Data and the Digital Economy

Effective and large-scale use of data is powering the global and connected digital economy, presenting significant economic opportunities for all sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for efficient and effective data sharing to enable effective policy responses to pressing issues.

Australian Government data initiatives supporting the digital economy include:

- an **Australian Data Strategy** to create a data-driven economy through better data use
- **$111.3 million** to support the acceleration of the **Consumer Data Right** rollout
- **$40.2 million** to deliver the **Digital Atlas of Australia**
- **$16.5 million** for a pilot program to make the **Australian Government’s data assets discoverable** and support whole-of-economy reuse.

**An Australian Data Strategy**

The Government is committing to deliver Australia’s first Data Strategy (the Data Strategy) setting out how the Government will enhance effective, safe and secure data use over the period 2021 to 2025. Data is critically important to building a modern digital economy and delivering better outcomes for Australians.

The Data Strategy will explore the contribution of data to the digital economy, identify the Government’s use of data in delivering its functions and set out how the Government will manage data as a critical asset.

The Data Strategy will outline the Australian Government data system and opportunities to enhance it, including:

- the Government’s settings to support use, value, custodianship, sharing and security of both public and private data in Australia to improve outcomes for Australians
- commit Government agencies to building and enhancing data maturity, visibility and capability in the Australian Public Service
- increase consumer awareness, use and control of their data for personal benefit.

The Government is committing to the delivery of the Australian Data Strategy by late 2021 following consultation with state, territory and local governments, and with the private sector and not-for-profit sectors.
The Data Strategy will outline a clear vision for maximising data-driven innovation across the economy by improving access to data, data sharing arrangements, data asset management and strengthening collaboration between government and business. For example, it could look to identify how the Consumer Data Right and supporting institutions could be further leveraged to build a data-driven economy. In 2025, the Government will evaluate its achievements under the Data Strategy.

Towards 2030: the benefits of the Australian Data Strategy for citizens

Adam and Peta have just learned that they are expecting a baby, but do not interact with government on a daily basis and don’t know what services are available in their area. With improved data management, along with the safe and secure release, sharing and use of data under the Data Strategy, Adam and Peta will have a better experience interacting with government departments, and have confidence that their data is being used appropriately and transparently.

Consumer Data Right

The Consumer Data Right is designed to give consumers greater access to and control over their data. It improves consumers’ ability to compare and switch between products and services, and encourages competition between service providers, leading not only to better prices and service quality for customers but also more innovative products and services.

Following the launch of the Consumer Data Right in the banking sector in July 2020, the framework is now entering a multi-year period of growth with expansion to the energy sector already underway and telecommunications identified as the next priority sector.

The Government is committed to delivering an economy-wide Consumer Data Right, to help consumers save time and money in finding the best deals for them for everyday products and services, based on their own data. Rollout of the Consumer Data Right across multiple sectors will unlock new innovation opportunities. The Consumer Data Right will grow Australia’s technology and innovation sector and drive digitalisation of Australian businesses, with consumers benefitting from new and more competitive data-driven products and services, and the creation of more high-paying technology jobs.

Funding for the Consumer Data Right under the 2021-22 Budget Digital Economy Strategy will accelerate the rollout across the economy including:

- deliver the rules and standards to implement the Consumer Data Right in the energy sector in 2021, and provide for real-time and machine readable product data, to enable energy data sharing to commence in 2022
- assess and designate telecommunications as a Consumer Data Right sector and undertake a strategic assessment to deliver a roadmap for the economy-wide roll out of the Consumer Data Right
- expand international engagement to export Australia’s leading data portability framework, and promote an interoperable and rules-based approach to international consumer data portability frameworks and provide offshore opportunities for Australian technology companies to scale globally.
The Government will respond to the Inquiry into Future Directions for the Consumer Data Right report late in 2021.

**Digital Atlas of Australia**

The Government will deliver a three-dimensional Digital Atlas of Australia’s geography, bringing together the wealth of Government data on people, the economy, employment, infrastructure, health, land and the environment into a single national data asset. With the Digital Atlas, users will have secure and private access to visualise and derive new insights from their own data. This will open up new economic and social opportunities – including virtually designing new roads and other major infrastructure without even having to visit the site, helping businesses make investment decisions.

The Digital Atlas will be the next generation of the Australian Government’s location-based data infrastructure, based on a modernised National Map. The Digital Atlas will make better use of Australia’s over 90,000 open datasets to create a secure, dynamic, location-based and collaborative public data platform. The platform will drive improved place-based policy, planning, investments and decision-making across all sectors and levels of government.

By presenting data overlaid on Australia’s geography, individuals, governments and other organisations can better understand and respond to issues such as, the economic impacts of COVID-19 and infrastructure planning. Users will be able to combine other publicly-available data and overlay their private data on the platform to provide a more detailed and integrated map. It will also enable businesses to be better informed on economic, demographic, and infrastructure settings to guide decisions on where business activity and investment is best targeted.

Australians will be able to use the Digital Atlas for greater visibility of issues that may affect their physical and virtual connection to people and services, and better understand government interventions on their local environment. As the Digital Atlas matures, appropriate geospatial data will be accessible to both humans and machines, enabling innovative downstream uses through third-party applications and technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning.

![Image](Image)

### Towards 2030: A Digital Atlas of Australia powering place-based decision-making

Gus’s Trucking and Logistics Co. is looking to build a new warehouse in regional NSW as part of their expanding supply chain. Gus is able to use the Digital Atlas, adding his current warehouse locations, to identify key transport infrastructure, population centres and utility services in order to determine the best location for his new warehouse.

Illustrative Example

### Making Government assets discoverable to support more data use

Australia has committed to improving access to and use of government data, assisted by the passage and implementation of the Data Availability and Transparency Bill. However, most government agencies do not currently maintain a comprehensive inventory of the data they hold, limiting their ability to understand the value of their data holdings, and making it difficult to find data when needed. This hampers access to data to support...
digital transformation and enable innovative, data-driven projects, and makes it harder to respond quickly during times of need.

The Office of the National Data Commissioner will lead a pilot program to develop data inventories for 20 per cent of Australian government agencies. Common standards and shared infrastructure will be used to aggregate individual agency inventories into a government-wide catalogue of government-held data assets.

The catalogue will complement existing catalogues on open data platforms, particularly data.gov.au, and support greater data transparency of government data holdings and promote reuse, including with other jurisdictions, researchers and the private sector. It will, amongst other things, allow the Government to respond quickly in emergencies, and will help transition Australia to a data driven economy, including making Australia more attractive to investors seeking to create new data driven products and services.

**Towards 2030: Unlocking government data stores for community benefit**

Alexandria is a researcher working on schools and bullying policy. She is researching how to improve outcomes for students in regional and remote schools in Victoria.

Using the Government Data Catalogue, she is able to identify unpublished datasets held by four different Commonwealth agencies. The data helps to make Alexandria’s research more influential as it provides evidence for the different types of government support that are most effective in providing health and other positive outcomes for students.