# Whole of Government

# **Interoperability Policy**

# Document Control

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**Contact:**

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

2 Havelock Street

WEST PERTH  WA  6005

Telephone: (08) 6552 5444

Email: enquiries@gcio.wa.gov.au

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# Interoperability Policy

The Western Australian (WA) public service operates within a complex and shifting environment as a result of rapidly changing demographics and business needs, fiscal constraints, rising public expectation for unified services, and multi-faceted policy problems requiring joined up solutions. Interoperability ensures that those challenges, and future challenges can be met.

Increasing interoperability between agencies is a key enabler for government-wide collaboration and service delivery.

It can be applied at three distinct levels; the ongoing exchange of information between agencies, coordination of business processes, and harmonisation of technical operation systems to facilitate connected government. It does not comprise a one-off exchange between agencies, but rather continuing and mutually beneficial connectivity.

## Policy Statement

Western Australian Government agencies should view interoperability as a core business process and planning for which agencies are required to allocate resources from within existing budgets.

All new information, communication and technology (ICT) systems in development by agencies must comply with existing interoperability standards, and all existing systems should be transitioned towards compliance as soon as possible.

This policy should be referred to during the design, planning and implementation of any procurement or redevelopment project.

## Purpose

The purpose of the WA Interoperability Policy is to ensure that systems across the public sector can seamlessly interact, exchange data and, if necessary, share functions and resources through the identification and adoption of appropriate frameworks and standards.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies, processes, programs and functions through system integration, information sharing, and cross-boundary collaboration.

- Improve service automation and interoperability.

- Foster open standards.

- Enhance timeliness, consistency and quality of government responses across multiple agencies.

- Create opportunities for data analytics and business intelligence, encouraging innovation and competition across the public and private sectors.

- Improve accountability and transparency for the community.

- Reduce unnecessary duplication and replication of information storage and handling.

## Principles

Developing interoperability is a multi-faceted undertaking – it's about systems connecting and sharing information, but also facilitating the ongoing harmonisation of work practices and service delivery. The following principles describe best-practice requirements for interoperability.

### User focussed

Internal and external agency systems and services give priority to the needs and requirements of those who are receiving services. As much as possible, services are inclusive, accessible and transparent. Members of the community and businesses are able to access and engage with administrative processes and decisions that affect them.

### Effective and efficient

Government agencies identify internal information, functions and technologies that may be of benefit to other agencies and seek to share these resources on an ongoing basis. Duplication and replication is avoided. Agencies collaborate on the delivery of programs and services in ways that are focussed on whole-of-government objectives and directed towards the most effective and efficient solutions, providing the best value for taxpayers' money.

### Openness and reusability

Government processes and solutions are developed and implemented to maximise their openness and reusability, using industry and open interoperability standards including government standards when developed (see related guidance on standards TBD).

### Security and privacy

Interoperability is pursued within the context of relevant legislation and regulation to ensure the security and privacy of citizens, businesses and Government.

## Related Guidance

Information and guidance on interoperability is available from the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) website at www.gcio.wa.gov.au.

Agencies will need to ensure implementation of this Policy is consistent with, and operating within any applicable legislative, policy and strategic frameworks.

## Definition of Terms

**Interoperability** is defined in accordance with the:

Australian Government Information Management Office. (2007). *The Australian Government Business Process Interoperability Framework - Enabling Seamless Service Delivery*, pp. 7-9:

**Value for money** is defined in accordance with the State Supply Commission supply policies, available from:

http://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/State_Supply_Commission/Procurement_Policy/Value_for_Money.aspx