



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency



Chief Technology (Data) Officer
Digital Transformation Agency
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Taylor Black
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Dear Mr Black,

DTA Submission to the DAT Act Review

I note that our Chief Executive Officer, Chris Fechner met with Dr King on the 27/05/2025 to provide his feedback as part of the review of the Data Availability and Transparency Act (the 'Act') 2022. The following constitutes the feedback from the DTA as an agency, IT project board member of the Data Place, and supporter of the intent of the Act.

Thank you for the opportunity for the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) to provide feedback as part of the review of the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*. The DTA has been a strong advocate for the work of both the Department of Finance and the Office of the National Data Commissioner in its implementation of the DAT Act and supporting tools, and the DTA as an accredited user of the Dataplace.

While the objectives of the DAT Act are enviable, this submission will focus on 3 areas of the lived experience of implementing the DAT Act — adoption, clarity and technology — and how these 3 areas answer the Review's reference points of whether the DAT Act has advanced its objectives, the operation of the DAT Act, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Adoption

Since the introduction of the DATA Scheme, the DTA has received no requests for data under the DATA Scheme via Dataplace. However, during this period, the DTA has received data requests outside of the DATA Scheme. This may indicate a lack of adoption in the DATA Scheme.

The DTA has also taken steps to invest in and uplift adoption. For example, when establishing data sharing agreements with other Commonwealth entities, the DTA has attempted to drive agencies towards Dataplace but has not been successful, and as a result has no data sharing agreements on track to be registered on Dataplace.

In one case, referencing the DAT Act in a draft data sharing agreement has resulted in lengthy delays including re-writing of the agreement, indicating low satisfaction from some stakeholders with the operation of the Act.

Clarity

The supporting information and guidance around both the DAT Act and the DATA Scheme is unclear, and in many cases difficult to access, which may be contributing to the lack of adoption of the DATA Scheme.

When trying to negotiate with agencies around the DAT Act, the DATA Scheme, and use of Dataplace, there is no single source of guidance and interpretation, meaning users must navigate between the piece of legislation itself, limited information available on datacommisioner.gov.au and dataplace.gov.au, and internet searches that go beyond what is directly navigable on those websites. The guidance on what is and isn't exempt from the DATA Scheme is an example of this.

In this case, it may not be the DAT Act itself that is limiting the delivery of the Act's objectives, but instead the operation of the DAT Act through the guidance and support provided around the Act.

The clarity regarding the longevity of the DAT Act has potentially influenced the appetite for broadscale support of the scheme across government.

Technology

The technology infrastructure supporting the DAT Act and DATA Scheme has presented several challenges for adoption of the DATA Scheme.

Noting that Dataplace as an existing platform comes into the scope of the Digital Experience Policy on 1 July 2025, there are opportunities to review the Dataplace platform to ensure an ongoing seamless and user-friendly experience. In the DTA's experience, Dataplace specific roles and permissions are complex and not intuitive, limiting the efficiency of smaller agencies like the DTA managing activities within Dataplace.

The process for data sharing is unclear on the platform, with a lack of understanding from first-time users of what actions are to be undertaken in and out of the platform, such as the manual nature of data sharing.

The lack of data-sharing capability offered from the product (Dataplace) may impact the successful adoption and compliance with the DAT Act. Without the introduction of a simple and secure mechanism of negotiating data exchange between two entities, the Dataplace will continue as a product that assists only in the tracking of – even retrospectively for compliance – the data sharing process with little contribution to the value of data sharing.

This inefficiency may also discourage users from engaging with the DATA Scheme.

The DTA remains a staunch advocate of the objectives of the DAT Act, and should the decision is taken to continue the value and intent that the DAT Act represents past its sunset date, then the DTA will remain committed to assisting the Department of Finance and the Office of the National Data Commissioner in addressing these challenges. We would also welcome the opportunity to provide future guidance around an uplift of the digital experience of the product.

Regards,



Andrew Morrison

Chief Technology Officer and Data Officer
Digital Transformation Agency

Date: 29/05/2025