

To the Statutory Review of Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022.

From the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research.

University of Melbourne

We support the continuation of the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*.

We consist of over 60 research economists undertaking research for government and public sector agencies. We are heavy users of government data collated and curated through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. We believe data sharing should be standardised and streamlined.

Currently, every data custodian of a linked data set needs to give approval for the use of a database for research within the ABS DataLab. This is time consuming and wasteful when many requests are straightforward and use de-identified data in standard regression analysis.

Better and less costly data sharing can be done through better use of AI techniques to enable quicker and more accurate output vetting.

Custodians should be required to share in a timely manner unless there is a good reason not to. Authorised officers to be accountable for refusals. Ministerial discretion should be given to authorise sharing under the Act where it is in the national interest to do so

We believe the Government should enhance transparency around available databases, such as those created by the Australian Taxation Office, to enable researchers to develop projects based on a clear understanding of accessible data.

We support expanding the types of entities eligible to participate in the DATA Scheme to include all Australian organisations such as government services providers, research organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

When providing access to their data, custodians often require the right to review research findings prior to publication and to approve or deny their release. Whereas it is appropriate for custodians to review and comment on findings prior to publication, researchers should ultimately have the right to publish results that do not compromise privacy or breach data access agreements.

Professor Beth Webster | Director and Ronald Henderson Chair

Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research | Faculty of Business and Economics

Level 5, FBE Building, 111 Barry Street, Carlton

The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 Australia



melbourneinstitute.com | twitter.com/MelbInstUoM | facebook.com/BusEcoMelb