

OPEN DATA STRATEGY



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1 Purpose

Government data should be open and transparent where possible. As outlined in the DataVic Access Policy Guidelines v2 ('Open Data Policy'), the Victorian Government's default position is to make its datasets freely available to the public. To achieve this, datasets that are generated by Victorian Government agencies which are suitable for publication are required to be published on the Victorian Government Data Directory at data.vic.gov.au ('Data Directory'), in formats and under licences that facilitate their reuse.

The State Revenue Office ('SRO') is committed to delivering the benefits of open data by proactively making its data freely available to the public where appropriate, having regard to its legislative and administrative obligations. The SRO's Open Data Strategy ('Strategy') sets out the SRO's plan to support the Open Data Policy, and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fulfilling that purpose.

2 Agency Function

The SRO is the Victorian Government's major revenue collection agency. It is a semi-autonomous service agency that is responsible for administering Victoria's taxation legislation and collecting a range of taxes, duties and levies, including land tax, payroll tax and land transfer duty. The SRO is also responsible for administering the First Home Owner Grant, Commercial Passenger Vehicle Service Levy, Wagering and Betting Tax and the *Unclaimed Money Act 2008*, as well as assisting with the administration of various subsidies and rebates.

3 Policy Principles for Data Release

The Strategy is guided by the Open Data Policy's open data principles as follows:

Government data will be made available unless access is restricted for reasons of privacy, public safety, security and law enforcement, public health, and compliance with the law

The SRO will consider all data it collects or creates for publication and, where it is found to be appropriate for publication, make it available to the greatest extent possible. The SRO will not publish *Protected Data*, being data, the dissemination of which is limited for reasons of privacy, public safety, security and law enforcement, public health, copyright infringement, legal privilege, contractual obligation, confidentiality, the public interest, or compliance with the law.

Government data will be made available under flexible licences

SRO data that is appropriate for publication will be made openly available under flexible licences to facilitate reuse, with Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence being the default.

With limited exceptions, government data will be made available at no or minimal cost

The SRO will make its data available for free, unless the cost is set by law.

Government data will be easy to find and accessible in formats that promote its reuse

The SRO's data will be easily discoverable through the Data Directory and will be released in accessible formats that promote its reuse.

Government will follow standards and guidelines relating to making datasets available and agency accountability for those datasets.

The SRO will make data that is appropriate for publication available in a timely and relevant manner, and is accountable for the release of good quality data in accordance with whole of Victorian Government standards and guidelines.

4 Scope of the SRO's Open Data Program

For the purposes of the Strategy, *In-Scope Data* is defined as:

- current and historic, raw, unprocessed, and machine-readable data collected, created, used and stored by the SRO,
- data with a protective marking of Unclassified (i.e. public domain), either before or after modification, aggregation and de-identification, and
- able to be licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution, or similar, licence.

Out-of-Scope Data is defined as:

- data that would be more accurately defined as information, being data that has been processed, analysed, interpreted, organised or, otherwise, has had value and context added, or
- data with a protective marking higher than Unclassified, and which cannot be classified as Unclassified after reasonable attempts at modification, aggregation and de-identification, or
- data that is Protected Data after reasonable attempts at modification, aggregation and de-identification, or
- data that is not collected or created by the SRO in the course of exercising its agency functions.

5 Legislative and Administrative Framework

The use and disclosure of information held by the SRO is subject to the secrecy provisions in the laws administered by the SRO. These provisions prohibit the disclosure or secondary disclosure of information obtained under or in accordance with a revenue law except for permitted purposes or to authorised recipients.

A person's privacy is also protected under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*, and personal information must be collected, managed, used and disclosed in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. The SRO's [privacy policy](#) is published on the website.

However, information of a general nature may be disclosed, and the SRO proactively releases data relating to its revenue administration functions.

In accordance with our obligations under Part II of the *Freedom of Information Act 1984*, the SRO also publishes a [statement](#) providing a snapshot of the SRO's functions and resources, including details as to how members of the public may access those documents.

6 Governance and Accountability Framework

Operational Governance

The SRO's Information Management Governance Committee ('the Committee') will be responsible for implementing and administering the Strategy. The Committee will be responsible for:

- providing leadership and fostering an organisational culture that supports open data,
- building organisational capability in identifying, developing, releasing and managing datasets,
- monitoring and reporting the SRO's progress towards reaching goals in the Strategy,
- determining whether to publish datasets recommended for publication by asset custodians, and
- maintaining the Strategy.

On a day-to-day basis, responsibility for identifying, assessing and managing the SRO's datasets will sit with the relevant asset custodian.

Compliance

The Strategy complies with the:

- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- DataVic Access Policy Guidelines (v2)
- DataVic Access Policy Dataset Publishing Manual – May 2015
- DataVic Access Policy Suggest a Dataset Manual – May 2015
- Victorian Government Information Management Principles
- Victorian Protective Data Security Standards
- Victorian Government Intellectual Property Policy
- SRO Information Security Classification System (based on 2011 Australian Government Security Classification System)
- SRO Information Management Strategy 2020-2023
- SRO Information Privacy Policy
- SRO Information Management Governance Committee – Terms of Reference
- Secrecy provisions in the Acts administered by the Commissioner of State Revenue.

7 The SRO's Data

To conduct its functions, the SRO collects, creates, uses, stores, manages and discloses a range of information and data. The types of information and data managed by the SRO is summarised in the SRO's [Information Asset Register](#).

