Hi DAT Act Review Team

It was great working in your office from 2021 to 22 (when it was in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet before moving to the Department of Finance). It is great to see the progress made with the DataPoints newsletter, the DATA Scheme activities, and the webinar sessions. Keep it up, great work

I am interested in making a submission for the Statutory Review of the DAT Act 2022 and answering some key consultation points for discussion. I hope you made yourself a cup of tea or coffee, because it is going to be a long read. I apologise in advance, but I hope it helps to add value with the consultation process with the Statutotry Review.

SR1) Has the operation of the DAT Act advanced its object (objectives)?
a) In short, overall, yes, the operations of the DAT Act have advanced on its objectives.
b) Looking at the Annual Reports, it is good to see the Scheme "At a glance', as it raises the question of how many of the custodians and users are from the Federal Government with a breakdown and whether the Scheme has been reached to the major/principle 16 APS agencies, and how many of the 194 entites listed in the PGPA Flipchat are part of the DATA Scheme. Is it evident that this is mostly APS/Federal Agencies, with state and territory government agencies? So, it would be good to know if it's like 80% are Federal Government and 20% state government agencies, and 25% of the APS are onboarded. Looking at the recent DataPoints (1st May 2025), it does provide another dashboard of performance, but it seems inconsistent with the Annual Reports. The Dataplace website (link) provides the Data Custodians in alphabetical order, but again, it would be good to have a data visualisation version of it (Power BI). In the Statutory Review document, it does say 34 entites being 17 Commonwealth entities, but who are they and what benefit have they received.
c) This might be a lazy question to ask for the ONDC, but where can I find out that the objectives of the PC 2017 Report align with ONDC's objectives, and what were the metrics and what is the % of achievement so far. I guess that 'At a Glance' and DataPoint newsletter cover the quantitative information, but it is hard to find the answer to this question. When I am on the ONDC website, I cannot find a link to the PC 2017 Report, and I have tried the Sitemap.

d) Focusing on Section 3 (Objects) in the DAT Act 2022:
>>(a) Serve the public interest by promoting better availability of public sector data -> yes, for DataPoints, Annual Reports and various webpages on the ONDC site, but there is no visibility externally of the ONDC presence in the APS Data and Digital Professions community and not on GovTeams as a forum for data-sharing chats.
>>(b) Enable the sharing of public sector data consistently with the Privacy Act 1988 and appropriate security safeguards -> yes, it is publicly on the ONDC webpage. It is mentioned on the DATA Scheme placemat under the Privacy protections, and the National Data Advisory Council with Angelene Falk (OAIC Commissioner).
>>(c) Enhance integrity and transparency in sharing public sector data -> yes, it is via the Annual Reports that we see the performance and staffing info.

\>\>(d) Build confidence in the use of public sector data -> <mark>yes</mark>, under the Annual Priorities 2024-25.
\>\>(e) Establish institutional arrangements for sharing public sector data -> <mark>yes</mark>, it is evident in the [accreditation](#) page

SR2) Does the DAT Act improve information flows between public sector bodies and accredited entities?
<mark>Yes</mark>, the Data Availability and Transparency (DAT) Act aims to enhance information flows between public sector bodies and accredited entities. By facilitating better access to public data while ensuring privacy and security, the Act seeks to improve collaboration and data sharing. This can lead to more effective decision-making, better resource allocation, and the development of innovative solutions based on shared information. Ultimately, the DAT Act is intended to create a more transparent and efficient data ecosystem. With myself, looking at the APS Gazette, there has been good initatives of APS agencies, like ABS and AIHW, looking for data project managers with DSAs.

SR3) How does the DAT Act add value in the wider data sharing context?
a) <mark>Enhanced Access:</mark> By improving access to public data, the DAT Act empowers various stakeholders, including researchers, businesses, and non-profit organizations, to leverage data for their initiatives. This democratises information and fosters innovation.
b) <mark>Collaboration and Efficiency</mark>: The Act enhances collaboration between public sector bodies and accredited entities. This can lead to more efficient processes, as organisations can share resources and insights, minimising duplication of efforts and fostering a more integrated approach to problem-solving.
c) <mark>Informed Decision-Making</mark>: With improved access to reliable data, decision-makers can make more informed choices. The ability to analyse comprehensive data sets can lead to better resource allocation, targeted interventions, and ultimately, more effective policies and programs.
d) Privacy and Security: The DAT Act ensures that while data is made more accessible, privacy and security measures are prioritised. This balance builds trust among data providers and users, encouraging more entities to participate in data sharing initiatives.
e) <mark>Innovation and Economic Growth</mark>: The Act can spur innovation across various sectors by facilitating data sharing. Access to diverse datasets promotes the development of new technologies and solutions, contributing to economic growth and improved public services.
f) <mark>Transparency and Accountability</mark>: The DAT Act promotes transparency in government operations, which can enhance public trust. Making data available holds public institutions accountable and encourages responsible data management practices.

SR4) What changes could be made to the DAT Act or the DATA Scheme to make it more effective in facilitating access to, sharing and use of public sector data?
There are so many things that I would like to suggest, but it would be 'War and Peace' document, and I know the APS loves briefs, so I will keep it BLUF.

a) <mark>Encouragement of the Standardisation of Data Formats</mark> - giving that SAP with ERP is working across the 16 principle/parent APS agencies, like PM&C, AGD, Finance, Health, Home Affairs and Defence, there shouuld be and establishment of a uniform data format and protocols across these government agencies, which would simplify data sharing and improve interoperability. E.g. adopting widely recognised JSON and XML can make it easier to access data.
b) <mark>Feedback Mechanisms for data custodians, data intermediaries and data users</mark> (soft touch - desktop analysis) - I am aware of the ONDC website, Contact Us, you can submit

feedback via a form with details and files, however, providing feedback in my experience works with an invitation for a desktop analysis, as not many people might provide feedback, nor be aware of what type of feedback is possible. It is especially the fact that establishing mechanisms for user to provide feedback on data quality and accessibility (like via Data Sharing Agreements via Dataplace) can lead to continuous improvement. Like an on-the-spot feedback experience. Regular surveys and user forums can help agencies understand user needs and adjust the data offerings accordingly.

c) Alignment with the 2030 Data and Digital Strategy, DTA's Strategy, and other Department of Finance portfolio initiatives—it is not clear how the DATA Scheme is benefiting other WoAG initiatives. I think it would be good to have a PGPA Flipchart, structure, and other APS agencies' interactive datasets. I am happy to provide mine.

d) Better Visualisation of the DATA Scheme -> like Power BI being an interactive data visualisation, it would be good to have an interactive breakdown of the DAT Scheme. Again, At A Glance and DATA Scheme Activity is great as static reporting, but it would be good to have a publicly available monitoring toolset.

e) Benefits Management with the DATA Scheme - introducing incentives for agencies to share data, such as grants or recognition programs, could foster a culture of openness. It would be good to have some testimonials of how the DATA Scheme make the job for an APS public servant easier to get fit-for-purpose data from another agency.

SR5) Should the DAT Act 2022 be allowed to sunset?

a) In short, no, this would be detrimental to the objectives of the Productivity Commission Report into DAU 2017 to improve the use of public sector data.

b) The question is what would happen if the DATA Scheme products, like Data Sharing Agreements within Dataplace, were discontinued, and whether another section within the Department of Defence, like the Service Delivery Office, or the Australian Bureau of Statistics with its operations, like MADIP, would take ownership for the continuation of the Scheme. This would be a heavy administrative burden and costly, which would be counterproductive. So, it would cause uncertainty about what publicly available data is that would be free to share (in a Data Catalogue), and it would cause admin burdens.

c) Unless there is evidence in a report (like the Annual Report noted in s138 of the DAT Act) that indicates that the DATA Scheme with the Dataplace and Data Sharing Agreements are ineffective and inefficient (since the first anniversary of the Act in 2022), why would it need to be sunsetted/cease?

d) On the other hand, with the rapid advancements in technology (like AI and co-pilot with SAP + Microsoft), it is a double-edged sword. If the Data Scheme fails to keep pace with the emerging technologies for data management and transparency, it may be seen as outdated, warranting its sunset.

e) It is obvious, but the Office of Impact Analysis (PM&C) with sunsetting a legislative instruments, would have regulatory impact on various organisations. It is not clear in the consultation documents nor in the DAT Act 2022 would be the benefits and opportunities of sunsetting, and what would be disbenefits and issues of sunsetting the DAT Act.

SR6) Any other relevant matters (or anything else to add?)

a) With SR6 (sunset clause of s143 of DAT Act), it would be advised that if there are other recommendations in other submissions, to do a Bill. The Bill should either extend the sunset of the data sharing scheme (under the DAT Act for another five years, so instead of April 2027, it would be April 2032. This Bill should be done within the three-year period of the current government, in order for a smooth transition in the HoR and Senate, so possibly after the 12-month review period. So, I would say December 2026 at the latest, making in DAT Bill 2026.

Let me know if your team requires anything else from me. ██████████████████████
██ It's best to keep
APS agency colleagues in the loop. I hope for a bright future for the DAT Act 2022 and
the continuation of data sharing to promote innovation and continuous improvement!

Best Regards

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Association Qualifications:
JP: Justice of the Peace ACT
TM: Distinguished Toastmasters

Formal Education:
Innovation and Organisational Change (Online)
Tanner James: PRINCE2 Agile (Foundational)
ANU: Analytical Techniques for Policy Makers (National Security Colleague)
MBA: Mini-MBA in Public Sector Leadership
MPP: Master of Public Policy
BCom: Bachelor of Commerce
Diploma: Diploma of Government
Certificate IV in Government Investigations

Articles:
Read my article about harnessing data (visualisation, insights and reporting) in government
here!
I am part of Konnect with Data's Writer's Hub. Check out my profile here.