

Open Data Strategy

2015–16

Prepared by: Corporate Communications, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

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Our goal

To provide Queenslanders with greater access to information about environment and heritage protection and provide opportunities for innovation, research and development opportunities through the provision of data-enabled services and products.

Our data

We collect, store and maintain a diverse range of datasets to support the delivery of environment and heritage protection services to the community. These datasets can be grouped into five main categories:

- Licencing and permitting
- Environmental management
- Environmental regulation
- Heritage
- Wildlife and ecosystems.

Our principles

We will assess and publish data in line with the following principles:

- **Government data will be available for open use:**
Open access to government data drives innovation and entrepreneurial activities. Where appropriate, data will be made available under the least restrictive licence allowing for its use and re-use in accordance with the Australian Government Open Licensing framework.
- **Government data will be available free:**
Government data, collected using public monies, belongs to the community. Unless cost has been prescribed by legislation or benefits the Queensland community and is approved by Cabinet, data will be made available free.
- **Government data will be in accessible formats and easy to find:**
Publishing data in different formats offers maximum flexibility of user experience and access. Where practicable, we will publish data in machine readable formats that can be downloaded, indexed, and searched by commonly used web applications. We aim to maintain data as fit-for-the-purpose for which it was collected
- **Government data will be released within set standards and accountabilities:**
As a department, we hold personal information about our clients that is not suitable for release. We will reduce risks associated with the public release of data by establishing a robust publication process to identify and protect personal and other confidential information in accordance with relevant legislative and other statutory and administrative frameworks.

Our release strategy

Our release strategy contains four main components:

- **Identification:**
We will proactively identify information assets by surveying departmental publications and business systems for underlying data sources, gathering information from business units about stand-alone data collections and engaging with stakeholders about their needs and interests.
- **Assessment:**
We will assess the suitability of data for release in accordance with relevant legislation, administrative instruments, policies and guidelines. The release of data will be prioritised according to its value to the public, such as allowing new products or services to be developed, increasing openness and transparency of government and its processes, and use by researchers or non-government organisations.

Not all data is suitable for release. The process of identifying and assessing data for publication acknowledges the need for it to be accessible to external audiences. Datasets subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations may be restricted or released in a modified form.

- **Publication:**
We will publish data in line with set standards and prioritised having regard to public interest; feedback from stakeholders; potential social or economic value; and ability to restore accountability in government, with the approval of the data owner.
- **Management:**
We will maintain datasets as fit-for-purpose, identify opportunities to improve data quality, seek feedback from data users and review our processes to ensure maximum efficiency.

Our contribution to government objectives

Through open data we contribute to the Queensland Government’s objectives for the community in the following ways:

Queensland Government objective (and strategy)	Our open data strategy contributes to this by:
Protecting the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing greater access to environmental data. • Providing greater access to scientific, research and performance monitoring data. • Publishing real time data and time series data, where possible, to provide greater depth of information.
Creating jobs and a diverse economy (Stimulating economic growth and innovation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to a strong knowledge economy by making data available, free for use and re-use in easily accessible and open formats by anyone who wishes to use it. • Promoting opportunities for innovation and research by publishing a diverse range of datasets.
Delivering quality frontline services (Providing responsive and integrated government services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing improved access to government data and decision-making processes. • Demonstrating transparency by making data open by default. • Being responsive to feedback and suggestions for new datasets.

Governance and accountability

The Director-General is responsible for the success of the department’s Open Data initiative by creating and sustaining an open data culture within the department.

Execution of our Open Data Strategy will be governed by the department’s Executive Management Team. Coordination and reporting functions will be undertaken by Corporate Communications. Each Division will nominate an Open Data representative to identify suitable data for publishing. This strategy will be reviewed annually.

Progress will also be reported to the whole-of-government Senior Officers Working Group overseen by the Department of the Science, Information Technology and Innovation.

Implementation of the department’s Open Data Strategy will be managed in accordance with information management and publication provisions contained in relevant State and Federal legislation and administrative instruments.

The Open Data Strategy adheres to the policies, principles, procedures and artefacts underpinning the Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture 2.0 and is further guided by department-specific procedures relating to the handling and release of information about our clients, services and outputs.

Data priorities

Open data will continue to be identified and published as part of standard departmental operating practices and procedures, in line with the four components of the release strategy.

In 2015–16, there will be a specific focus on publishing data associated with the release of the 2015 State of the Environment report.

Data will be published in four themes:

- Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Water
- Climate.

Data maturity

To support evolving data sophistication and functionality we will:

- Review and refine data process and infrastructure to ensure timeliness, reliability, quality and accuracy.
- Publish data in variable formats and structured data feeds, where practicable.
- Explore data collection methods to allow the release of real time data, where possible.
- Build capability through professional development and guidance.
- Continue to support transparent decision making processes to ensure as much data is being released as possible.
- Encourage data users to provide feedback about usefulness, gaps and general satisfaction.
- Embrace emerging technologies.

Glossary of terms

Data: Refers to numbers, letters, or pixels which are expressed in any form. Open data is focused on the basic or 'raw' data that we collect, generate and store. When data is analysed, processed, organised, structured, or presented in a given context so as to make it meaningful, it becomes 'information'. In this sense, information is derived from data.

Dataset: A representation of data in a formalised manner, suitable for communication, interpretation or processing.

Information Asset: An information asset is an identifiable collection of data stored in any manner and recognised as having value for the purpose of enabling an agency to perform its business functions, thereby satisfying a recognised agency requirement.