



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Deregulation



August 2009

National Government Information Sharing Strategy

Unlocking Government information assets to
benefit the broader community

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICE
(AGIMO)



August 2009

National Government Information Sharing Strategy

Unlocking Government information assets to
benefit the broader community

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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Information – what is it?

The dictionary defines information as “: *facts or details that tell you about something or someone*¹.”

Clearly Australian Governments are information rich. Over the years they have collected vast amounts of information about life in Australia. Within this information there almost certainly lies a great untapped value and benefit to Australia. For example, in 2006, in the Australian Government Information Interoperability Framework government information refers to:

1. information that citizens need to understand their rights, entitlements, and obligations;
2. information that government needs to plan, participate, manage and deliver services and programs for the benefit of individual citizens, as well as the Australian community as a whole;
3. information that government needs to participate and position itself in the global community and economy;
4. information that government needs to plan for, manage and support national security activities designed to protect the Australian community; and
5. information that public servants and stakeholders need to be able to do their jobs and fulfill their roles within both agency and whole-of-government contexts.

A national information sharing strategy will help unlock this stored potential. It will help transform policy development, and the design and delivery of government programs and services across all levels of government in Australia.

1 Longman Business English Dictionary, 2000.

1.2 Why do we need a National Information Sharing Strategy?

Information sharing enables better government service delivery and improved policy development through focused inter agency collaboration. The requirement for improved information sharing in government is highlighted in several formal reviews. For example, The National Innovation Review – (2008) recommended the need for a National Information Strategy to help stimulate innovation within the economy. In 2000 The review of Australian Governments Use of ICT indicated opportunities for more efficient and effective use of government information.

Gaining benefits from sharing information across all levels of Australian governments is a complex objective that can only be achieved with a consistent national approach. A National Government Information Sharing Strategy (NGISS) will identify the best practices, tools and further requirements for success and provide the foundation for future development.

This strategy articulates the principles that will assist agencies to share their information to benefit the Australian economy and the lives of Australian citizens. The strategy will continue to evolve as learning's are accommodated and best practice approaches shared.

This strategy will be followed by an implementation plan to identify and report on progress across all jurisdictions.

1 Introduction

Executive Summary

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Vision

The National Government Information Sharing Strategy offers the opportunity to unlock the engine room of government and improve the delivery of services to the Australian community.

Using NGISS will ensure the right service is delivered to the right citizen at the right time, by applying evidence based policy, decision-making and service delivery based on the best available information.

Timely, reliable, and appropriate information sharing is the foundation for good government and has the capacity to deliver a better way of life for all Australians

2.2 Background

The National Government Information Sharing Strategy (NGISS) was commissioned by the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Online and Communication Council's (OCC) in July 2007. Information sharing and interoperability was identified as an item of interest on the agenda of each of COAG's 42 ministerial councils.

The NGISS is to provide:

“...a standardised approach to information sharing to support the delivery of government services to the Australian community. The expectation is that the national strategy can be used by all portfolio areas at all levels of government.”

2.3 Approach

2.3.1 Consultation

A series of facilitated roundtables were held with representatives from State and Territory government agencies as well as a cross-section of Commonwealth agencies. More than 180 representatives from government agencies participated in the roundtables to identify barriers and potential solutions to information sharing.

All roundtable attendees were invited to identify existing tools that would support information sharing, for inclusion in the strategy. Case studies (completed, ongoing or potential) showing the impacts, pitfalls and successes of information sharing were also requested.

2.3.2 Targeted reviews

A diverse field of recognised experts in key fields and programs were approached individually to provide input into the strategy. They included leaders in information

exchange and business process development. Licensing experts and legal advisors were also consulted.

2.3.3 *Research and analysis*

An examination of existing Australian governments' frameworks and strategies was undertaken. This, along with research on global trends, case studies and key papers supplemented the consultations to form the direction of the strategy. Research analyst, Gartner assisted with identifying documents of interest and providing relevant commentary.

2.4 *Summary*

2.4.1 *Barriers*

Information sharing does not take place due to:

- A lack of leadership within agencies
- The absence of a clear value proposition
- Information management practices that restrict sharing capability
- Privacy and accountability concerns; and
- A culture that is resistant to sharing information

2.4.2 *Principles*

The success of the strategy will depend on the acceptance and application of the principles for information sharing agreed to by the On Line Council. They are:

- Provide leadership
- Demonstrate value
- Act collaboratively
- Establish clear governance
- Establish custodianship guidelines
- Build for interoperability
- Use standards-based information
- Promote information re-use
- Ensure privacy and security

Information sharing is about unlocking the many islands of information stores across government and to discover the value of that information. This will help ensure that information is available to the right people at the right time – providing governments at all levels with improved capacity to save lives, improve lives and to better protect the community.

