Public attitudes towards data Governance in Australia

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Motivation

• Living in the “Data Age”
• Provides many opportunities:
  – public policy development and evaluation
  – service delivery
  – Improve our decision making
• Data has enormous economic and political value
  - creates incentives for misuse
• Research suggests Australian community has concerns about data privacy, but limited high quality data on Australian’s attitudes to data and data sharing
• **Privacy paradox:** Individuals concerned about privacy and the use of personal data but place a high value on the immediate benefit of making personal data available, discount future effects, or may not be able to assess reductions in privacy because they do not read or understand privacy policies.

• Government’s face challenge of developing new governance arrangements for management of, and access to, personal data held by government,
Outline of presentation

- Overview of survey
- Summary key findings
- Way forward in Australia?
Survey methodology

• Conducted a survey of 2,150 Australians in October 2018
• Data from the Life in Australia (LinA) panel
• Online probability panel with offline component (1,893 surveys completed online and 257 interviewed over the phone)
Do you think the government should or should not be able to …?

- Provide the data to researchers to research ways to improve outcomes for individuals and communities
- Provide the data to researchers to research ways to improve the delivery and targeting of government services
- Use the data within government to evaluate the effectiveness of government programs
- Use the data within government to target resources to those who need it most
- Use the data within government to ensure residents aren’t missing out on their entitlements
- Use the data within government to ensure residents aren’t claiming benefits they are not entitled to

**Percentage of respondents**

- **Definitely should be**
- **Probably should be**
- **Probably should not be**
- **Definitely should not be**
Do you think the government definitely should be able to …? By method of data use

- ... evaluate the effectiveness of government programs
- ... target resources to those who need it most
- ... ensure residents aren’t missing out on their entitlements
- ... ensure residents aren’t claiming benefits they are not entitled to

Percentage of respondents

- Use the data within government ...
- Share data across government departments ...
- Combine data across a range of sources (also known as linked data or integrated data) ...
Level of concern about specific forms of data breaches or misuse

Accidental release of sensitive information

Deliberate hacking of government systems by a third party

The data being used by the Australian Government to make unfair decisions

The data being provided to academic researchers who may misuse the information

The data being provided to consultants or private sector organisations who may misuse the information

Percentage of respondents

- Very concerned
- Concerned
- Only a little concerned
- Not really concerned at all
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the government …?

- ... could respond quickly and effectively to a data breach
- ... has the ability to prevent data being hacked or leaked
- ... can be trusted to use data responsibly
- ... is open and honest about how data is collected, used and shared

Percentage of respondents

- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
Level of trust in organisations for maintaining privacy of data

- The Commonwealth Government in general
- The State/Territory Government where you live
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Social media companies (for example, Facebook, Twitter, Google)
- Universities and other academic institutions
- Telecommunications companies
- Companies that you use to make purchases online
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics
Summary

• Data environment changing rapidly
• Australians are generally supportive of data being made available to researchers and used within government
• Much less support for multiple sources of data to be linked – need to explain how such linkage can benefit individuals, set up safeguards for such linkages and to not move too far ahead of public opinion
• Levels of trust in social media companies are particularly low
The new Australian data sharing framework

**Data Custodians**
- Government bodies that are the primary collectors or generators of data
- Need to establish that Purpose Test is met and DS safeguards fulfilled before sharing

**Accredited Data Authorities (ADAs)**
- Accredited by NDC
- Hubs of expertise in data curation, de-identification, and linkage

**Accredited Users**
- Data accessed subject to DS safeguards, for projects that meet the Purpose Test
  - Government and non-government bodies
  - Strict limits on data on-sharing

Data Sharing Agreement outlines purpose of sharing and how safeguards are being met

Data requests (NDC to monitor)

Subject to any conditions in original Data Sharing Agreement

**National Data Commissioner**
- Oversight
- Regulation
- Guidance
- Accreditation

Standard regulatory powers to oversee and enforce compliance with legislation

Source: Office of the National Data Commissioner, 2019
The 5 Safes

- Safe projects: Is this use of the data appropriate?
- Safe people: Can the users be trusted to use it in an appropriate manner?
- Safe settings: Does the access facility limit unauthorised use?
- Safe data: Is there a disclosure risk in the data itself?
- Safe outputs: Are the statistical results non-disclosive?