



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Data Matching Program

Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System and Trade Support Loans

Data matching between the Australian Taxation Office
and the Department of Employment and Workplace
Relations

February 2023

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Definitions

Term	Definition
Matching Agency	In relation to a data matching program, it is the agency that has ownership for the information technology facilities or resources being used to conduct the data match comparison. In the case of this protocol, the matching agency is the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
Pay Event	This is the file generated by Single Touch Payroll (STP) enabled software, which includes payments subject to PAYG withholding.
Data Matching	Data-matching is combining two or more sets of data that contain personal information, that have come from different sources, and the comparison of those data sets with the intention of producing a match.

Purpose

The purpose of this data matching protocol is to inform the public about the existence and nature of the Australian Apprenticeship and ATO STP Data-matching program and to:

- identify the matching agency and the source agency
- detail the direct relationship of the program to the performance of the lawful functions or activities of the matching agency
- set out the legal basis for any collection, use or disclosure of personal information involved in the program
- outline the objectives of the program, the procedures to be employed, the nature and frequency of the matching covered by the program and the justifications for it
- explain what methods, other than data-matching, were available and why they were rejected
- detail any cost/benefit analysis or other measures of effectiveness, which were considered in deciding to initiate the program
- outline the technical controls proposed to ensure data quality, integrity and security in the conduct of the program
- outline the nature of the action proposed to be taken in relation to the results of the program
- indicate what form of notice is to be given, or is intended to be given to individuals whose privacy is affected by the program
- specify any time limits on the conduct of the program.

Next review date: July 2023

Overview of the Data-Matching Program

Overview

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is undertaking a data matching program with the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The Australian Apprenticeships program will use payroll data, collected through the ATO's Single Touch Payroll (STP) system, as part of the process of determining eligibility for incentives.

The Australian Government, through Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System), provides a number of financial incentives to eligible apprentices and employers. The Incentives System is administered by DEWR. More information about the Incentives System is available on [DEWR's website](#).

The ATO is leading the implementation of STP to streamline business payroll reporting obligations. Employers or their intermediary are required to report payments such as salaries and wages, pay-as-you-go (PAYG) withholding and superannuation information directly to the ATO from their payroll system, on or before the day they pay their employees.

As of 1 July 2019, most employers, including small business (19 or fewer employees), started transitioning to STP reporting, unless they have an exemption or concession. More information regarding the ATO STP program can be found on the [ATO website](#).

DEWR will use the payroll information as part of its decision-making process when confirming eligibility for an incentive for apprentices and employers. This will reduce red-tape for employers, apprentices and trainees. It will also reduce the risk of incorrect payments.

DEWR Privacy Policy

The DEWR privacy policy has detailed information about how we collect, hold and disclose data and information about what a program user or stakeholder can do if not satisfied with how their information has been treated. If a program user or stakeholder is not satisfied with how DEWR collected, held, used or disclosed its personal information, they can make a formal complaint.

Via email:

privacy@dewr.gov.au

Via pre-paid post:

The department prefers that you mail your privacy complaint to the following address:

Privacy Officer
Legal and Assurance Division
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
Location Code: C50MA1 - LEGAL
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Via telephone:

The department's switchboard number is 1300 566 046.

In order to ensure that DEWR fully understands the nature of your privacy complaint and the outcome you are seeking, DEWR prefers that you make your privacy complaint in writing.

If you are unhappy with DEWR's response to your privacy complaint you can lodge a written complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). More information about the OAIC and how to lodge a complaint can be found on [the OAIC website](#). The OAIC generally prefers that individuals complain to the agency in the first instance before lodging a complaint to the OAIC.

DEWR's Privacy Policy can be found at www.dewr.gov.au/about-department/resources/dewr-privacy-policy.

Requirement for a Data Matching Program

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's Guidelines on Data-Matching specifies that a Data-Matching Program should be prepared by agencies conducting data-matching programs. These guidelines are voluntary but represent the Australian Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner's view of best practice. DEWR complies with these guidelines.

