

GovAI

Whole of Government AI service platform – GovAI

Issue

What is the GovAI service and why has it only been quietly released through the APS Academy?

Headline Response

GovAI is a whole-of-government initiative led by Finance, currently being **piloted** to accelerate safe, sovereign, and scalable adoption of generative AI across the APS.

Public servants have **not** been using an onshore version of ChatGPT.

As part of preparation for official launch of GovAI, APS Academy has started programming training opportunities for APS staff.

GovAI is not in widespread production use at this time.

Facts and Figures

- GovAI is a pilot whole-of-government service platform designed for the APS to boost productivity, optimise workflows, and elevate service delivery through four key elements:
 - A catalogue of AI apps and a use case library
 - A shared AI technology environment
 - An interactive learning environment and knowledge hub
 - A collaboration space
- The APS AI framework is a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach to safely and responsibly deploy artificial intelligence across public service agencies.
- GovAI is intended for use by public servants to boost productivity, find efficiencies, and enable public servants to focus on higher value work that improves service delivery outcomes for Australians.

Contact: s22

Contact No: s22

Division: ICT

s 22

Cleared by: Peter Qui

Contact No: (02) 6215 1492

PDR Number: QB25-000119

s 22

- Participating agencies are guided along the way with a structured pathway to lead them from idea to production, supported by GovAI experts.
- The Department of Finance is well positioned to deliver GovAI, drawing on its strong record of delivering successful enabling whole-of-government services for the APS including GovTEAMS and GovCMS, and its ongoing stewardship of secure and trusted digital platforms that support collaboration, transparency and innovation across government.
- Over 400 APS participants engaged in the closed beta trial which commenced in May 2025 and continues through July. The trial includes testing of GovAI's tools and services.
 - GPT4o is currently only available for training purposes through the GovAI Interactive Learning Environment and as a backend capability for GovAI demonstration apps. Use of these apps has been limited to GovAI closed beta trial participants between May 16 and July 11.
- The program is already delivering tangible outcomes that accelerate safe and productive use of AI in public service work, including:
 - AI experimentation environments.
 - hands-on learning with Large Language Models (LLMs).
 - the Knowledge Hub that's more than just a website – it is a community helping APS staff at all levels build skills, share use cases, and stay up to date. Whether starting out or leading an AI project, the Hub provides the tools and support to succeed.
 - interactive training courses to uplift APS capability in generative AI.
- A shared technology hosting environment has been established, supporting both centrally hosted and agency-developed AI apps. This is helping to eliminate redundant technology infrastructure and duplicated effort across the APS. Instead of each agency building and maintaining siloed systems, teams can now leverage a common platform – saving time, reducing costs, and accelerating safe AI adoption.
- The pilot was delivered using existing departmental funding and resources.

Security

- GovAI ensures safety and sovereignty through a layered security model.

GovAI

- It is hosted onshore and aligned to the Information Security Manual of the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework.
- Technical controls include identity and access management, data loss prevention, and secure-by-design hosting. These are complemented by an interactive learning environment and continuous education for APS users, reinforcing responsible and AI use and compliance with government data handling obligations.

Safe and Responsible AI

- A suite of frameworks has been established to ensure the safe, lawful, and ethical deployment of AI across the APS. These frameworks collectively underpin the APS commitment to responsible innovation and public trust in AI-enable services:
 - The **National Framework for the Assurance of Artificial Intelligence in Government**, is a joint initiative by the Australian Government, state and territory governments. It incorporates legal and ethical principles such as transparency, accountability, privacy and contestability and aligns with Australia's AI Ethics Principles.
 - Agencies are encouraged to use the **AI Impact Assessment Tool** to identify risks and apply appropriate mitigations, ensuring transparency, accountability and human-centred values.
 - The **Pilot AI Assurance Framework**, developed by the Digital Transformation Agency supports agencies in evaluating AI use cases against key criteria such as fairness, reliability, privacy and contestability.

Policy Commitments

- N/A

Background

GovAI is a whole-of-government initiative led by the Department of Finance to accelerate the safe, sovereign, and scalable adoption of generative artificial intelligence (AI) across the Australian Public Service (APS). It is designed to uplift APS capability, streamline service delivery, and foster innovation in public sector operations.

The initiative was formally endorsed by the Minister for finance in May 2024 and is part of Finance's coordinated AI strategy and governance structure. It also aligns with broader efforts such as the AI in Government Taskforce, co-led by DTA and DISR, and Finance's own Copilot for Microsoft 365 trial.

GovAI is structured around three core service elements. First, the initiative provides a secure and scalable AI technology hosting platform which includes an isolated sandpit for experimentation and an interactive workspace where agencies can develop and deploy AI solutions. Second, it offers a centralised knowledge hub that houses training materials, guidance documents, and use-case examples tailored to varying levels of AI literacy within the public service. Third, GovAI fosters a community of practice – a collaborative network of APS practitioners who regularly share insights, updates, and best practices to strengthen collective capability.

GovAI will develop a cost recovery funding model, similar to Finance's other whole-of-government services, and is undergoing security assessments to meet ISM (Information Security Manual) standards.

The initial stage of the GovAI pilot was delivered using existing departmental funding and resources, with a total spend last financial year of \$2.222 million.

GovAI**Attachment A****Gov quietly launches onshore instance of GPT-4o for APS****Comes ahead of new pilot launch.**

The federal government has quietly launched a sovereign-hosted instance of OpenAI's GPT-4o for use by the Australian Public Service (APS).

The multimodal large language model was made available to select government agencies in recent months, according to a presentation published by the Australian Public Service Academy (APSA) [pdf].

The launch is one of several key artificial intelligence milestones reached across the Australian Public Service (APS) over the past six months, culminating in the formal commencement of a whole-of-government pilot program known as GovAI.

Led by the Department of Finance, the program aims to fast-track AI adoption within the public service, provide access to AI tools for all agencies and reduce duplication of resources and investment.

The program is currently in a closed beta phase with selected agencies but is expected to be expanded by November this year.

Since January this year, several "foundations" have been laid, including embedding a Microsoft-based AI hosting service within the APS-wide collaboration platform, GovTEAMS.

According to the presentation, several agencies have onboarded to the hosting service so far, while early scoping for Amazon-hosted AI services also commenced before the end of FY25.

A presentation timeline published by APSA reveals that the APS has rolled out a new general-purpose AI chat app for staff and developed two prototype applications.

The first, named the Assessment Assistant app, is designed to help staff gain initial insights into applications or submissions, such as grant proposals.

The other, known as the Knowledge Assistant app, aims to demonstrate how staff can use AI to query complex datasets, such as procurement rules.

Other foundation measures include developing high-level design documents for security-assessed applications and introducing templated apps to enable faster development for small and medium-sized agencies.

The program is being supported by a GovAI working group, which brings together technical experts from across government, as well as training on models including Gemini, Claude and GPT.

It is expected to be open to new AI models and hosting options by November.