and industry feedback about the data.

### Implementation

This Policy is supported by an action plan to assist agencies in achieving open data objectives.

This Policy is maintained by the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation.