












**Australian Government**  
**Department of Communications**

# Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan 2015–19 describes our purpose, role, strategic priorities, culture and values.



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# Secretary's statement



Dear Minister

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of Communications, present the Communications corporate plan 2015–19, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Digital technologies and communications services are increasingly pervasive and are driving rapid transformation. The effective and innovative use of these technologies and services offers significant economic and social benefits for individuals, communities, businesses, industry and governments.

Realising the full potential of digital technologies and communications services will underpin Australia's future economic prosperity.

To provide good public policy advice to the Government, our Department must establish and maintain a deep and authoritative understanding of market developments and innovations, both international and domestic. Our advice to Government must be consistently the best-informed, insightful, invaluable.

Our Corporate Plan 2015–19 sets our course for the future, identifying our purpose, our significant activities, operating environment, planned performance and evaluations, capability and risk oversight and management.

This updates our previous Corporate Plan 2014–18 to take account of new environmental factors and activities and responds to new requirements under the PGPA Act.

I will report on performance achievements against this plan through the Department of Communications Annual Reports.

*Yours sincerely*

**Drew Clarke**  
Secretary



# Purpose and role

## Our purpose

We promote an innovative and competitive communications sector so Australians can realise the full potential of digital technologies and communications services.

## Our role

We are the Australian Government's pre-eminent advisor on communications, in particular digital technologies and communications services.

We provide:

- > **Critical analysis** – We identify, analyse and report on digital technologies and communications services and market trends, including their effect on economic and social issues, to inform policy priorities.
- > **Strategic policy advice** – We provide Government with the best policy advice on communications issues.
- > **Best practice administration** – We administer portfolio legislation efficiently and effectively. We review and shape the regulatory framework. We assist the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary to fulfil their Parliamentary obligations.
- > **Collaborative approaches** – We work with portfolio agencies, stakeholders across government, industry, research institutions and the community to generate innovative advice and to provide high quality service.

- > **Effective program management** – We deliver efficient and effective programs to achieve the Government's policy outcomes.
- > **Portfolio agency advice** – We analyse and provide strategic advice on our portfolio agencies: government business enterprises Australia Post and nbn; national broadcasters the ABC and the SBS; and the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Digital Transformation Office and the Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner.





# Our Environment

**Government** – The Department is charged to deliver on its role as pre-eminent advisor on communications issues. The establishment of the Bureau of Communications Research (BCR) and market analysis teams within the Department enhances its ability to deliver on this role. Through critical analysis and policy and operational advice, effective program management, strong collaboration with stakeholders and best practice public administration, the Department promotes economic growth and consumer welfare through realising the benefits of digital technologies and communications services.

**Digital Transformation** – Information and communications technologies are improving the efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility of government services. Government engagement is evolving in response to the digital world where the consumer is the driver. In concert with the establishment of the Digital Transformation Office (DTO) and through other initiatives, the Department continues work to improve the quality of, and access to, online government services and systems and the use of data.

**Changing technologies, changing markets** – Technological innovation is seeing rapid increases in capability, ubiquity and connectivity. This is driving fundamental changes to market structures, conduct and process and the emergence of new business models and service offerings that are expanding the

scope for consumer value. We will continue to foster the uptake and use of leading-edge technologies and promote open, competitive and innovative markets as the source of economically efficient outcomes and enduring benefits to consumers.

**Stakeholder expectations** – government, industry and consumer expectations of what we can deliver continues to expand. Behaviours and preferences are changing as digital conduct establishes new 'norms'. As issues such as connectivity, interoperability and privacy and trust become more central, we must continue to work to meet or exceed the expectations of our stakeholders.

**A global community** – We are deepening our international engagement and understanding of international markets and developments, reaffirming Australia's interests and capacity. Digitisation is all-pervading, expanding our world from local, technology-defined silos to global, interoperable industry layers, and we need to be ready to meet the opportunities and challenges posed by these developments.

**Fiscal environment** – all areas of government are working in an increasingly constrained fiscal environment. The Department is implementing its strategy to strengthen organisational capability and service delivery to improve its efficiency, responsiveness and operational effectiveness.

Technological innovation is seeing rapid increases in capability, ubiquity and connectivity

**Better regulation** – we continue to lead in achieving major efficiency gains and productivity improvements through reducing unnecessary regulatory impost. Ongoing challenges include balancing the innovation and competition against delivering 'public good' outcomes in the digital world, and the ongoing capacity of regulation to remain relevant and useful in respect of new services and technologies. We will partner with industry and other stakeholders in putting in place future regulation that is effective, proportionate and fit-for-purpose.



