

Have your say on Australia's first Open Government National Action Plan

The Australian Government has released a draft of Australia's first ever Open Government National Action Plan for public consultation. This is the final round of consultation in a year-long process to develop the National Action Plan.

The National Action Plan sets out an ambitious agenda for the next two years, focused on: transparency and accountability in business; open data and digital transformation; access to government information; integrity in the public sector; and public participation and engagement.

The creation of a National Action Plan is part of the commitment the Australian Government made when it became a member of the Open Government Partnership.

What is the Open Government Partnership?

The Open Government Partnership is an international initiative established in 2011 that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. There are 70 participating countries. More information can be found at www.opengovpartnership.org.

What action is the Government proposing to take?

This is Australia's first National Action Plan. It sets out the initial actions the Government will take to uphold the principles of open government, improve and build confidence in Australian institutions, and strengthen our democracy. A package of 14 commitments has been proposed across five themes, as set out on the following page.

How was the Plan developed?

Non-government stakeholders have been engaged in developing the draft Plan through a variety of consultation activities which started in November 2015. An Interim Working Group of senior public servants and non-government stakeholders was also established in August 2016 to inform the drafting of the Plan and the commitments.

What is the Government seeking feedback on and how do I provide feedback?

The focus of this round of consultation is on the details of the proposed commitments in the Plan (e.g. Are there potential implementation issues? Is the level of ambition appropriate?) Consultation was undertaken earlier in 2016 to seek ideas on potential commitments for the Plan.

The draft Plan and further information on its development (including details of the Interim Working Group) is available online at ogpau.govspace.gov.au. Public submissions close at 5pm on 14 November 2016, and can be made by emailing ogp@pmc.gov.au. Submissions will be published.

What happens next?

The Open Government Partnership sets deadlines for submitting National Action Plans. The Government will consider public comments and potential changes to the Plan, before submitting it before the end of 2016. There will be ongoing engagement with the public throughout implementation, and on the development of future National Action Plans.

National Action Plan commitments

i. Transparency and accountability in business

- Improve whistle-blower protections in the tax and corporate sectors.
- Consult on the details, scope and implementation of a register of beneficial ownership of companies.
- Work towards compliance with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to enhance disclosure of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining.

ii. Open data and digital transformation

- Work with the research, not-for-profit and private sectors to release high-value datasets and drive social and economic outcomes.
- Engage with the community and improve privacy risk management capability across government to build public trust around data sharing and integration.
- Deliver a whole-of-government digital transformation roadmap and a live dashboard measuring the performance of government services.

iii. Access to government information

- Consider options for reforms to the framework for managing and accessing government information (including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the *Archives Act 1983* and, where relevant, the *Privacy Act 1988*) to deliver a simpler and more coherent framework within the context of digital government.
- Improve understanding of the public's use of freedom of information by working with the states and territories to collect and publish uniform data.
- Improve the discoverability and accessibility of government data and information through central portals and digital platforms.

iv. Integrity in the public sector

- Work with the parliament and the public to investigate the conduct of the 2016 election, use of technology in elections and the framework of donations to political parties and other political entities.
- Strengthen our national anti-corruption and integrity framework, including regularly reviewing the jurisdiction and capabilities of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity and the Australian Federal Police's Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre.
- Undertake a public review of the Australian Government's compliance with the Open Contracting Data Standard.

v. Public participation and engagement

- Establish a permanent forum for dialogue with civil society to monitor implementation of the National Action Plan and inform the drafting of future National Action Plans.
- Develop a whole-of-government framework to improve public participation in government decision making for better policy development and service delivery.