Tasmanian Government

Open Data Policy

2022

Contents
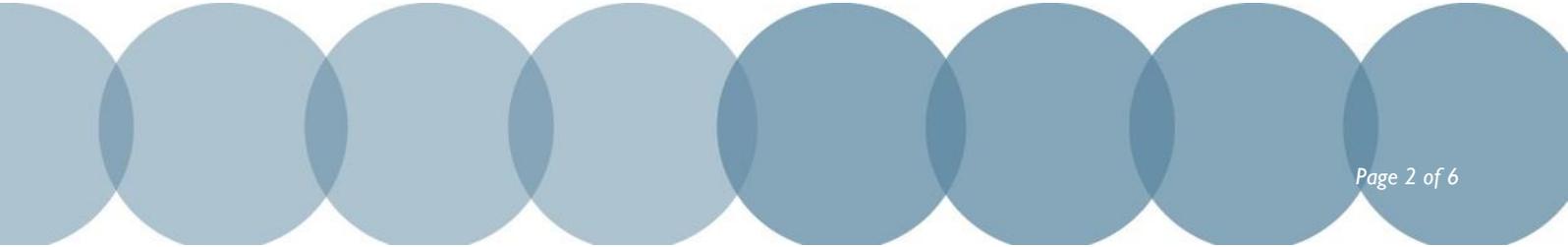
Purpose and scope

This Policy applies to all Tasmanian Government agencies, as listed in Schedule 1 of the *State Service Act 2000*.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- help facilitate the release of appropriate, high-value datasets by Tasmanian Government agencies to the public
- make explicit the Tasmanian Government's commitment to open data and open government
- create a practical policy framework to embed open data principles across Tasmanian Government operations
- foster understanding of open data priorities for government, industry and the community, and
- support the objective of the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

Introduction

Data or information is open if it can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone, to the extent that its management, release and characteristics meet the principles outlined in this Policy.

Open data should be both:

- *technically* open – in the sense that it is in machine-readable standard format, meaning that it can be retrieved and meaningfully processed by a computer application, and
- *legally open* – with appropriate licensing frameworks in place that facilitate commercial and non-commercial use and re-use without restriction.

Establishing a culture of quality open data, and applying it from the time data is first generated or collected, has been shown to deliver benefits to communities and economies both in Australia and overseas.

This Policy aims to embed open data principles across the Tasmanian Government to help make appropriate government data available across agencies, the private sector and the general public.

By embedding these principles, government can:

- make more responsive decisions informed by quality data
- improve productivity and service delivery for the benefit of all Tasmanians
- promote transparency, participation, collaboration and innovation
- advance citizen engagement with government agencies
- contribute to industry transformation in Tasmania
- promote development of new businesses and industries that can make use of government data
- facilitate greater awareness and understanding amongst agencies of their own data and its potential uses
- facilitate better public services, and
- support evidence-based policy and practice across all sectors.

Principles

OPEN BY DESIGN

To maximise use and reuse of data, agencies start from a position of data openness, with the expectation in favour of data release unless there is an overriding reason for not doing so.

Even where a dataset is incomplete, releasing the data is favoured, provided sufficient context and metadata is included to notify the user of any limitations or gaps in the dataset.

PROTECTED WHERE REQUIRED

Datasets may be made available unless access is restricted for reasons of privacy, public safety, security, law enforcement, public health and compliance with the law.

Consistent with Schedule 1 of the *Right to Information Act 2009,* matters relevant to the assessment of public interest, data should not be released if the potential for harm outweighs mere interest in disclosure.

FREE WHERE APPROPRIATE

Data should be provided free of charge where appropriate, to:

- encourage its widespread use for innovation
- achieve the maximum value from the data for the people of Tasmania, and
- enhance the transparency of the Tasmanian Government.

Where it is not possible to provide data free of charge, or this is not suitable in the circumstances, data should be provided at a reasonable price. Factors affecting the pricing decision should include the public interest and the effect of other policy or legislative provisions, as determined by the custodian agency.

PRIORITISED

The following datasets should be prioritised for release in order to enable discovery and innovative use by individuals or organisations:

- high-value datasets aligned with demand from the public and industry, as determined through stakeholder consultation
- high-value datasets determined by agencies to contribute to better service delivery in Tasmania, and
- datasets identified as holding potential to address emerging opportunities and challenges.

DISCOVERABLE

Data should be easily discoverable and searchable (on a central portal), with quality metadata. Data should be made available, as far as possible, at permanent internet addresses, so it may be easily referenced or linked.

USABLE

Data should be in a format that makes it easy to use, transform and reuse. Commonly accepted open data standards, such as those proposed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), should be implemented as far as possible to enhance data usability. Characteristics that support data usability include:

- machine-processable formats

- non-proprietary formats
- completeness, and
- clear, high quality metadata, which describes data being accessed.

Standard formats support inter-agency sharing, data linking and federation of data portals across Australian and international jurisdictions. Datasets should be designed to allow connection and linking between multiple public sector agencies, so far as this is practical.

Standardised metadata provides descriptive and contextual information that makes the dataset understandable and more useful. This is particularly important when publishing raw data, which may be difficult to use or interpret without explanation.

PRIMARY

Data should be published as collected at the source where practical to do so, with the highest level of granularity possible, minimising use of aggregations and modifications. However, data should not be published that would contravene the *Protected Where Required* principle.

TIMELY

Data should be current and – if practicable – live, with real-time feeds provided as appropriate and where this enhances the utility of the dataset.

Datasets should include timestamps or other information for users to identify the currency of the data, and where newer replacement data becomes available agencies must aim to make this available to users in a timely manner.

TRUSTED AND AUTHORITATIVE

Data must be well-managed to help ensure its ongoing integrity and efficacy for users, for example protected from unauthorised alteration or deletion in accordance with agency policies. Appropriate data governance arrangements must be established and data must be maintained in accordance with the Tasmanian Government's information management principles.

It is important for users to have confidence that the data they are accessing is trustworthy and authoritative, and where there are limitations in regard to a dataset, or a dataset is incomplete, users will be alerted accordingly.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE LICENSING

Selection of the least restrictive licences (including Creative Commons) appropriate to the material being published, will support inter-agency sharing, data linking and federation of data portals across Australian and international jurisdictions.

ENGAGING

Open data should facilitate engagement and collaboration between the government, private sector and the public, with the potential for new online and mobile applications to be developed to make further use of open datasets.

Responsibilities

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Comments
Nov 2022	V1.1 updated
Oct 2019	V1.0 reformatted for publication
Jan 2016	V1.0 published

POLICY AUTHORISATION
Tasmanian Government Secretaries Board (transferred from the former Digital Services Board)

MONITORING PROGRESS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
Tasmanian Government Data and Digital Committee

POLICY MAINTENANCE
Digital Strategy and Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet

POLICY ISSUED
January 2016

REVIEW DATE
No later than January 2025, or earlier if required

CREATIVE COMMONS STATEMENT