STATS MATTER

A long-term strategy to build Tasmanian Government statistical assets and capability

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Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered how government makes critical decisions to direct resources and services to where they are needed most?

Scenarios like the emergency response and community rebuilding following the 2013 Tasmanian bushfires or the placement of Child and Family Centres demonstrate what can be achieved when we work together across government. These initiatives were underpinned by accessing, sharing and interpreting data and statistics.

Statistics really do matter. They help to identify and prioritise community needs, set goals and monitor progress. Without good data and statistics and the ability to interpret them the decision making process is weakened, productivity lost and achievement of goals becomes difficult to measure.

To make informed decisions which benefit Tasmanians all the time we need to ensure processes are in place across government to support ongoing production, management, use and reporting of high quality data. We also need to understand and use the data confidently and competently. Examples like the bushfire response or the placement of Child and Family Centres demonstrate what can be achieved.

Wouldn't it be good if government worked like this all the time?

The Stats Matter Strategy has been developed to help guide the way forward to this vision. It has a set of objectives and actions which will ensure we build statistical capability and more robust data. This will improve the way we use, interpret, analyse and share quality data. It will help us actively manage our statistical assets as an important part of the business of government and will enhance our capacity to demonstrate accountability.

Stats Matter has been specifically designed to integrate with other whole of government strategies. It is critical to achieving Goal 3 of the Tasmanian Government ICT Strategy on improved access and sharing of information; while complementing the Tasmanian Government Collaboration Approach and Spatial Information Foundations.

Stats Matter is a long-term vision

Stats Matter is an important government initiative. We are embarking on a long term work program. The values and objectives it promotes will be embedded as part of the broader framework of good government, in a manner similar to the way we value our people, our business infrastructure and shared knowledge of our goals.

VISION

Better Government decisions informed by quality data and sound statistical practice for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

Stats Matter will underpin a culture in which statistical assets are valued and used competently. With better management, the assets will support government accountability and improved services for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

VALUES

The following values guide and underpin implementation of Stats Matter:

Collaboration - By working together we can all contribute to realising the value of data and statistics in government.

Integrity - Our statistical assets will be accurate and credible. Our practices will be transparent, sound and accountable.

Relevance - Our statistical assets will meet the needs of their users in the right way at the right time.

Accessibility - All government staff will have easy access to the statistical information they need.

Confidentiality - Statistical Information will be used and shared in secure ways to protect privacy.

OBJECTIVES

1. **To develop a culture that values and uses quality statistics and data**

Government will value and use data confidently, competently and collaboratively to support accountability, routinely evaluate programs, inform decisions and drive ongoing improvement.

2. **To ensure quality statistical data is available in government for the benefit of all Tasmanians**

Government decisions are underpinned by accessible, high quality and relevant statistical and spatial data.

3. To provide robust governance of significant statistical assets

Active and sustained governance of statistical assets will support government accountability and ensure strategic investment in statistical assets and capability development

MAJOR ACTIONS

The Objectives of Stats Matter will be achieved through the following actions.

1. **Identify and manage statistical assets to strengthen government accountability**
    - Identify and agree a set of State Significant Statistical Assets; implement a governance structure and management plans to support them.
    - Review and align state and national performance reporting requirements where practical to reduce the burden of reporting.
    - Ensure statistical assets support performance measurement and program evaluation.

2. **Establish a toolkit of resources to build data quality and support capability**
    - Identify applicable national and international standards and guidelines for inclusion.
    - Create a central repository of resources that will assist staff to ensure data quality and promote best practice.

3. **Build mechanisms to make sharing and publication of statistical information easier**
    - Develop policies to ensure statistical data and metadata will be easy to find across agencies and available in formats suitable for a range of uses.
    - Support access and publication of statistical data to promote government accountability.

4. **Strengthen collaboration across government to make the best use of statistical information**
    - Implement a framework for integrating data to maximise safe use of statistical resources held in agencies.
    - Establish a community of interest for collectors, producers and users of statistical data to share knowledge, experiences and resources.

5. **Develop and implement a Plan to improve Tasmanian Government statistical capability**
    - Identify statistical capability priorities and development needs across government.
    - Establish a framework to address need, guide development and monitor improvement in statistical capability.