'Guidelines on data matching in Australian Government Administration' – 18 June 2014, outline voluntary guidelines that are aimed at assisting Australian Government agencies with the use of data-matching as an administrative tool. The Guidelines outline how data-matching should be done to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APP) and the *Privacy Act 1988 Cth* (Privacy Act), in a manner that is consistent with good privacy practice. These Guidelines represent the Australian Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner's view of best practice. DEWR complies with these guidelines.

The Incentives System data matching program has been developed in accordance with the Guidelines on Data Matching in Australian Government Administration 2014 (Guidelines) published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). The Guidelines aim to assist agencies to use data matching as an administrative tool in a way that complies with the APP and the Privacy Act and is consistent with good privacy practice. They set out the legal basis for any collection, use or disclosure of personal information involved in the data matching program. They also set out the objectives of the program and the procedures to be employed.

Description of the STP Data-matching Program

Summary of the Program

Using the data matching program DEWR will attempt to source payroll data from the ATO for individuals who are, or who have been, signed up as an Australian Apprentice. DEWR will provide the ATO with information relating to employers and apprentices from DEWR's IT systems. The ATO will match the information against their data holdings to verify DEWR information.

As a first step, the data matching program will identify those individuals that have a relationship with both DEWR and the ATO (referred to as "mutual clients"). This is done by DEWR providing information about its apprentices to the ATO, and the ATO matching that information against ATO records to locate a customer match. Where there is a customer match to a high level of confidence, the customer will be added to the ATO's Mutual Client Register (MCR).

For those apprentices added to the MCR, DEWR will provide the employer details to the ATO. The ATO will match this employer information against their records to establish a "Related Party" arrangement. The ATO then provides DEWR with STP data it holds for those mutual clients, but only for the Related Party (i.e. the apprentice and employer). Additionally, the data provided will only be for those periods between the apprenticeship start and end dates.

DEWR will use new technology solutions to support the transfer of the STP data set from the ATO to DEWR. DEWR will use the STP data set to modernise the way we work to deliver a simple, helpful, respectful and transparent experience for apprentices and employers by supporting:

- confirmation that the employer or apprentice is eligible to receive an incentive under the Incentives System; and
- validation of information provided by the employer or apprentice claiming an incentive under the Incentives System.

Objectives

The objectives of this data matching program are to:

- where possible, reduce the need for our employers to provide wage evidence to substantiate their claim for payment.
- reduce employer burden by minimising the contact that employers must have with DEWR to provide payroll information in support of their incentive payments, including the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement (BAC) and the Completing Apprenticeship Commencement (CAC) wage subsidies and Incentives System payments.
- create efficiencies for DEWR and its contracted Providers in administering the Incentives System.

- confirm the continuing employment of an apprentice which would in-turn reduce the overpayments generated when an apprenticeship ends.
- provide an opportunity to potentially re-engage an apprentice shortly after the cessation of their apprenticeship, further enhancing the opportunity of a recommencement.

Outcomes

In achieving the objectives of the data-matching program, DEWR will achieve the following outcomes:

- Making digital services that are simple, efficient, and better connected, in alignment with Government priorities.
- Where available, reduce the red tape that employers and apprentices currently face in gathering documentary evidence for making relevant Incentives System Incentive claims
- improve processing times for relevant Australian Apprenticeship Incentive claims and
- assist in reducing overpayments and avoiding debt recovery.

Agencies Involved

The ATO is the sole source agency that supplies data to DEWR for the purposes of this data matching program. The ATO solely relies on STP data provided to them from employers reporting through STP.

DEWR is the sole matching agency using data from the ATO as part of this data matching program. DEWR will only receive STP data from the ATO for individuals who have a relationship with DEWR as clients of interest listed on the MCR, which have a valid Related Party. The STP data will be matched against conditions falling within the data exchange agreement and used to deliver the objectives outlined above.

The Data Matching Process

For the ATO to identify mutual clients of interest, DEWR will disclose personal information for individuals and employers who enter an Australian Apprenticeship (clients of interest and related parties) to the ATO.

The data exchange will be based on the following:

- **DEWR Client of interest** – An Australian apprentice/ trainee with an approved Training Contract.
- **Related Party** – Employer and apprentice/ trainee relationship
- **Agreement** - Apprenticeship/traineeship start and end dates.