2 Executive Summary

Overview

3 Overview

3.1 Summary of Findings

Analysis of the evidence identified the following findings:

3.2 Barriers

The research uncovered consistent themes of barriers to successful information sharing across jurisdictions, sectors and even international boundaries. All tiers of Australian governments have identified overcoming these barriers as imperative for efficient and effective information sharing for a connected government. Details of the barriers identified below are provided in the 'existing barriers to information sharing' section of the NGISS.

- Leadership;
- The absence of a clear value proposition;
- Information management practices;
- Privacy and accountability; and
- A non-sharing culture.

3.3 Opportunities

The development of a National Government Information Sharing Strategy is widely supported across agencies and jurisdictions.

By facilitating a common and considered approach to information sharing, the National Government Information Sharing Strategy (NGISS) can provide numerous benefits to governments and the public.

Australians should see less red tape, less complex and inconsistent forms and less repetition of processes, such as authentication. Sharing information between and within governments provides more efficient use of public funding through reduction in repetition of tasks associated with information management such as; collection, authentication, validation and storage.

Fostering an environment of access to a better quality and comparable information will help improve evidence-based decision-making and better informed cross-jurisdictional initiatives. This will result in providing more seamless access to government services.

Australians will benefit from improved services across many public service sectors. Better management of natural resources, more effective and efficient emergency services and health services, and improved policy and planning for their communities.

3.4 Implementation summary

Endorsement by the Online and Communications Council (OCC) provides the direction for all jurisdictions to adopt the information sharing principles contained within this strategy. Adoption of the principles will require each jurisdiction to contribute to various activities and the development of tools.

A detailed implementation plan will be developed in 2009 for endorsement by the CJCIOC. A co-ordinating function, lead by the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), will be established to steer and report on the implementation activities to CJCIOC.

Implementation activities fall under four areas:

Awareness raising

- Information education
- Privacy education
- Communication plan

Improving governance

- Information governance
- Standards governance; and
- Custodianship guidelines

Management and planning

- Strategic planning
- Information sharing champions
- Capability gap analysis
- Management of intellectual property/copyright/licensing

Enabling tools

- National Collaboration framework (NCF)
- Common business processes
- Information sources catalogues
- Information re-use
- Australian Government Information Interoperability Framework

3 Overview

3.5 The current situation

Accurate and complete information is essential for governments to provide the right services to the right citizen at the right time, and at the right place.

Information is used by all levels of government in the delivery of public services, whether paying Centrelink benefits, processing tax refunds, providing grants to small business or assessing a local development application.

The problem with the current state of affairs is that there are hundreds of islands of information that cost a significant amount to maintain, and do not necessarily provide a complete picture of the type of services the public is using or requires. This is exacerbated by the absence of national standards for the storage, use and interchange of information.

There are many examples of the consequences of not having an effective national information sharing strategy in place. The aim of this strategy is to unlock information within Government to:

3.6 Save lives

In 1999 a 15-year-old, sexually abused girl in an aboriginal community near Perth took her own life. The resulting 'Gordon Inquiry' into child abuse and family violence in Aboriginal communities found that information sharing and exchange between agencies, both individual and general, could potentially have saved a teenager's life.

3.7 Improve lives

Spatial information technology is increasingly being applied to the management of health care, with 'location' as a key element in understanding where services are needed most. It enables remote monitoring and remote specialist intervention. It helps prevent errors in the prescription of drugs; the tracking of patient movements within and between medical facilities; and the location or monitoring of the movement of assets and equipment. At a public health level, spatial information helps us to understand the relationships between disease and location; the effect of the environment on health; the location of health services; the take up of those services; and the investigations about incidence of disease.

3.8 Protect the community

In 2006 a 38 year old man was pulled over by a Western Australian policeman for failing to pay for petrol. Following a struggle where the officer was badly injured, the man

was shot dead. The officer did not have information about the suspect's violent history, or that he was a person of interest in a double murder of two sisters in Victoria. The National Police Reference System (NPRS) has since been released by CrimTrac to provide a consolidated view of the profiles of persons of interest nationwide.

3.9 Existing barriers to information sharing

Although the need for information sharing between Australian governments has become clear, as the examples on the previous page demonstrate, it does not necessarily mean information is being shared.

Currently, there are a number of barriers to open information sharing between governments that need to be overcome, and these are:

- leadership;
- the absence of a clear value proposition;
- information management practices;
- privacy and accountability; and
- a resistant culture.

These are not insurmountable challenges and can be overcome with a national strategy that applies common and clear standards for how information can be shared, without impacting an agency's compliance with the range of State, Territory and Commonwealth privacy laws.

Cross-jurisdictional consultations indicate that information sharing is working well in some areas such as the criminal (e.g. Crimtrac) and spatial sectors (e.g. PSMA Pty Ltd)². However, there still remains a fragmented "by accident" approach to information sharing in many sectors of the public service.

The common barriers to information sharing identified by agency representatives are explained below.

