



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Minister for Government Services

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Sarah Redden
Acting Committee Secretary
The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee
fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Redden

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee on the *current capability of the Australian Public Service (APS)*. I am writing in my role as Chair of the Commonwealth-State Data and Digital Ministers' Meeting.

The Data and Digital Ministers' Meeting is focused on progressing a strategic data and digital transformation agenda for the nation.

Data and Digital Ministers from the Commonwealth, each state and territory and New Zealand are working collaboratively with the goal of better, more joined up service delivery, improved data and digital policy outcomes and sharing information, insights and capabilities.

We operate in an agile and flexible manner, with an ability to deliver on emerging priorities quickly. Ministers have fostered an open and productive culture of cross-jurisdictional information sharing—where jurisdictions can replicate successes and act early when other approaches aren't working.

COVID-19 accelerated digital and data initiatives. Each jurisdiction prioritised initiatives to provide timely and relevant COVID-19-related information to constituents and supported people experiencing difficulties, including provision of welfare and employment support, health and mental health support, schooling and business support.

In September 2020, Ministers released the State of the Data and Digital Nation report (available at <https://pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/public-data/state-data-and-digital-nation-september-2020>), which highlights data and digital activity occurring across Australia.

Data and digital matters are increasingly important in all domains across Australian governments, from education to child safety to planning to law and regulatory activities – meaning national collaboration and coordination is more crucial than ever.

In 2021, Ministers are focused on:

- accelerating the delivery of a seamless digital identity experience for citizens;
- re-designing government services to streamline citizens' engagement with government during key life events, such as when looking for work, having a baby, or experiencing a natural disaster. This aims to orient services around people's needs, rather than how government is structured;
- investigating integration and tactical sharing of all jurisdictions' hazards information, including relating to fires, floods, storms and cyclones; and
- breaking down barriers to sharing data across jurisdictions.

An Australian Public Service (APS) with mature data and digital capabilities is a critical enabler to deliver on this work. Workforce skills across service design, product management, content design, strategy, interaction design, user research and data analytics are fundamental to realising the Ministers' goals. The launch of the APS data and digital professional streams are a welcome step to uplift APS capability.

I trust this information assists the committee.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Robert

26 February 2021