Implementing the major actions will be the responsibility of all agencies supported by a small central unit within DPAC. Already, there are examples of good statistical practice across government. These will be promoted and will help drive achievement.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

By December 2014:

- State Significant Statistical Assets are identified; custodians agreed; and there is progress towards management and access plans for these assets

- Statistical Policy Committee endorses a Tasmanian Government Statistical Capability Plan; and pilot assessment tool is in place in one or more agencies

- A web-based toolkit is live with a process for adding components, standards and guidelines in place via the Statistical Policy Committee

- A framework for integrating data for research purposes is endorsed and actively used by agencies
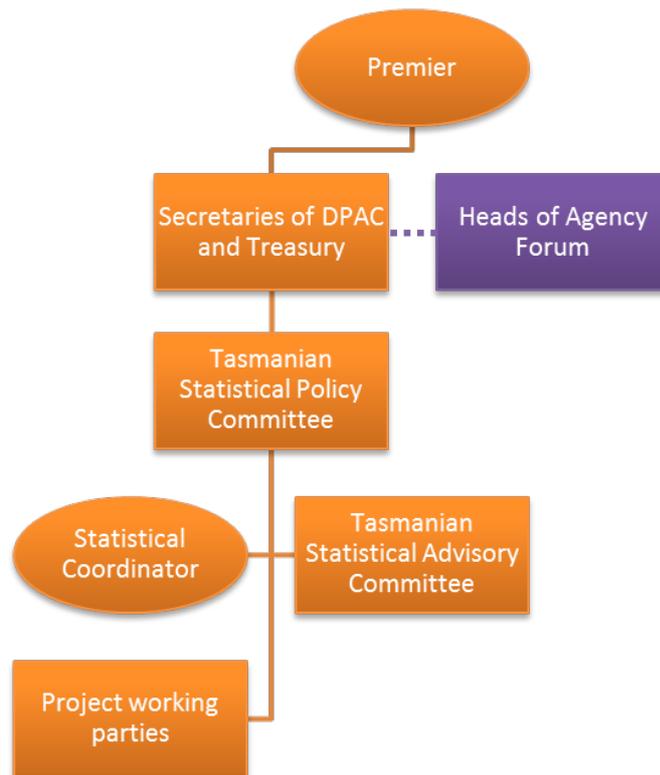
By December 2016:

- Agency enduring outcomes are aligned with budget and annual report key performance indicator processes

- Agencies have effective management plans in place for significant statistical assets linked to agency ICT Strategic Plans

- Statistical capability assessment is complete for all agencies and there is progress towards addressing need

- A business case is developed for a robust, reliable data directory for State Significant Statistical Assets

- Policies for publication of statistical data are agreed

- A framework for integrating data for both research and service delivery purposes is active

By December 2018:

- State Significant Assets are used by Heads of Agency to monitor performance against enduring government outcomes

- Data is published according to agreed policies

- Integration of data is a routine process in driving ongoing improvements

- Effective evaluation of programs is utilised in future decisions and supports a culture of achievement

GOVERNANCE OF STATS MATTER

Secretaries

The secretaries of the two central agencies, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and the Department of Treasury and Finance (Treasury) will be established as the primary governance body for Stats Matter to lead and maintain a strong focus on statistics and performance management issues across government. They will report regularly to the Premier and to the Heads of Agency Forum on an as needs basis.

Statistical Policy Committee (SPC)

The SPC is an established mechanism of statistical coordination under the Tasmanian Government – Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Statistical Partnership Agreement. SPC is chaired by the Deputy Secretary DPAC, with senior membership from all agencies including the ABS Tasmanian Regional Director as the Tasmanian Government Statistician. SPC will assume responsibility and authority for implementation of Stats Matter together with the existing Statistical Partnership Agreement with ABS. Stats Matter will drive many of the outcomes sought by the Partnership Agreement. Terms of Reference for SPC will be revised to account for the additional responsibility.

Where appropriate, SPC may also seek advice from other bodies such as the Agency ICT Reference Group, which is also chaired by the Deputy Secretary DPAC. Coordination between SPC and the Agency ICT Reference Group will be facilitated via the common secretariat provided by the Office of eGovernment, for example, working together to achieve Outcome 3 of the ICT Strategy *Better access to information for the community, business and public sector employees.*

Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Committee (TSAC)

TSAC is also an established mechanism of statistical coordination under the Tasmanian Government – ABS Statistical Partnership Agreement and acts as a working group for SPC. It has membership from all agencies including the ABS. TSAC will advise SPC as per current arrangements. TSAC will be a key mechanism for driving some of the major actions such as creating the toolkit of resources.

Statistical Coordinator

The role of the Tasmanian Government Statistical Coordinator is defined under the Statistical Partnership Agreement. This includes being chair of TSAC and a member of the SPC. The role will be revised to include the secretariat function for operation of the Stats Matter Strategy. The role of Statistical Coordinator and secretariat support will be incorporated into the Office of eGovernment, DPAC.

IMPLEMENTATION

The success of the Stats Matter Strategy relies on all Tasmanian Government agencies implementing it with support from a small unit located in DPAC.