3.10 Leadership (political and senior executive levels)

It has become clear that information sharing will not work effectively, without the support and direction from the senior ranks of all tiers of government. This is particularly true where executives focus on protecting agency information as a priority and are not aware of the benefits of sharing this information with other agencies and levels of

2 PSMA Pty Ltd (formerly Public Sector Mapping Agencies) is an unlisted public company limited by shares and owned by the state, territory and Australian governments

3 Overview

government where it is legitimate to do so. In this case, it makes it difficult to collaborate across agencies and jurisdictions.

Competing agenda and differing goals across, and within, the three tiers of government make it difficult to gain cohesive support for information sharing from public sector leaders.

3.11 The absence of clear value proposition

Information is often gathered by an agency for a particular purpose without recognition that it may be useful to another part of the same agency, or another agency or jurisdiction. In some cases, agencies or jurisdictions can be burdened with the costs of developing particular information databases, when most of the benefits will accrue to another agency using that information, in situations where opportunities for re-use are recognised and the agencies or jurisdictions are not bound by legislation that inhibits information sharing.

Often cost-recovery policies covering information being provided to other users means the costs can be too high for a secondary user to maximise the value of the information that already exists. Conversely, there are information assets and the associated intellectual property that are undervalued and shared without any conditions covering the use and re-use of that information source.

3.12 Information management practices

The absence of a common approach to information management practices makes pragmatic aspects of information sharing more difficult. Current information management practices include:

- the custodianship and interoperability of data sets;
- the use of standards;
- a common language;
- discoverability;
- an understanding the issues of intellectual property; and
- how licensing can help with the management and maintenance of valuable information assets.

There is also an absence of a whole-of-government training program for the practice of information management. This leads to the inconsistent application of the interoperability frameworks, information management principles, making information sharing much more difficult as data sets can often be incompatible.

3.13 Privacy and accountability

As the Australian Law Reform commission noted in its review of the federal Privacy Act:

“...Australian privacy laws are multi-layered, fragmented and inconsistent.”³

The federal *Privacy Act 1988* provides eleven ‘Information Privacy Principles’ and ten ‘National Privacy Principles’.

With different state legislative arrangements for privacy, a consistent approach to sharing information becomes difficult.

The complexity of privacy laws often results in the default response to requests for information (that might be considered sensitive) as: “We cannot share our information because of privacy laws.” This response is often given instead of determining (through the appropriate channels) whether the information can, in fact, be shared.

3.14 Non-sharing Culture

From the consultation conducted it has been identified that there is still a culture of ‘information is power’ that results in the defensive protection of an organisation’s information assets. Information policy is often developed for one sole purpose and this can prevent the use and re-use of that information for other purposes.

Added to this is the fact that knowledge management practices are poorly defined and applied. This is due to capability and skills in this area not being either developed or sustained across and with governments.

There is also a generational divide in terms of attitudes towards information sharing. Younger generations have grown up in a world where the information they need is readily available and easily shared, whereas, older generations have generally not experienced or adopted such sharing approaches. For example, social networking is an excellent example of information sharing that is producing innovation and many governments are now using social networks to gain support from citizens, understand their needs and have citizens help resolve government issues.

3 Source: For Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice, May 2008

3 Overview

Strategic Intent

4 Strategic Intent

4.1 Purpose

The intent of this strategy (NGISS) is to foster greater access by Australian governments to relevant, appropriate, accurate and reliable public sector information.

The National Government Information Sharing Strategy (NGISS) provides all levels of government with a common and considered approach to sharing information with each other. A number of benefits to government can be demonstrated by the consistency this provides, such as:

Benefit to governments	Benefit to the public
Contributing to improved service delivery to the Australian public.	Citizens get access to the right government services more easily and quickly.
Gains in efficiency and effectiveness through reduction in repetition of information collection and management.	Citizens' contact details can be updated by one department and shared with others, saving time in having to register in multiple locations for government services.
Improved capability for evidence-based policy and decision-making.	Public services are provided where they are most needed.
Better informed cross-jurisdictional initiatives between Australian governments.	Making it easier for the public to access different government services, across all levels of government.
Improved transparency of government practices.	Providing citizens with a better idea of how government manages their information and its business.
Enhanced communication across government and related sectors.	Citizens will not have to navigate the different areas and levels of government before they can access vital government services.
Greater confidence in the data quality and accessibility.	Services are provided to the right person, at the right time, in the right place.
Increase understanding of diverse government operations.	Citizens have a better idea of which part of government to approach for which service.

The NGISS is not a simple initiative; it requires many components to deliver a simple objective – more efficient management of government information. This strategy delivers the guidance needed for the public sector to develop and activate a considered plan covering how information is shared, by whom, with what authority and for what purposes.

4.2 Background

This National Government Information Sharing Strategy (NGISS) has been commissioned by the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Online and Communication Council (OCC) in July 2007. Information sharing and interoperability was identified as an item of interest on the agenda of each of COAG's 42 ministerial councils.