# Strategic priorities

## Enhancing digital productivity

Rapid technological change is transforming the economy, with significant implications for productivity, competition and innovation. The speed and success with which certain sectors, and the economy as a whole, can adopt these technologies is of increasing importance to our national prosperity. We play a critical role in advising Government on opportunities arising from the innovative adoption and use of digital technologies.

### Actions to support this strategic priority

- > **Research and advice** – We will analyse international and domestic developments in digital technologies, networks and services. We will advise on how these developments can enhance productivity, improve competition and encourage innovation across all sectors of the economy. We will advise on the implications for Government policies and recommend appropriate policy responses.
- > **Digital Productivity** – We will review the government’s digital economy strategies to improve the nation’s productivity and Australians’ quality of life.
- > **Government online** – We will work with other government agencies, including the DTO, to improve the quality and number of government systems, products, services and data sets that Australians can access online.

## Expanding digital infrastructure

Australia’s economy and security increasingly relies on the availability and integrity of digital infrastructure, communications networks and systems. We advise Government on the necessary market settings to deliver competitive and efficient digital infrastructure to drive growth in the broader economy.

### Actions to support this strategic priority

- > **Broadband network** – We will provide strategic advice and policy leadership to achieve the Government’s plan for a fast and affordable National Broadband Network.
- > **Mobile coverage** – We will deliver the Government’s Mobile Coverage Programme to expand reliable mobile phone coverage and competition in outer metropolitan, regional and remote communities.
- > **Digital services** – We will collaborate across government, industry, research institutions and the community sector to develop policies that deliver more efficient, trusted and secure enabling digital infrastructure.
- > **Spectrum availability** – We will explore opportunities for making spectrum available more efficiently for the delivery of existing or new communications services.

## Promoting efficient communications markets

For Australians to fully benefit from communications, broadcasting, media and other services the markets that supply these services must be trusted and operate efficiently. We advise Government on the necessary market, policy and regulatory settings to promote competition, provide for consumer safeguards that support access to basic services, make available socially valuable content, and protect against inappropriate content. We advise on appropriate mechanisms to help ensure viable and efficient postal services for all Australians.

### Actions to support this strategic priority

- We will undertake further reform of the policy and regulatory framework for the telecommunications sector, undertake a major review of the ACMA and complete the Regional Telecommunications Review.
- > **Regulatory reform** – In consultation with our stakeholders, we will rigorously assess the extent to which the current regulatory frameworks operating in the communications and media sectors remain appropriate, particularly given technological changes. We will implement the Government’s announced reforms to the spectrum management framework to enable a more efficient, flexible and transparent market for allocation and



# Strategic priorities (CONTINUED)

use of spectrum. We will advise Government on regulatory reform and deregulation options to:

- promote competitive and open markets
- provide effective consumer safeguards and protections from harms
- ensure efficient and responsive portfolio agencies
- reduce the regulatory burden for individuals, businesses and community organisations

We will recruit, develop and retain skilled and motivated staff

- > **Research and analysis** – We will improve our capability to analyse markets and to persuasively communicate practical strategic policy advice and authoritative information.
- > **Australia Post** – We will continue to support the Government and shareholder Ministers in achieving reforms to Australia Post's letters business to address significant shifts in consumer and businesses preferences for mail delivery.

## Strengthening our capabilities

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) has reviewed key government agencies to improve the capability of the Australian Public Service as a whole. Capability reviews consider an agency's ability to meet objectives and challenges in the areas of leadership, strategy and delivery. The APSC's capability review of the Department of Communications was published 2 June 2015, and will be used as a roadmap to build on our strengths and strategically target areas where departmental capability can be enhanced.

### Actions to support this strategic priority

We will build on our identified strengths:

- > **Strategic policy** – We will continue to build a strong and independent research capability focused on economic analysis of information and communication technologies.
- > **Stakeholder engagement** – We will maintain and enhance our productive alliances and professional relationships within the Communications portfolio, across government and with industry, the research sector and representative community groups.
- > **Better Regulation** – We will improve our capability in designing rules-based regulation and other market interventions to deliver effective policy outcomes. Focussing on this capability

will enhance the quality of our advice to the Government on 'best fit' regulatory solutions to policy issues.

- > **Technology** – We will continue to be an early adopter and user of effective and innovative leading-edge information and communication technologies.

We will further strengthen our organisational capabilities by focussing on:

- > **Leadership** – We will create opportunities for our people to demonstrate outstanding public sector leadership skills at all levels in the organisation and promote a culture of collaboration, innovation and high performance.
- > **Workforce capability and talent management** – We will recruit, develop and retain skilled and motivated staff.
- > **Business planning and resource allocation** – We will strengthen our business planning, performance tracking and internal prioritisation and resourcing processes as part of using our small size, agility and expertise to achieve success.



# Performance

We will assess our performance in delivering on these strategic priorities across the timeframe of the Corporate Plan and through annual activity measurements. We also recognise that the achievement of our strategic priorities is not the responsibility of the Department alone. Industry, consumers, other government agencies (including our portfolio agencies) each have important contributions to make.

## Enhancing digital productivity

**Outcome** – There is a measurable increase in the contribution of the digital economy to Australia's GDP over the period of the Corporate Plan.

Contribution of the Department to the Outcome:

1. Bureau of Communications Research publishes reports on measuring digital productivity, enablers and blockers to efficient communications markets, and review of information and communications technology statistics.
2. The Department reviews current government policies, programs and strategies that support the growth of the digital economy and provides timely, implementable advice on the settings necessary to drive further growth from the use of digital services and technologies, including data.

3. Publish whole of government data standards and principles drawing on existing domestic and international guidelines.
4. Drawing on the findings from the Open Data 500 project, develop a framework to release high value datasets, including a national geo-coded address data set, and a whole of government searchable online data catalogue.

## Expanding digital infrastructure

**Outcome** – Competitive and efficient digital infrastructure drives growth in the broader economy.

Contribution of the Department to the Outcome:

1. The Government is satisfied with the Department's support in achieving the rollout of a national broadband network by 2020.
2. The number of sites established and consumers served through the implementation of rounds of the Mobile Blackspots Programme.
3. A new regulatory framework for efficient spectrum allocation and management is provided to the government together with an implementation plan for the period 2015–16 to 2018–19.
4. A knowledge base of Australia's digital infrastructure is built to inform pre-eminent policy advice to Government.


## Promoting efficient communications markets

**Outcome** – Continuing strong contribution to Australia's GDP of the communications sector, supported by competitive and efficient communications markets with appropriate levels of consumer safeguards.

Contribution of the Department to the Outcome:

1. Reform the telecommunications infrastructure policy and regulatory frameworks following the Government's framework for telecommunications regulatory and structural reform.
2. Develop a framework for reform of telecommunications consumer regulation.
3. Achieve or exceed the deregulatory target set for the Department year on year.
4. Assist the RTIRC committee to deliver its report to the government by August 2015 and develop a response for government consideration by January 2016.





# Capability

## Outcome –

To be the Government’s pre-eminent advisor on digital technologies and communications services we must possess strong capabilities in leadership, strategy and delivery.

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Contribution of the Department to the Outcome:

1. The Department will:
  - Build on our strengths consolidating our ‘well placed’ and ‘strengths’ in stakeholder engagement and leading edge thinking/research;
  - Address our development areas of Business Planning, Talent Management and Leadership Visibility and Aligned Behaviours.
2. The Department’s policy advice will draw on increasingly diverse and robust data and data analytics provided by its Market Analysis Teams and the Bureau of Communications Research.
3. The Department will enhance its ability to effectively respond to new issues and initiatives through a rigorous but agile project methodology, led by its Project Office.
4. Increased number of staff participating in secondment and job rotation opportunities.
5. APS Census shows that the Department equals or exceeds other policy departments in relation to staff engagement, organisational culture and flexible learning and working measures.
6. Deliver inaugural Crawford School policy development courses with a positive impact on staff development and engagement.
7. The Department is assessed as a government leader in effective and innovative use of leading-edge information and communication technologies.
8. A departmental Digital Transformation Plan (DTP) is developed and implemented with services that meet or exceed the DTO’s Digital Service Standard.





# Risk oversight and management

We engage with risk in a positive and transparent way, promoting a culture that encourages rigorous risk assessment, informed risk taking and anticipation of risk in the pursuit of our objectives. We establish and maintain systems of risk oversight, management and internal controls in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy including, regular monitoring and reporting on the risk environment to both the Audit Committee and the Executive Leadership Team.

## Strategic Risks

Our Executive Leadership Team is active in identifying emerging risks and managing identified Strategic Risks. Our Strategic Risks are matters that are fundamental to the function of the communications sector, material in delivering Government agendas, and important in supporting the well-being of Australian citizens.