The ATO will provide the source data to DEWR.

Entity	Activities
DEWR	DEWR to manage MCR requests for clients of interest, Agreement and Related Party. DEWR matches the STP data returned by the ATO to confirm it has been linked to the relevant client of interest, and then use the data in accordance within business processes (if applicable).
ATO	The ATO to process MCR requests, match the clients of interest, and exchange related STP data where there is a valid Related Party and active Agreement (if applicable and available) with DEWR.

The purpose of the MCR is to identify mutual ATO/DEWR clients of interest to be recorded for STP data exchange. A client of interest is identified by DEWR when a training contract is approved for an Apprenticeship. This is to ensure DEWR only receives STP data where there is legal authority. Not every DEWR client of interest will be able to be matched with the ATO and added onto the MCR. Any identity matching undertaken by the ATO is outside the scope of this Program.

DEWR will undertake pre-validation checks on client data before sending clients of interest to ATO to match on the MCR. DEWR data matching capabilities will be used to compare various elements and/or combinations of the following fields, for each client of interest, to determine matches:

- name
- date of birth
- postal address
- telephone number
- email address

Data Elements

The data elements relating to the clients of interest, included within the data file exchange for a valid apprentice are:

- name
- date of birth
- postal address
- telephone number
- email address
- DEWR unique Id

Related Party data elements sent by DEWR are:

- Employer ABN
- Apprenticeship start and end dates.

Data exchange Agreement data elements sent by DEWR are:

- Apprenticeship start and end dates.

Where the ATO is able to match the above client of interest data elements with a high level of confidence, to a ATO client, a MCR relationship is established. This matched relationship, along with a valid Related Party and active Agreement will provide the confirmation for on-going exchange of STP data between both agencies.

A change of circumstance in a client of interest's apprenticeship (e.g. cancellation, suspensions, re-commencements) will result in DEWR adjusting the associated Agreement and Related Party(ies). DEWR will send updates to the ATO to adjust the MCR and the ATO will cease exchanging STP pay event data for any period in which there is no valid Related Party or active Agreement.

The information returned to DEWR via STP data exchange with the ATO will contain the clients of interest payroll information such as:

- Year-to-date payment details (e.g.: income, allowances, deductions, employment termination payments)
- Pay period details (e.g.: start and end dates, payment dates)
- Employment commencement and cessation dates.

Full details of the data elements within the exchange agreement are set out in **Appendix A**.

Action resulting from the Program

DEWR will not solely rely on matched STP data to make decisions on apprentice or employers' eligibility and entitlements to Australian Apprenticeship Incentives.

STP data will be exchanged from the ATO to DEWR to inform, where possible, Australian Apprenticeship Incentive wage evidence verification and incentive eligibility. The accuracy of the STP data will be confirmed through contact with employers and/or apprentices, or by reference to reliable secondary sources of data.

Where possible, DEWR will use STP data to prefill or validate wage evidence for relevant Australian Apprenticeship Incentive claims and assist in identifying changes in an apprentice's employment that has an impact on eligibility. This information will be able to be confirmed by apprentices and employers when providing evidence in support of their claim.

Data Issues

Number of records in the data exchange

This program applies to the total number of expected apprentices at the commencement of STP data exchange, which is approximately 450,000. The number of individuals for whom this program applies may change when STP data exchange begins, due to evolving impacts such as COVID-19 on the economic environment.

Data Quality

Poor data quality is of limited value in data-matching. DEWR verifies the quality and integrity of the data received from the ATO.

Data quality mechanisms include:

- The ATO will provide data for clients of interest where there is a high confidence regarding the identification of the 'right' individual.
- The STP Data Quality Assurance (QA) framework and processes are followed to ensure:
 - Confidence that the identity of the Payee in STP data is matched to the identity of the DEWR apprentice and employer it has reported
 - Where any key data elements fail validation, the STP data will be quarantined from use
 - Where risks of unexpected or out of order payroll processing of the STP data is identified, the STP data will be flagged to minimise misinterpretation in its use.