The NGISS is to provide:

“...a standardised approach to information sharing to support the delivery of government services to the Australian community. The expectation is that the national strategy can be used by all portfolio areas at all levels of government.”⁴

Australian governments hold vast amounts of both paper and electronic information. It is evident that there is a need to share information across traditional program and jurisdictional boundaries. For example, taking a national approach to water management to protect this valuable and scarce resource into the future requires state jurisdictions to share information with the Commonwealth and one another. Within federal boundaries, programs such as ‘Social Inclusion’ highlight the same need for information to be shared for the benefit of the broader community. The ability to easily share information is an imperative for governments and agencies to operate together for better policy outcomes and improved service delivery.

Most Government information deals with different aspects of the same subject. In human services, for example, information about health, education, welfare, travel and justice issues exist at both program and individual levels. This is mirrored in business, regulatory, environmental and security services.

Public sector information is recognised internationally as a powerful resource for governments. Reviews such as ‘The Power of Information’⁵ are being undertaken to explore the concept of improving government service delivery through better information sharing. Broad access to information assets across government is a key to improving capability within the public service, supporting evidence-based policy, finding service delivery efficiencies and maintaining effective outcomes.

The NGISS has been developed by the Cross Jurisdictional Chief Information Officer Committee (CJCIOC) with the Department of Finance and Deregulation through the

4 Source: Online and Communications Council, June 2007.

5 Source: United Kingdom - The Power of Information: an independent review by Ed Mayo and Tom Steinberg, June 2007.

4 Strategic Intent

Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), acting as the lead jurisdiction in the development of this national strategy.

The Cross Jurisdictional Interoperability Working Group (CJIWG) has undertaken consultations with its corresponding jurisdictions and provided advice on the strategy.

4.3 Scope

The primary focus of the NGISS is providing a foundation for information sharing between all levels of Australian government (federal, state, and local).

- It is expected that this will be achieved by identifying the best practices, policies, tools, advice, and making this available to all Australian governments.
- Government expects it will realise improvements in service delivery to its customers, citizens, businesses and communities, by providing a consistent and coherent foundation for information sharing.

The secondary focus for the NGISS will be to provide strategic intelligence to government to support effective, evidence-based decision-making.

The NGISS is focused on the sharing of information held by all Australian governments (federal, state and local) for use within and across agencies and jurisdictions.

This strategy recognises there are examples of, and benefits to be gained from the successful sharing of information between the public sector and selected third parties e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)'s approach to providing census information free to the Australian public and to governments.

Information sharing with third parties outside of Australian governments is out of scope for this strategy.

4.4 Objectives

The strategy will be implemented with reference to the following objectives:

- Make it easy for the public to get access to government services⁶.
- Improve governments' approaches to evidence-based policy and decision-making.
- Assist governments to deliver shared services to the community.
- Strengthen the agility and responsiveness of Australian governments to meet changing needs.
- Manage government information as a strategic asset, providing more efficient and effective use of it.

4.5 Vision statement

The National Government Information Sharing Strategy offers the opportunity to unlock the engine room of government and improve the delivery of services to the Australian community.

Using NGISS will ensure the right service is delivered to the right citizen at the right time, by applying evidence based policy, decision-making and service delivery based on the best available information.

Timely, reliable, and appropriate information sharing is the foundation for good government and has the capacity to deliver a better way of life for all Australians.

6 In the annual e Government satisfaction surveys, Australians' Use of and Satisfaction with e-Government Services (undertaken by the Australian Government Information Management Office), people have repeatedly requested simple access to government information and services as well as more personalised services through a principal online entry point. They are frustrated by the need to visit multiple websites to get information and services that are relevant to them.

4 Strategic Intent

Principles

5 Principles

5.1 Information sharing principles

Information is a valuable asset and as such, needs to be managed as a strategic resource by government. To ensure successful information sharing, adherence to the following principles is essential. These principles aim to ensure delivery of the right services, to the right people, at the right time, at the right place, through information that is:

- Provide leadership
- Demonstrate value
- Act collaboratively
- Establish clear governance
- Establish custodianship guidelines
- Build for interoperability
- Use standards-based information
- Promote information re-use
- Ensure privacy and security

To make it easier for governments to build an information sharing framework, based on NGISS, a number of collaborative tools and techniques have already been created, or are being created to make this process as simple and easy as possible. These tools are outlined further in this document. Having these tools also provides a standard approach to creating information sharing systems.

In this way, implementing NGISS is a combination of the application of the following principles plus the use of the suggested range of tools and techniques provided to address each principle.

5.2 Provide leadership

The sharing of information in a legal and appropriate way requires strong and deliberate leadership. A top-down approach to the sharing of information from Ministers and Senior Executives provides the political will and support to information sharing initiatives.

Recognition and reward for those who actively participate in information sharing will foster a more open and collaborative culture within, and across, agencies and jurisdictions. This approach will, ultimately, deliver greater benefits to governments as a whole in cost-efficiencies and improved service delivery.

Application

Endorsement and promotion of the information sharing principles at senior management levels means that information sharing has to be included as a goal in organisational strategic plans.