## Engagement on Risk

We will identify, engage with and manage risk, and actively seek innovative ways of improving processes and achieving outcomes. Our corporate governance framework strategically links our systems, structures and processes to ensure we deliver our outcomes and meet our challenges.

## Business Planning Framework (BPF)

The Department's BPF includes the identification, documentation and regular monitoring of risk and mitigation strategies.

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is chaired by the Secretary and comprises Deputy Secretaries and First Assistant Secretaries. The Committee provides advice to the Secretary on the operations of the Department, including:

- > strategic direction
- > organisational priorities
- > human resource management
- > governance
- > risk management
- > budget and performance monitoring

## Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provides independent advice and assurance to the Secretary on the appropriateness of financial and performance reporting, the system of risk oversight and management, and internal controls. Membership of the Audit Committee comprises both external and internal members with an independent Chair.

## Business Continuity Planning

The Department has a Business Continuity Plan which outlines policies, procedures and responsibilities to ensure key business activities continue in the event business is interrupted. The Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, especially to incorporate any lessons learnt following a disaster recovery exercise.



# Our culture and values

We value and reward excellence. We encourage innovation and continually look for opportunities to improve processes, including using new technologies. We contribute to our full potential and are supported to develop new skills. We take personal responsibility for our actions. We display courteous and collegiate workplace behaviours and speak up constructively if our high standards are not met.

We are guided by the Australian Public Service (APS) Values:

- > **Impartial** – The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence. We demonstrate this value by:
  - assessing the relative merits of policy and program options, including learning from our experiences and being dispassionate in our judgment
  - balancing being timely and responsive with ensuring that advice and decisions are evidence-based and unbiased
  - ensuring that views expressed as private citizens are not associated with our role as APS employees.
- > **Committed to service** – The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government. We demonstrate this value by:
  - working collaboratively and communicating authoritatively and persuasively across the Department, portfolio, government, industry and the community
  - engaging in strategic conversations to develop high quality advice and programs
  - identifying, engaging with and managing risk, and actively seeking innovative ways of improving processes and achieving outcomes
- > **Accountable** – The APS is open and accountable to the Australian public under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility. We demonstrate this value by:
  - taking personal responsibility for our behaviour and development, and accepting and positively responding to performance feedback
  - effectively managing people and resources including providing fair and honest feedback to colleagues
  - understanding and applying internal policies and processes, and adhering to legislative, audit and reporting requirements
  - working transparently and documenting our actions and decisions
- > **Respectful** – The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage. We demonstrate this value by:
  - treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves
  - promoting teamwork, encouraging consultation and taking time to understand others' views
  - being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and acting appropriately
  - supporting a culture that encourages everyone to speak up, welcomes a diversity of ideas and accepts decisions once they are made
- > **Ethical** – The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does. We demonstrate this value by:
  - appropriately dealing with sensitive or private information
  - being open and transparent when we make decisions, implement policy and provide advice
  - quickly addressing behaviour or actions that are inappropriate or fail to meet required standards

These values underpin our work and are demonstrated in our workplace behaviours and client service charter.



# Compliance with the PGPA Act

Item	Topic	Matters to be included	Reference
1	<b>Introduction</b>	The following – (a) a statement that the plan is prepared for section 35(1)(b) of the Act; (b) the reporting period for which the plan is prepared; (c) the reporting periods covered by the plan.	<a href="#">Secretary's statement: page 3</a>
2	<b>Purposes</b>	The purposes of the entity.	<a href="#">Purpose and role: page 4</a>
3	<b>Environment</b>	The environment in which the entity will operate for each reporting period covered by the plan.	<a href="#">Secretary's statement: page 3</a> <a href="#">Environment: page 5</a>
4	<b>Performance</b>	For each reporting period covered by the plan, a summary of – (a) how the entity will achieve the entity's purposes; and (b) how any subsidiary of the entity will contribute to achieving the entity's purposes; and (c) how the entity's performance will be measured and assessed in achieving the entity's purposes, including any measures, targets and assessments that will be used to measure and assess the entity's performance for the purposes of preparing the entity's annual performance statements for the reporting period.	<a href="#">Strategic Priorities: page 6</a> <a href="#">Performance: page 8</a>
5	<b>Capability</b>	The key strategies and plans that the entity will implement in each reporting period covered by the plan to achieve the entity's purposes.	<a href="#">Capability: page 9</a>
6	<b>Risk oversight and management</b>	A summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity for each reporting period covered by the plan (including any measures that will be implemented to ensure compliance with the finance law).	<a href="#">Risk Oversight and management: page 10</a>