The SRO's approach is to review and catalogue all the datasets it manages. Through this process it will prioritise for release high-value datasets that are considered to be of greatest value to the public, having either the potential for valuable reuse or being of interest to the Victorian community. A dataset will be considered 'high-value' if it has one or more of the following characteristics:

- it is central to the SRO's functions,
- it is requested through the Data Directory,
- it has previously/regularly been provided under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*,
- it supports a major reporting process of the SRO (e.g. annual report data),
- it is spatial data,
- it is transport data,
- it is administrative data,
- it is financial data,
- it facilitates the development of new products or services by users of the data,
- it captures the public interest or adds to the public debate, or
- it relates to customer feedback or the customer experience.

8 Short and Long-Term Goals

In the short term, the SRO will:

- continue to review its information assets to identify datasets that are appropriate for publication, with a focus on prioritising the identification and release of high-value datasets,
- appoint asset custodians for all the SRO’s information assets,
- have asset custodians conduct a data review of their assets with a view to identifying and cataloguing all existing SRO datasets,
- develop and implement a centrally monitored SRO information Asset Register to create a comprehensive register of the SRO’s data assets,
- review and improve metadata, in particular data descriptions, of published SRO datasets,
- communicate the Strategy internally to begin the process of embedding an agency-wide culture that accepts and sees the value in open data.

The SRO expects its journey to reach open data maturity will occur over a longer timeframe, and is committed to goals and strategies that will facilitate this evolution. In addition to the short-term actions described above, the SRO has identified the following key long-term goals for its open data program:

GOAL	STRATEGIES
Raise the profile and acceptance of open data at all levels within the SRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of open data in planning and service delivery activities • Open data to form part of privacy/FOI training • Asset custodians to engage with relevant staff in identification of datasets • Organisation-wide engagement on open data to occur through internal communication channels • Delivery of targeted training as necessary to staff involved in the SRO’s open data program, particularly asset custodians
Embed dataset identification and release in ‘business as usual’ activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of datasets for release is included in relevant business processes and procedures • New datasets are included in the SRO Information Asset Register and evaluated for release as soon as possible after collection
Improve the quality and timeliness of data released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement processes to ensure that datasets are published and available as soon as possible after collection • Prepare data quality statements for all datasets in the SRO Information Asset Register and publish statements for released datasets
Ensure open data program is responsive to feedback and engages with data users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage feedback about the usefulness, gaps in, and general satisfaction with the SRO’s released datasets • Promote the ‘suggest a dataset’ function on the Data Directory • Participate in open data events and activities • Feedback and requests in relation to the SRO’s data are acknowledged, considered carefully, and responded to in a timely manner

9 Dataset Identification and Publication Process

Assessment

Asset custodians will identify and record new and existing datasets in the SRO Information Asset Register. Asset custodians will then assess the suitability of an identified dataset for public release and make a recommendation to the Committee. This assessment will be based on legislative requirements, applicable information management policies and procedures, the protective marking of the asset from which the dataset is extracted, and the policy principles for data release described at (3.) of the Strategy. The Committee will then decide whether to publish the dataset.

Modification, Aggregation and De-Identification

Where an identified dataset contains Protected Data that prevents it from being classified as Unclassified, reasonable attempts will be made through modification, aggregation and de-identification techniques to make the dataset suitable for public release.

Publication

If a release is approved, the dataset will be published to a permanent URL on the [SRO's website](#) in an open and machine-readable file format such as CSV or XML. A data quality statement and metadata will then be prepared for the dataset by the relevant asset custodian.

The completed metadata template and data quality statement will then be provided to DataVic to link the published dataset to the Data Directory. The default release licence will be Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC-BY 4.0).

Maintenance of Published Datasets

The SRO manages all of its information assets throughout their lifecycle. After an SRO dataset is published, the relevant asset custodian will be responsible for maintaining the currency and, where necessary, improving the accuracy, accessibility or usability of the dataset. The frequency of updates to datasets will vary depending on the dataset and will be stated in the metadata template accompanying the dataset.

10 Feedback and Data Publication Requests

The SRO encourages enquiries and feedback about the usefulness of its published datasets and areas for improvement. It also encourages data users to request datasets using the 'suggest a dataset' function on the Victorian Government Data Directory. A link to the 'suggest a dataset' function is also available on the [contact page of the SRO's website](#). The SRO will respond to data publication requests and feedback regarding its data, in a timely manner.

11 Published SRO Datasets on the Data Directory

Statistical information is available on the SRO website (<https://www.sro.vic.gov.au>). A list of published SRO Datasets is also available on the DataVic website (<https://www.data.vic.gov.au>).

12 Definitions

Asset custodian

A designated SRO staff member with assigned responsibilities for an information asset to ensure that the information contained in the asset is managed appropriately over its lifecycle, in accordance with relevant rules and processes¹. An asset custodian is appointed for each of the information assets in the SRO's Information Asset Register.

Data

Datasets and databases owned and held by Victorian Government and public bodies and stored in formats including hardcopy, electronic, audio, video, image, graphical, cartographic, physical sample, textual, geospatial or numerical form².

De-identified

In relation to personal information, means personal information that no longer relates to an identifiable individual or an individual who can be reasonably identified³.

Information asset

An identifiable collection of data stored in any manner and recognised as having a value for the purpose of enabling an agency to perform its business functions, thereby satisfying a recognised agency requirement⁴.

Personal information

Means information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), that is recorded in any form and whether true or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion, but does not include information of a kind to which the *Health Records Act 2001* applies⁵.

¹ Victorian Protective Data Security Framework – Information Asset Guide

² DataVic Access Policy Guidelines (v2)

³ *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*

⁴ SRO Information Management Governance Committee – Terms of Reference

⁵ *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*



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