Information management and exchange initiatives need to be adequately funded to ensure they continue to deliver ongoing benefits to governments and the public. To ensure information exchange continues to demonstrate value, sponsors and steering groups must remain focused on the outcomes of sharing information and longer term value.

Agencies should facilitate whole-of-government approaches to information management through inter-departmental communication and collaboration. Representatives need to build trust and respect for other agency and cross-jurisdictional missions. Inter-departmental committees and cross-jurisdictional coordination mechanisms provide a platform to do this.

Effective collaboration between agencies and across governments requires a formal and agreed approach to information sharing. Endorsement of collaboration documentation requires high level agreement and ongoing support of any agreed arrangements for information sharing.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
National Collaboration Framework	Australia Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Updated January 2009
Spatial Strategic Plan 2007-2010	National Spatial and Information Management (NSIM) working group, Attorney-General's Department (AGD)	Published August 2007
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006

5 Principles

5.3 Demonstrate value

To gain support, information sharing initiatives must demonstrate a net benefit for government.

Agencies will not only need to identify the return on investment, but also the potential gain in efficiencies and effectiveness of government service delivery as a whole. The benefits may be both tangible e.g. return on investment to government, and intangible; e.g. the increased well-being of the people receiving the service.

Application

The purpose of information sharing activity needs to be clear. Reasons to share may vary from a reduction in repetition to the ability for others to add value to the information being shared.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
Spatial Strategic Plan 2007-2010	National Spatial and Information Management (NSIM) working group, Attorney-General's Department (AGD)	Published August 2007

5.4 Act collaboratively

Australian governments can no longer sustain agencies operating in silos. A new culture of collaboration is required. Custodians of public sector information need to shift to finding reasons why they must and can share information.

Governments must work collaboratively, but also need to take into account privacy, confidentiality and security requirements, as well as maintaining appropriate accountability of the custodians of the information assets. A better understanding of these issues and how to overcome them will lead to governments remaining compliant with legislative requirements, while being flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the Australian community.

Application

Agencies will need to identify key information sets over which they have primary responsibility and custodianship. This will help to identify the information resources that can be shared and how best to do this.

Partnerships will need to be developed to enable information sharing. In unearthing these partnerships, agencies will need to consider how to improve their operational effectiveness and create opportunities for information re-use.

Partnerships need to be formalised by developing strong agreements that cover the terms under which information is to be exchanged, particularly in relation to governance and conditions of use arrangements.

Maintaining a focus on the long-term productivity and efficiency benefits to be gained from sharing information requires united leadership, and the clear identification of projected benefits in business plans and other organisational performance measures. Financial and non-financial benefits of sharing may not be realised in the short-term. However, with united leadership the will to collaborate will continue, which will eventually deliver stronger, long-term benefits to the public and to government.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
National Collaboration Framework (NCF)	Australia Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Updated January 2009
GovDex	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	In operation
Data access and management agreement	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC) and National Land and Water Resources Audit (NLWRA)	Signed in 2001
National Government Information Licensing Framework	CJCIOC /Queensland Department of Treasury	Available from April 2009 at http://www.gilf.gov.au

5.5 Establish clear governance

The management of shared information is as important as the information itself. Appropriate governance arrangements for information sharing must be clearly defined and applied consistently across government. Users of data require appropriate authority and formal agreements to clarify the conditions of use covering the access to information.

5 Principles

Application

Governance documentation should include, but not be limited to, accountabilities, responsibilities and processes associated with:

- authority and oversight;
- delivery of outcomes and milestones;
- policy parameters;
- relevant standards and processes;
- coordination and integration of information;
- instructions regarding information conditions of use e.g. copyright, licensing etc;
- dispute and disengagement processes;
- performance measurement criteria; and
- alignment with other sharing initiatives.

Agencies will be encouraged to use the National Collaboration Framework (NCF) to ensure consistency across government. To aid in the ongoing improvement of the National Collaboration Framework documentation agencies and jurisdictions have been consulted to identify current and proposed use of the framework and suggested improvements to the NCF.

Privacy requirements and legislative compliance need to be considered by all levels of government when sharing information. It is important that the requirement for the sharing of information is clearly defined.

Government information custodians need to develop a clear understanding of the privacy framework and use this knowledge as a tool in overcoming the perception that privacy is a barrier.

Tools

Element and responsibility	Responsibility	Status
National Collaboration Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Updated January 2009
National Government Information Licensing Framework	Cross Jurisdictional Chief Information Officers Committee/Queensland Department of Treasury	Available from April 2009 at http://www.gilf.gov.au
Data access and management agreement	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC) and National Land and Water Resources Audit	Signed in 2001

5.6 Establish custodianship guidelines

Custodians need to be appointed for information sets and understand their role, accountabilities and responsibilities for information sharing to be a success.

Confidence in the quality and administration of information will grow where the management, use, development, maintenance and release of information is being correctly managed by the appointed custodians.