Both DEWR and the ATO will jointly be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the data exchange through an exceptions handling process, which will promptly notify the other party of any issues

and/or incomplete records and will reach agreement on secure procedures for data transfer and storage – to be followed.

Data Integrity

DEWR maintains a high level of data integrity. Measures taken to maintain integrity levels include designing systems that will not accept records that are incomplete and identifying records that have data items that are inadequate or corrupt. In relation to this data-matching program, if a client of interest match is of low confidence, no STP data will be exchanged.

DEWR has an obligation to provide access to quality skills, training and employment to support Australians find secure work in fair, productive and safe workplaces - supporting individuals, businesses and our nation to prosper. This is aided through the maintenance of high-quality data. DEWR will continue to work collaboratively with the ATO to develop quality assurance processes that help to ensure the integrity of the data without compromise.

The data will be supplied in accordance with reporting specifications, which are inclusive of record layout and data format for each record. Data will be transformed into a standardised format and validated to ensure that it contains the required data elements before it is loaded into DEWR ICT systems.

Data Security

Data will be transferred into a standardised format and validated to ensure that it contains the required data elements prior to being exchanged between DEWR and the ATO.

The ATO and DEWR exchange data uses Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and Message Queue (MQ) and security transfer process. These mechanisms provide secure and trusted communications across government jurisdictions.

DEWR has implemented the Authentication flow to call ATO's APIs according to the ATOs requirements, and a new queue was created on the existing queue manager between the ATO and DEWR for the MQ Data exchange. The data is classified as OFFICIAL: Sensitive.

DEWR's core systems have strict security controls. Only users with a business need to access data are able to view the STP data provided under this program, with that being managed by authentication, authorisation and security roles to ensure that access to information is on a need only basis.

DEWR staff are subject to existing security controls and confidentiality provisions under laws including: the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Crimes Act 1914* and the *Public Service Act 1999*. The Apprenticeship Program receives its authority through the FMA Act and is managed through their guidelines and provider contracts. The exception is Trade Support Loans (TSL) which is managed under the *Trade Support Loans Act 2014*.

In addition to that, the Apprenticeship Application is being developed to comply with [ISM2106] (June 2021) control measures. This provides protection and control in regards, but not limited to:

- Cyber Security Roles
- Cyber Security Incidents
- Physical Security
- Personnel Security
- Communications
- System Monitoring and Management
- Software Development
- Data Bases and Data Transfers
- Networking and Gateways

The ATO is responsible for its own security with respect to its staff and access to the data. The ATO is subject to existing security controls and is subject to:

- *the Privacy Act 1988*
- *the Taxation Administration Act 1953*
- *the Crimes Act 1914*
- *the Public Service Act 1999.*

Access to the ATO's computer systems is aligned with the Protective Security Policy Framework, Australian Government Information Security Manual and is subject to requests for system access, which include reminders about privacy and security obligations. Security features include logon identification codes and passwords. All access to systems is monitored and logged. Existing security arrangements in DEWR automatically log user access to data files.

Time limits applying to the Program

The first data matching activity is intended to be conducted as soon as practicable, and to occur at regular intervals as required over the life of the Incentive System.

DEWR will handle the data received from the ATO in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, the *Archives Act 1983* and any relevant records authority.

Public Notice – STP Data-matching Program

The Program will be published on the DEWR website. A notice will also be published in the Australian Government Gazette (refer

Attachment A) before the use of the STP data.

Reasons for conducting the Program

Relationship to lawful functions

The data matching program relates to DEWR's lawful function of limiting payments to those eligible under the [Australian Apprentices Training Incentive Program Guidelines](#).

Legal authority

The disclosure of information by DEWR to the ATO is consistent with the primary purpose for which the information was collected which is to determine eligibility, make payments and general program administration, and is authorised by APP 6.1. In addition, there is a reasonable basis to apply the exception at APP 6.2(a) which provides a lawful basis to facilitate data disclosure.

ATO is permitted to disclose data to DEWR under Section 355-65(2) Table 1, Item 4B of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*.

Alternative methods

There are no practical alternatives to this data matching program, as the relevant data (payroll information) is held by the ATO.

