An Information Management Framework for Victoria

Open data initiatives are making spatial information more accessible than ever before.

The Victorian Spatial Council supports these initiatives, but it does not believe that simply making large numbers of datasets available will, by itself, maximise the benefits spatial information can provide.

The Council's position is that the value of spatial information lies in its being used; therefore it must not only be accessible, but also appropriately managed so that its value is enhanced.

An information management framework, operating alongside the necessary physical infrastructure for releasing data, is critical to ensuring this value.

Why do we need an Information Management Framework?

The Council believes that to create a culture of open data, a strong underpinning information management framework is needed. Such a framework will balance open data objectives (such as creating innovative products and services) with building the confidence of information managers and providers to release their data.

The starting point for the framework is:

- Strong and transparent governance
- Adequate custodianship arrangements
- Providing adequate funding to maintain data quality and currency
- Making data 'fit for purpose' for a wide range of users
- Ensuring agreements are in place for data supply, maintenance and exchange

Benefits of an Information Management Framework

While government is the primary source, there are many other creators and providers of spatial data. For example, electricity, gas and water utilities are also sources of useful and valuable information.

An information management framework will enable these data custodians to retain full control of their respective information resources, while acting according to consistent principles that ensure seamless access to their data for integration into a new and innovative products and services.

Governments, businesses and communities plan essential physical infrastructure carefully – our highways, electricity lines, water courses and broadband connections. We should treat data in the same way. ***We need to plan and create data infrastructures.***[3]

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What the framework should do

The framework must support rigorous information management, while also giving custodians the flexibility and confidence to release their data. It should be one that:

- Gives custodians tools to manage their information and meet growing demands for easily accessible data that is fit for purpose
- Enables information to be made available
- Defines roles so that all sectors have confidence
- Provides for standardisation so that duplication is reduced and authoritative sources can be created
- Improves data management practices
- Makes information sharing possible – giving confidence to data managers that sharing their data has benefits to them as well as users

To whom will the framework apply?

The information management framework should apply to all custodians of spatial data that can be made available for developing into new and innovative products and services.

These custodians would be responsible for all aspects of managing spatial information, ie, describing it, providing metadata, managing its quality, determining pricing and licensing arrangements, providing appropriate access to it and making people aware of it.

These requirements are documented in the Council's Spatial Information Management Framework.

Victoria's Spatial Information Management Framework

The Spatial Information Management Framework is the basis for a consistent approach to managing spatial information across the spatial information community in Victoria.

It is the cornerstone of Victoria's foundation for making spatial information accessible. It is the mechanism to make it easy to identify who has the information, whether it is fit for the purpose at hand, how it can be accessed and whether it can be integrated with other information.

The Framework sets out the core requirements for managing and making available spatial under 4 categories:

institutional arrangements for developing spatial information – governance, custodianship

requirements for creating and maintaining spatial information – framework and business information, data quality

mechanisms for making spatial information accessible and available – metadata, awareness, access, pricing and licensing, and privacy

strategic development of technology and applications

> *"The key to achieving the benefits that spatial information provides is the availability of and access to it. Such information must not only exist, it must be easy to identify who has it, whether it is fit for the purpose at hand, how it can be accessed and whether it can be integrated with other information"*

Further reading

1. APPSI, *A National Information Framework for Public Sector Information and Open Data*, October 2012, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/appsi/appsi-discussion.htm

2. Center for Technology in Government at the State University of New York, *The Dynamics of Opening Government Data*, December 2012

http://www.ctg.albany.edu/news/press_ogsap2_20121204

3. Open Data Institute, *Who Owns Our Data Infrastructure?*, May 2015, http://opendatainstitute.org/who-owns-our-data-infrastructure

4. Victorian Spatial Council, *Spatial Information Management Framework*

http://victorianspatialcouncil.org/page/resources/spatial-information-management-framework