Effective custodianship of an information data set implies that the information is provided from a trusted source – or a ‘single point of truth’. Establishing this trusted source, through a robust information sharing agreement, will further promote information re-use.

Application

The identification and consistent application of a best practice model of custodianship policy for government is a requirement of the NGISS.

A ‘create once, use many’ approach will need to be taken to information, where applicable. A strong understanding of the concepts of custodianship will provide the confidence for public service officers to be able to determine where and when this approach makes sense.

Custodianship roles and responsibilities will need to be defined within the collaboration agreement documentation. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring accuracy, comprehensiveness, security and privacy;
- managing the acquisition of the information;
- addressing integration issues;
- ensuring compliance with relevant standards;
- developing metadata; and
- managing the maintenance, access, use and distribution of the information.

5 Principles

Tools

Element and responsibility	Responsibility	Status
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
ANZLIC Custodianship Guidelines	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC)	Published April 1998
Register of Strategic Information (ROSI)	Queensland Government	Established 2002

5.7 Using standards-based information

For information sharing to be cost-effective, efficient and possible, the creation, storage and maintenance of information must adhere to relevant standards. The consistent application of relevant standards gives assurance to users and providers that the information is 'fit for purpose' and implies a certain level of quality. The application of standards fosters an environment of trust and dependability across government, providing a reduction in duplication of effort and re-work.

Application

During the establishment phase, information sharing initiatives need to investigate the relevant standards for the information to be shared.

Agencies will need to perform a quality check of their key information catalogue. Research on the relevant standards for the information assets should be undertaken and applied.

When considering which standards to apply to information, the use of Australian standards should first be explored. If the relevant Australian standards are not available, international (ISO) standards should be used. If none of the existing standards apply, and they are required, new standards will need to be established and endorsed by custodians and users.

The public sector must continue to educate all employees involved in the lifecycle of its information assets about standards and practices for information management per the Information Management Principles.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
Australian Government Architecture	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published mid 2007
Australian Spatial Data Infrastructure	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC)	Launched in 1998, reviewed in 2001. Ongoing development of standards.
AGLS Metadata Element Set v1.3	National Archives of Australia (NAA)	Published Dec 2003 and is also recognised by Standards Australia as AS5044
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
National Standards Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office	Endorsed in December 2008

5.8 Build for interoperability

Improving the capability of government agencies and jurisdictions to confidently manage and exchange information is critical to achieving a connected government.

Information custodians must have the ability to transfer and use standards-based information in a uniform and efficient manner across multiple organisations and information technology systems. The proper management and sharing of information across agency boundaries will result in information being used more efficiently and effectively.

Interoperability of information will help to optimize the flow of information. Increasing the flow of information is seen as a key driver to stimulating innovation within the Australian economy, as stated in the Innovation Review 2008.

Application

To enable agencies to maintain the ability to transfer and use information consistently and efficiently, they will be supported by use of the Interoperability Frameworks

5 Principles

(information, process and technical) provided by AGIMO. It is essential that information interoperability be addressed in the planning stages of any information sharing initiative. This could help to identify any potential uses for the information by other agencies or identify where another agency may hold the information required.

Agencies will need to apply the relevant standards relating to the specific interoperability needs of their particular sector of government, e.g. education or health, given there are so many different types of interoperability standards in existence. Agencies should adopt standards and definitions for recording information so that it can be easily shared.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
Australian National Data Service (ANDS)	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR)	Proposal Paper (Nov07) at: http://www.pfc.org.au/twiki/pub/Main/Data/TowardstheAustralianDataCommons.pdf Establishment Project Jan-Jun08.
Privacy principles	Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPM)	In <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>
Statement of IP Principles for Australian Government agencies	Attorney-General's Department (AGD)	Published July 2008
Guide to Digital Rights Management 2002	Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE)	Published in 2002
National Government Information Licensing Framework (NGILF)	Cross Jurisdictional Chief Information Officers Committee/Queensland Department of Treasury	Available from April 2009 at http://www.gilf.gov.au
Data access and management agreement	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC) and National Land and Water Resources Audit (NLWRA)	Signed in 2001

5.9 Promote information re-use

Establishing a single point of truth builds confidence and trust. Overall improvements in efficiency can be achieved from a reduction in duplication and the re-use of trusted information. Information re-use benefits from the use of common tools and centrally-coordinated standards and terminology. By applying these tools governments can develop consistent best practice methods.

Measuring the value of information is a difficult obstacle to overcome. Placing a value on information is a step towards managing information as a strategic asset and displaying the value of information re-use to government as a whole.

Application

Agencies need to investigate the conditions of use they should apply to the different elements of their information catalogue e.g. legislation, classification, freedom of information and licensing requirements. Agencies should not share information just because they can; a clearly defined requirement for the re-use of the information will need to be shown.

With a single point of truth being the trusted source of information, agencies need to avoid duplication of maintenance costs and activities. The application of clear governance and custodian rules provides government with the ability to re-use information with confidence.