Prior Data-matching Programs

There has been one data-matching program prior to this Program. This was the Supporting Apprentices and Trainees data matching program.

Costs and benefits for Data-matching Programs

DEWR and the ATO will incur the costs to conduct the data-matching Program, however, these will be offset by the benefits delivered by the Program. The activities described in this Program are part of the 2019-20 Federal Budget Measure – 'Single Touch Payroll – expansion and new Apprenticeship Data Management System (ADMS) build announced at 2020-21 Budget.

The costs include:

- New technical solutions to exchange STP data between DEWR and the ATO
- Data analysis resources to identify and analyse the data to detect data quality issues
- Governance resources to ensure compliance with the Guidelines and Privacy Act, and quality assurance processes to ensure the rigor of the work undertaken by analysts and staff
- Resources for the purpose of data discovery efforts
- Storage of the data.

There are benefits for stakeholder groups such as:

Employers – A reduction in administrative burden and realisation of benefits of the STP investment due to fewer ad-hoc requests for information from government, accompanied with streamlined processes for ongoing reporting of payroll information.

Individuals – Fewer touch points with Government, simplified reporting obligations and greater confidence in the accuracy of payments.

Government – There will be more complete evidence base from which to make policy and payment decisions, enhanced integrity of the incentive payment system, reduced overpayments beyond the cessation of apprenticeships, and new opportunities to automate and enhance existing processes to improve government efficiency.

Appendix A – STP data sets

Data from DEWR to the ATO.

Table 1 – Data Fields for MCR

Description
<u>Mutual Client of Interest Request</u>
Apprentice ID
Surname
First Name
Other Given Name
Year of Birth
Month of Birth
Day of Birth
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Suburb
Post Code
State Code
Country Code
Telephone Number
Email Address
<u>Relationship Request</u>
Apprentice ID
ABN
Start Date
End Date
<u>Agreement Request</u>
Apprentice ID
Start Date
End Date (Null)

Data from the ATO to DEWR

Table 2 – STP Data Fields

Description
The financial year that the payevent relates to.
Payer who has reported the Payevent to the ATO. It is an active Australian Business Number (ABN) as registered on the ABR or the Withholding Payer Number (WPN) issued by the ATO.
Payer's external identification type.
The branch number of an organisation.
The Business Management software system used by the employer.
Payee's external identifier from the MCR based on the external agency's agreement.
The DEWR's identification type for the Payee from the MCR.
Identifier allocated by the payer payroll system to identify a payee.
The Previous Business Management Software ID is used to transfer payee year to data values from an old Business Management Software ID to the new Business Management Software ID for the payee.
The Previous Payroll ID
Payee's payevent transaction ID.
The event type of the lodgement.
The status of the exchange event.
Date timestamp that reflects the year to data figures for a payee at that exact point in time.
Date the PAYEVNT message is received in the incoming channel
When this field is for a Submit event, Update event or ATO Update event
Indicates whether the report is the employer's final payroll for the specified reporting period. It can be reverted to FALSE at any point
The initial date of the period for the payevent. Only provided on a submit event.
The final date of the period for the payevent. Only provided on a submit event.
The Lodgement Channel Version of the payevent that is determined by the software generating and sending PAYEVNT to the ATO. Currently, this can be 2018 or 2020.
The ID of the software product.
Identifier for a batch of transactions related to the same payer transaction id.
The code describing the action completed based on the low confidence.
The name of the organisation as reported in the PAYEVNT
The branch number of an organisation, as reported by the payer.
Identifies the associated parent's payevent transaction ID.

