

22nd May 2025

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Dear Taylor,

UWA submission to the Statutory Review of the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statutory Review of the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022.

UWA is home to many highly acclaimed researchers, research centres and institutes which produce impacts across a broad research portfolio. Our research areas align directly with government priorities to deliver better outcomes for all in Western Australia and Australia. Our projects incorporate Indigenous research, and we work with government, industry and the community to develop and deliver our expertise and research as impactful outcomes.

Significant research at UWA is undertaken in direct partnership with State and Commonwealth agencies, supporting government policy and programs, and contributing to many critical infrastructure sectors within Australia, the security of Australia and its defence.

Access to Commonwealth government data is essential to UWA's continued research, both directly with, in support of, and providing appraisal of Australia's interests, and it was for this reason that UWA pursued Accredited User status under the Data Availability and Transparency Act (DATA) Scheme.

The application process for user accreditation was lengthy and resource intensive and began at UWA shortly after applications for organisations opened in August 2022. The application was submitted at the beginning of April 2023 and UWA received confirmation of accreditation a year later in April 2024. We would be supportive of the accreditation process being streamlined and simplified.

UWA is not an accredited data service provider so cannot comment on that experience.

As of 12th May 2025, there have been no requests by UWA researchers to access data via the scheme. This is due in part to the very small number of restricted datasets currently listed in Dataplace and that researchers are entering into alternative data sharing arrangements. We are concerned to hear that other accredited users' data sharing requests have been rejected by agencies and would support these decisions being made in a more timely and transparent way.

There are only 5 users associated with UWA as an organisation in Dataplace and includes authorised officers, Library staff associated with support, or the UWA researcher who participated in the User Research (UR) testing of the Australian Government Data Catalogue. This means that no UWA researchers have signed into Dataplace for its intended purpose.

We support the feedback and recommendations put forward in the Universities Australia submission which UWA has contributed to. In particular, the recommendation for a transparent, centralised Data Catalogue to promote the availability of datasets. At UWA, ABS data is heavily used by researchers. Currently, there is only one restricted ABS dataset listed in Dataplace. The remainder are openly accessible directly via the ABS site. One of the ABS datasets used by UWA researchers is Employee Earnings and Hours. In the record in the Australian Government Data Catalogue, the metadata is very limited and no access URL is provided, meaning researchers still need to view the ABS page for all the details. Data.gov.au and the Geoscience Australia Data and Publications Search provide much more comprehensive information about datasets than Dataplace and account for nearly all of the datasets. We support centralising metadata about datasets into Dataplace to significantly improve the ease of discoverability, access, and useability for researchers and drive higher take-up of the service