Innovative ways to re use government information such as the aggregation of a number of different sets of information should also be considered.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
Information Interoperability Framework (AGIMO)	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
ANZLIC Custodianship Guidelines	Australia and New Zealand Spatial Information Council (ANZLIC)	Published April 1998
AGLS Metadata Element Set v1.3	National Archives of Australia (NAA)	Published Dec 2003 and is also recognised by Standards Australia as AS5044

5 Principles

5.10 Ensure privacy and security

Privacy and security requirements must be met, but should not become the inhibitor for limiting shared access to information when it is permissible to do so.

Establishing the requirement for information sharing is a very important step to maintaining the privacy and security of that information, rather than simply sharing because it is possible. Whether information is personally-identifying or not, governments must be able to demonstrate to the Australian public that the relevant protections are in place, the privacy laws are being met, and that the process of sharing is covered by transparent and publicly-available guidelines.

Application

Privacy is a primary consideration for information re-use. However, with a greater understanding of the entire privacy framework, agencies will be able to approach privacy as an opportunity rather than a barrier to sharing information, for the broader public good.

Tools

Element	Responsibility	Status
Information Interoperability Framework	Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO)	Published April 2006
Privacy principles	Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPM)	In <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>

Implementation of the NGISS

6 Implementation of the NGISS

6.1 Strategic direction

Endorsement of the NGISS by the Online Communications Council (OCC) provides the direction for all jurisdictions to adopt the information sharing principles contained within this strategy. Adoption of the principles will require each jurisdiction to contribute to various activities and the development of tools.

6.2 Implementation plan

The implementation plan identifies activities relevant to each of the key areas of focus listed in the following pages.

It is recognised that the following list of suggested activities is not complete and is further developed in the implementation plan endorsed by the CJCIOC. It does, however, provide an overview of the types of activities to enable successful information sharing across agencies and jurisdictions. The implementation plan clearly outlines how the NGISS will be delivered, managed and communicated across all jurisdictions and agencies.

Key Areas of Focus

7 Key Areas of Focus

7.1 Awareness raising activities

Information education

A modest education program for government employees involved in the information lifecycle, such as policy developers, business analysts and information custodians, needs to be developed. The program will need to cover standards and practices for information management, per the Information Management Principles (Information Interoperability Framework). Investigation into current tertiary courses on business informatics and their relevance will be required.

There are many representatives from the agencies and jurisdictions that will play an important role in the education plan by providing direction in their field of expertise, such as privacy, licensing and copyright, legislative requirements and technology.

Privacy education

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC)'s Privacy framework will need to be further publicised. A privacy education programme for government employees would assist them to develop a clear understanding of the privacy framework and use this knowledge as a tool.

Communication Plan

Some communication and marketing of the NGISS will be necessary to ensure all jurisdictions and agencies are aware of the implications and actions expected of them. As lead jurisdiction, AGIMO will work with the information sharing champions to develop the plan.

Agency and jurisdiction heads will need to know how the NGISS will impact their business and long-term strategic plans.

7.2 Improving governance

Information Governance

Each agency will need to establish, or review where they already exist, information governance documentation, including internal and external information sharing policies, re-use policies and accountabilities.

Standards Governance

The National Standards Framework (NSF) which is endorsed by the Cross Jurisdictional Chief Information Officers committee (CJCIOC) and the Online and Communications Council (OCC) authorises the Australian Government Information Management Office

(AGIMO) to administer the framework. The framework enables the authorising of whole-of-government information standards.

Custodianship Guidelines

A whole-of-government definition of custodianship is to be established and agreed to by the Cross Jurisdictional CIO Committee (CJCIOC) and Australian Government CIO Committee (CIOC). The role, accountabilities and responsibilities of custodians will need to be addressed.

7.3 Management and planning

Strategic planning

At the next opportunity in the business planning cycle, each agency will need to consider how the information sharing vision and principles can be addressed on an ongoing basis. Plans need to show measurable success criteria, accountability and be able to cascade through to individual performance assessments where applicable. Linkages will need to be made to show how sharing will be encouraged through the use of incentives.

Information Sharing Champions

The nomination and appointment of an information sharing champion for each jurisdiction will be required to guide agencies through information sharing issues and provide continued support and drive. Champions will establish communities of practice in their jurisdiction to meet regularly to facilitate outcomes, as well as be part of a national community of practice with the other champions.

Capability Gap Analysis

A full analysis of the existing information sharing capabilities among jurisdictions and agencies is required to determine areas of best practice, model documentation and technology leaders so that they can be further developed and used more widely. Future investment in developing capabilities on a national scale needs to be identified.

Management of Intellectual Property/Copyright/Licensing

The management of the intellectual property, copyright and licensing requirements of government information is a key focus for a number of agencies and jurisdictions at present. AGIMO will continue to be involved in the consultations with lead agencies such as Australian Government Attorney-General's Department and the Queensland Department of Treasury in relation to this matter.

Initiatives such as the Government Information Licensing Framework (GILF) and National Government Information Licensing Framework (NGILF) will play important roles in guiding Australian governments in the licensing of government information.