Description
The name of the person who can be contacted regarding the STP Payevent.
The postcode of the Payers registered ABN address or principal place of business.
The country of the Payers registered ABN address or principal place of business.
The email for the nominated contact person for the payer.
The telephone number for the nominated contact person for the Payer.
The payee's contractor ABN.
The payee's family name.
The payee's first name.
The payee's other name.
The payee's date of birth.
The payee's address line 1.
The payee's address line 2.
The payee's locality/suburb.
The payee's state or territory.
The payee's postcode.
The payee's country.
The payee's phone number.
The commencement date when a payee started employment or is rehired using the same Payroll ID.
The cessation date when a payee ended employment using the same Payroll ID.
The reason the payer and payee relationship has ceased.
The basis of payment indicates the type of working arrangement between the payer and payee.
The income type of payment that is reported.
Gross remuneration amount less other amounts reported elsewhere for the income type.
Gross bonuses and commissions for the income type.
Gross overtime amount for the income type.
Gross Income Directors Fee amount for the income type.
Gross paid leave amount.
The type of Lump sum payment for the income type.
Gross amount of a lump sum payment made to a payee.
The allowance type.

Description
The description or justification of the type of allowance paid to an individual for the income type that is not classified elsewhere.
Gross Allowance amount.
The date when the employment termination payment was made to the employee.
The Employment Termination Payment Tax Free component for the corresponding ETP code.
The Employment Termination Payment Taxable component amount for the Corresponding ETP code.

Matching Techniques

Identity Matching

The ATO and DEWR establish an MCR. The purpose of the MCR is to identify mutual ATO/DEWR clients of interest to be recorded for STP data exchange. A client of interest is identified by DEWR when a training contract is approved for an Apprenticeship. This is to ensure DEWR only receives STP data where there is legal authority. Not every DEWR client of interest will be able to be matched with the ATO and added onto the MCR. Any identity matching undertaken by the ATO is outside the scope of these Program.

These Program are associated with the data matching undertaken by DEWR. DEWR will undertake pre-validation checks on client data before sending clients of interest to ATO to match on the MCR. DEWR data matching capabilities will be used to compare various elements and/or combinations of the following fields, for each client of interest, to determine matches:

- name
- date of birth
- postal address
- telephone number
- email address

Payroll Information Matching

Once the STP data is received by DEWR, it is matched against data extracted from internal DEWR records.

Business rules may be applied to this data to check if there is a difference in the information reported to DEWR by apprentices and employers compared to the information reported by employers through STP.

If differences are identified, the apprentice or employer may be asked to confirm their continuation in their apprenticeship, or the wage details provided in support of an incentive claim.

Risks

Incorrect identity matches

There is a risk that DEWR might use payroll information for the wrong individual in the event of an incorrect match.

DEWR will not rely on information received from STP alone. The ATO will only send DEWR STP data where they are confident that they have matched the right payroll information to the right DEWR record.

Data quality controls and audit

DEWR will not solely rely on any matched STP data to make decisions affecting apprentice's or employer's eligibility and incentive entitlements. Before STP data is acted upon, additional checks will take place to ensure the data is correct and accurate. Apprentices and employers will be provided with the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information.

Attachment A – Gazette notice content

Gazette notice content

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Notice of a data matching program for the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System) and Trade Support Loans (TSL)

The Department Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) will acquire data from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to support administration of the *Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Incentives System) and Trade Support Loans (TSL)*.

This data will include information about businesses currently employing apprentices, as well as information about apprentices who were previously employed by a business.

It is estimated the data matching will capture records that relate to around 450,000 training contracts contained in the Department's Apprenticeship Data Management System (ADMS).

The records will be electronically matched with ATO data holdings. The objectives of the data matching program are to:

- where possible, reduce the need for our employers to provide wage evidence to substantiate their claim for payment.
- reduce employer burden by minimising the contact that employers and apprentices must have with DEWR to provide payroll information in support of their incentive payments, including but not limited to the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement (BAC) and the Completing Apprenticeship Commencement (CAC) wage subsidies.
- create efficiencies for DEWR and its contracted Providers in administering the Incentives System.
- confirm the continuing employment of an apprentice which would in-turn reduce the overpayments generated when an apprenticeship ends.
- provide an opportunity to potentially re-engage an apprentice shortly after the cessation of their apprenticeship, further enhancing the opportunity of a recommencement.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations complies with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's Guidelines on data matching in Australian government administration (2014) which includes standards for data matching to protect the privacy of individuals. A full copy of the Department's privacy policy can be accessed at www.dewr.gov.au/about-department/resources/dewr-privacy-policy