STATS MATTER

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

2015 revision

Tasmania
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INTRODUCTION

Stats matter !

Statistics really do matter. Like pieces in a jigsaw, statistics can be gathered together to help form a picture of life in Tasmania – whether our interest is in social issues, economic activity, or environmental management.

Statistics help governments understand the communities they serve and inform decisions about where resources should be allocated and where services should be provided.

Without good data, statistics and the ability to interpret them, the decision making process is weakened, productivity is lost and achievement of goals becomes difficult to measure.

To make informed decisions that benefit Tasmanians we need to ensure processes are in place across government to support the ongoing collection, management, analysis and reporting of high quality data. We also need to understand, share and use data confidently and competently.

The Stats Matter Strategy has been developed to help the Tasmanian Government maximise its use of information. It has a set of objectives and actions that 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.

Stats Matter is being implemented alongside the Tasmanian Government ICT Strategy, and complements that Strategy's goal to provide *better access to information for the community, business and public sector employees.*

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 created, valued and used competently. With better management, the assets will support the business of government, the development of policies, and the delivery of programs and 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 data assets

Active and sustained governance will initially focus on critical data assets to support accountability and ensure strategic investment over time in Government data assets and capability.

MAJOR ACTIONS

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

1. **Identify and manage critical data assets**
   - Identify and agree a set of critical data assets; implement a governance structure and develop management plans to support them.
   - Review and align state and national performance reporting requirements where practical to reduce the burden of reporting.
   - Ensure data assets generally 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. **Develop open data and related mechanisms to make sharing and publication of statistical information easier**
   - Develop an open data policy and portal to promote access, use and reuse of appropriate government data for community and commercial benefit.
   - Develop policies to ensure statistical data and metadata will be easy to find across departments and available in formats suitable for a range of uses.

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 departments.
   - Establish a community of interest for collectors, producers and users of statistical data to share knowledge, experiences and resources.

5. **Develop a Tasmanian Government statistical capability framework**
   - 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 departments supported by a small central unit within DPAC.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

By December 2015:

- A Tasmanian Government Open Data Policy is approved

- A methodology to identify department critical data assets is developed and piloted

- A web-based toolkit is live, with a process for adding additional components in place

- A statistical capability assessment tool is developed and piloted

By May 2016:

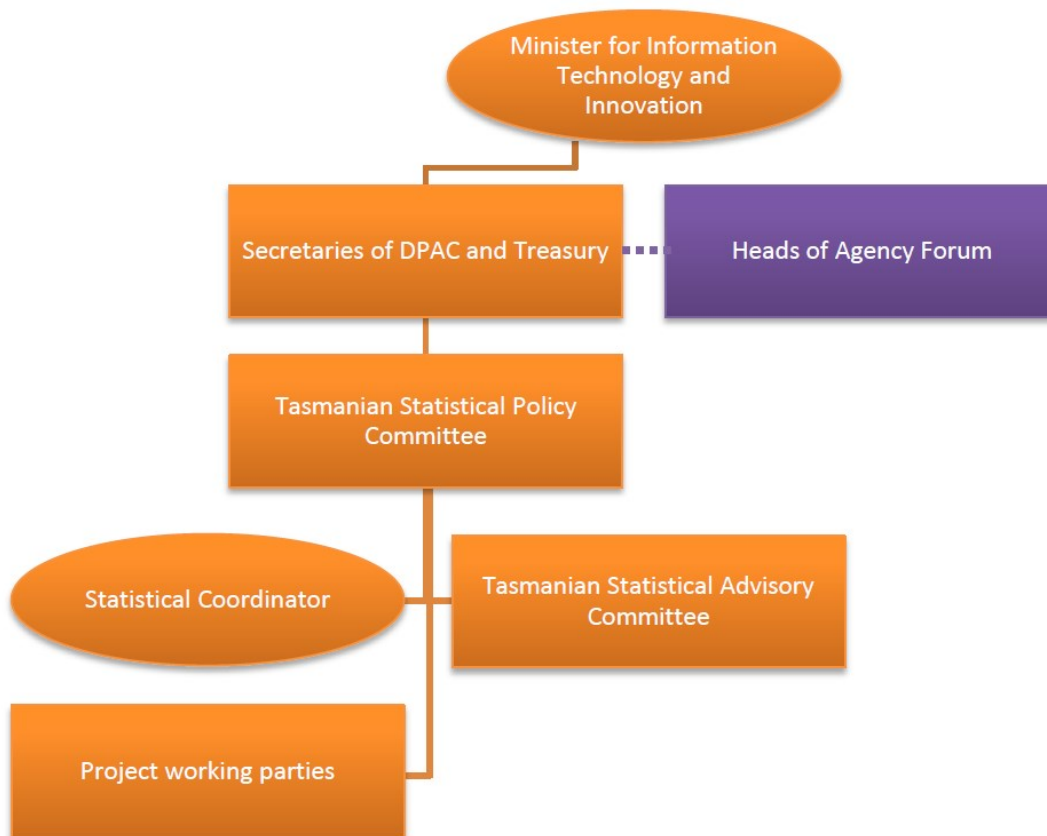- Open data being released in accordance with the Tasmanian Government Open Data Policy via the web

By December 2016:

- Critical data assets are identified by departments

- Department critical data asset management plan templates have been developed in consultation with departments

- Guidelines for accessing, exchanging and using data are endorsed for use by departments

- The statistical capability assessment tool is used by departments to identify capability needs

By December 2017:

- Departments have management plans in place for critical data assets, linked to agency ICT Strategic Plans

- Statistical capability plans are developed by departments

GOVERNANCE OF STATS MATTER

Secretaries

The secretaries of the two central departments, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and the Department of Treasury and Finance (Treasury), are the primary governance body for Stats Matter, leading and maintaining a strong focus on information and performance management issues across government.

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 departments including the ABS Tasmanian Regional Director as the Tasmanian Government Statistician. SPC has 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.

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 DPAC's 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 departments including the ABS. TSAC will advise SPC as per current arrangements. TSAC is a key mechanism for driving some of the Stats Matter 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 includes the secretariat function for implementation of the Stats Matter Strategy. The Statistical Coordinator and secretariat support role will be incorporated in the Office of eGovernment.

IMPLEMENTATION

The success of the Stats Matter Strategy relies on implementation by all Tasmanian Government departments with support from a small central Stats Matter Unit located in DPAC's Office of eGovernment.

The two main ways the Strategy will be embedded are via:

1. the Stats Matter Unit located in DPAC which will lead the implementation of the major actions that require central coordination. This Unit will also assist general collaboration across departments and monitor implementation of the Strategy.

2. departments 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 department projects showcasing Stats Matter values (eg collaboration; confidentiality; integrity) and demonstrating the benefits of good statistical practice to others. Examples include Spatial Information Foundations (Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment); Education Information Warehouse "edi" (Department of Education); Strategic Information Review project (Department of Health and Human Services)

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

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

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 people and processes in place to support them.

* ABS Statistical Language Glossary

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