7 Key Areas of Focus

7.4 Enabling tools

National Collaboration Framework (NCF)

The use of the NCF should become common practice for agencies to establish formal arrangements for information exchange (as well as shared service arrangements). To aid in the ongoing improvement of the National Collaboration Framework documentation agencies and jurisdictions have been consulted to identify current and proposed use of the framework and suggested improvements to the NCF.

Common business processes

The use of standardised business processes for agencies should become common practice.

This will help to create more streamlined and consistent service delivery from government agencies to their customers. AGIMO is coordinating the research into common business processes on behalf of the Australian Government Business Process Transformation Committee (BPTC).

Information sources catalogue

Agencies will need to catalogue the key information sets they are responsible for maintaining. It will be useful to have a single reference point for such resources and to have them labelled as 'used by the custodian agency' and/or 'used by other agencies'.

Information re-use

Tools will need to be further developed to create opportunities for information re-use. Tools for conditions of use, such as information licensing, will need to be progressed. The CJIOC will progress the validation phase of the National Government Information Licensing Framework (NGILF) as well as consider alternative options.

Administration

8 Administration

8.1 Support and administration

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities need to be established for the ongoing support of the NGISS.

There will be a need for a central coordination function for managing the needs of such a complex initiative. AGIMO will contribute to the successful delivery of the NGISS by ensuring the completion of such tasks as the;

- coordination of ongoing consultations with agencies and jurisdictions;
- coordination of meetings with key stakeholders and working groups;
- coordination of information sharing champions and subject matter experts;
- coordination of the information sharing activities and case studies – collection, collation and presentation;
- coordination of education and communication plans;
- secretariat role to the governing working groups and committees;
- reporting requirements for all stakeholders;
- general support requirements for agencies and jurisdictions; and
- collation of gap analysis information.

8.2 Funding

Appropriate allocation of resources and funds to ensure the administration activities are undertaken will be essential to building confidence in the NGISS.

8.3 Evaluation plan

It is essential that an evaluation plan is developed in the first phase of implementation. The evaluation plan and appropriate tools need to meet the expectations of all stakeholders, and is vital to the success of the NGISS. The evaluation plan and assessment will need to be developed and conducted by an impartial agency or business, with AGIMO coordinating the administrative requirements of the evaluation.

There will be a requirement for a number of processes such as, monitoring, reporting and reviewing. A central repository of all identified information sharing activities will also be required, and consideration will be given to the use of the existing capability of GovDex.

Case Studies

9 Case Studies

A suite of case studies and tracking of early adopters of the NGISS principles needs to be compiled and published. This will assist agencies to understand the lessons learned from previous experiences and gain ideas of how to overcome seemingly immovable obstacles.

Opportunities for case studies may be selected from, but not limited to, the following list:

9.1 Implemented case studies

- Strong Families – Department of Child Protection West Australia
- Australian National Data Service (ANDS) - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System (NEVDIS)
- National Police Reference System (NPRS)
- National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)

9.2 Current case studies

- National Common Operating Picture (COP) (a project of the National Spatial and Information Working Group – a working group of the National Counter Terrorism Committee)
- Water Information (Bureau of Meteorology)
- National Address Management Framework (NAMF)
- National Statistical Service (NSS) –ABS

9.3 Future case studies

Information sharing activities will continue to evolve and it is important that the NGISS recognises relevant future initiatives.

- Social Inclusion – Commonwealth Social Spatial Data Platform (CSSDP)
- Missing Persons Scoping study (CrimTrac)
- National Government Information Licensing Framework (NGILF)
- National Sealed Source Register – Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
- Platform for Environmental Modelling Support (PEMS)
- National Environmental Information System (NEIS)
- Health information (National e-Health Transition Authority - NEHTA)



Glossary

Glossary

Acronym	
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
AGOSP	Australian Government Online Service Portal
ANDS	Australian National Data Service – from the Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARPANSA	National Sealed Source Register – Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
CJCIOC	Cross Jurisdictional Chief Information Officers Committee (a Committee set up under the auspices of the Ministerial Online and Communication Council)
CJIWG	Cross Jurisdiction Interoperability Working Group
CIOC	Chief Information Officers Committee
COP	National Common Operating Picture - a project of the National Spatial and Information Working Group – a working group of the National Counter Terrorism Committee
CSSDP	Social Inclusion – Commonwealth Social Spatial Data Platform
GILF	Government Information Licensing Framework
NAMF	National Address Management Framework
NCF	National Collaboration Framework
NCRIS	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy
NEHTA	Health information (National e-Health Transition Authority)
NEIS	National Environmental Information System
NEVDIS	National Exchange of Vehicle and Driver Information System
NGILF	National Government Information Licensing Framework
NGISS	National Government Information Sharing Strategy
NPRS	National Police Reference System
NSS	National Statistical Service –ABS
OCC	Online Communications Council
PEMS	Platform for Environmental Modelling Support