The two main ways the Strategy will be embedded are:

1. Via a small central Stats Matter Unit located in DPAC which will lead the implementation of the major actions which require central coordination, for example Actions 1, 2 and 5. This Unit will also assist general collaboration across agencies and monitor implementation of the Strategy.

2. Via agencies working on current or planned projects which help to realise the priorities and major actions in the Strategy. For example this could include:

    a   Independent agency projects showcasing the Stats Matter values (eg collaboration; confidentiality; integrity) and demonstrating the benefits of good statistical practice to others. Current examples include Spatial Information Foundations; Tasmanian Data Linkage Unit

    b   Agencies working with the Stats Matter team to address issues within and across independent projects (eg Stats Matter could foster collaboration and help address data quality issues in projects mapping national and state reporting requirements)

    c   Agencies using or assisting in the development of major actions in the Strategy (eg using the toolkit of principles, standards and guidelines; identifying State Significant Statistical Assets)

Stats Matter is a long term strategy which provides time for agencies to develop projects aligned with the Strategy.

Stats Matter will be implemented by building on existing commitments made by agencies which support the Strategy. Funds for additional or new projects identified via the Strategy will be sought through the normal budget process.

REVIEW

A review schedule to measure the achievement of objectives and major actions in Stats Matter will be established in the implementation planning phase.

STATS MATTER STRATEGY
Building Tasmanian Government Statistical Assets and Capability

VISION

Better Government decisions informed by quality data and sound statistical practice for the benefit of all Tasmanians

VALUES

Collaboration	**Integrity**	**Relevance**	**Accessibility**	**Confidentiality**
By working together we can all contribute to realising the value of data and statistics in government	Our statistical assets will be accurate and credible. Our practices will be transparent, sound and accountable	Our statistical assets will meet the needs of their users in the right way at the right time	All government staff will have easy access to the statistical information they need	Statistical information will be used and shared in secure ways which protect privacy

OBJECTIVES

To develop a culture that values and uses quality statistics and data	**To ensure quality statistical data is available in government for the benefit of all Tasmanians**	**To provide robust governance of significant statistical data**
Government will value and use data confidently, competently and collaboratively to routinely evaluate, inform decisions and drive ongoing improvement	Government decisions are underpinned by accessible, high quality and relevant statistical and spatial data	Active and sustained governance of statistical assets will support government accountability and ensure strategic investment in statistical assets and capability development

MAJOR ACTIONS

1. Identify and manage statistical assets to strengthen government accountability

2. Establish a toolkit of resources to build data quality and support capability

3. Build mechanisms to make sharing and publication of statistical information easier

4. Strengthen collaboration across government to make the best use of statistical information

5. Develop and implement a plan to improve Tasmanian Government statistical capability

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

By December 2014	• State Significant Statistical Assets are identified; custodians agreed; progress towards management and access plans for these Assets • Statistical Policy Committee endorses a Tasmanian Government Statistical Capability Plan; and pilot assessment tool is in place in one or more agencies • A web-based toolkit is live with a process for adding components, standards and guidelines in place via the Statistical Policy Committee • A framework for integrating data for research purposes is endorsed and actively used by agencies

By December 2016	• Agency enduring outcomes are aligned with budget and annual report key performance indicator processes • Agencies have effective management plans in place for significant statistical assets linked to agency ICT Strategic Plans • Statistical capability assessment is complete for all agencies and there is progress towards addressing the need • A business case is developed for a robust, reliable data directory for State Significant Statistical Assets • Policies for publication of statistical data are agreed • A framework for integrating data for both research and service delivery purposes is active

By December 2018	• State Significant Assets are used by Heads of Agency to monitor performance against enduring government outcomes • Data is published according to agreed policies • Integration of data is a routine process in driving ongoing improvements • Effective evaluation of programs is utilised in future decisions and supports a culture of achievement

GLOSSARY

Data*

Data are measurements or observations that are collected as a source of information. There are a variety of different types of data, and different ways to represent data.
A dataset is a complete collection of all observations.

Statistic*

A statistic is a value that has been produced from a data collection and can take the form of a summary measure, an estimate or projection.

Statistical Information

Statistical information is a collection of data and/or statistics from which conclusions can be drawn.

Metadata*

Metadata is the information that defines and describes data.

Statistical assets

Statistical assets are data, datasets, related statistics and the systems in place to support them which have valuable qualities.

Significant Statistical Assets

Significant statistical assets are those assets essential to the business of government in Tasmania which demonstrate the achievement of agency outcomes and enhance agency accountability.

* ABS Statistical Language Glossary

http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/a3121120.nsf/home/statistical+language+-+statistical+language+glossary