

# Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Public Hearing – 6 May 2020  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Digital Transformation Agency

**Topic:** COVIDSafe App

**Question reference number:** 7

**Senator:** Katy Gallagher

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 15 May 2020

**Question(s):**

## Technology

1. Since the COVIDSafe app was released on 26 April 2020, what updates have been made to the app (noting that subsequent versions of the app have been released since 26 April 2020)?
2. In respect of each update to COVIDSafe, why was the update considered necessary or desirable?
3. Have the DTA or any other Commonwealth agency identified any flaws with the COVIDSafe app that have not yet been addressed? If so:
  - a) What is the flaw?
  - b) Will the flaw be addressed?
  - c) How will the flaw be addressed?
  - d) When will the flaw be addressed?
4. Has the DTA been in direct contact with the developers of the BlueTrace protocol in Singapore? If so, when? If not, why not?

**Answer(s):**

1. The COVIDSafe App (the App) has had one (1) update once since it was released.
2. The update included:
  - A design update, including branding and a clearer and simpler “upload” user flow in the event of a positive Coronavirus diagnosis.
  - Resolving minor registration issues associated with the name field (Android & IOS)
  - Notification message updates and fixes to resolve occasional looping to registration screen (IOS)
  - Crash fixes for Android
3. As with all applications, the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) will make iterative enhancements to the App to improve the user experience and performance.
  - a). The DTA identified additional Bluetooth performance and security enhancements that will improve the performance of the App.
  - b). The DTA is in the process of developing additional Bluetooth performance and security enhancements. The DTA is also working with Apple and Google to understand the improvements they are making to Bluetooth and will consider incorporating their changes if they provide improved Bluetooth performance. Additionally, the DTA monitors developments more broadly in other countries to assess whether other approaches to Bluetooth performance could be leveraged to further improve performance of the App.
  - c) and d). These enhancements will be released iteratively as part of the App updates.

4. The DTA has had ongoing engagement with the Government Technology Agency of Singapore since March 2020.

# Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Digital Transformation Agency

**Topic:** COVIDSafe App – AWS contract

**Question reference number:** 8

**Senator:** Katy Gallagher

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 15 May 2020

**Question(s):**

## AWS Contract

5. Is the contract between the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services based on the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Sourcing Contract template (created 27 February 2018)?
  - a) If not, is it based on a different publicly available contract template? If so, please provide the Committee with a copy of the template.
6. Noting the terms of the exception in section 94D(2)(c) of the draft bill, does the contract between the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services permit – in any circumstances whatsoever – Amazon to transfer any information from the COVIDSafe data store outside Australia?
  - a) If so, in what circumstances and under what conditions?
7. Noting the terms of the exception in section 94D(2)(c) of the draft bill, does the contract between the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services permit – in any circumstances whatsoever – Amazon to store any information from the COVIDSafe data store outside Australia?
  - a) If so, in what circumstances and under what conditions?
8. Noting the terms of the exception in section 94D(2)(c) of the draft bill, does the contract between the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services permit – in any circumstances whatsoever – Amazon to access any information, even incidentally, in the COVIDSafe data store from outside Australia?
  - a) If so, in what circumstances and under what conditions?
9. Does the contract between the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services impose a requirement that all AWS employees who administer or have access to the COVIDSafe data store be Australian citizens and Australian security cleared?
  - a) If not, why not?
10. Is the Commonwealth aware of any legislation, policy or practice in the United States (not Australia) that would prevent or mitigate any effort by US agencies to access COVIDSafe data? If so, to what extent is the Commonwealth confident that such US legislation/policy/practice would prevent access?

**Answer(s):**

5. The contract was made as a Statement of Work under the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Whole of Government Arrangement – Standing Offer. The Standing Offer is recorded as Austender contract notice number CN3601345).

The specific Statement of Work ID number under that Standing Offer is E104752985.

6. The contract between the Commonwealth as AWS specifies:
  - The National COVIDSafe data storage system must use PROTECTED certified cloud services; and
  - Data held in the National COVIDSafe data storage system must be located in Australia.
7. See answer to Question 6 – duplication of question.
8. See answer to Question 6 – duplication of question.
9. AWS have no access to the national COVIDSafe data store.
10. This question should be referred to the Attorney-General's Department.

## **Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

Public Hearing – 6 May 2020  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Digital Transformation Agency

**Topic:** COVIDSafe App – Privacy Amendment (Public Health Contact Information) Bill 2020

**Question reference number:** 9

**Senator:** Katy Gallagher

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 15 May 2020

### **Question(s):**

11. In a media statement on 5 May 2020, the Law Council recommended that “the legislation should prescribe the core parameters or minimum design specifications of the COVIDSafe app and data store themselves, rather than leaving them to be determined from time-to-time. For example, the legislation should provide that the app must operate on a strictly voluntary, opt-in basis at all times, with accessible mechanisms for users to ‘opt out’”.
- a) What is your response to this recommendation?
  - b) What are the likely consequences / implications of implementing this recommendation?

### **Answer(s):**

- 11.
- a) Any amendments to the exposure draft legislation are a matter for the Attorney-General's Department to consider in consultation with the Department of Health.
  - b) The Digital Transformation Agency notes a minimum design specification in the legislation could limit innovation or improvement in the COVIDSafe App.

For example, if legislation set a minimum device operating system for handsets, this could limit the ability to provide backward compatibility for older operating systems.