

Title	Open Data Policy
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Approval authority	Executive Team
Responsible officer	Coordinator Asset and Geospatial Systems
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Human Rights compatibility	This policy has been assessed and is compatible with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights of Responsibilities

1. Purpose

To improve the management and use of data assets in support of an open data policy which will deliver value and benefits for Council, Yarra based businesses and the Yarra community.

2. Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Yarra City Council is committed to the implementation of an open data policy that encompasses all segments of council.

Open data provides new opportunities for commercial applications, improves time-to-market for business, and can form the foundation for new technological innovation, better, more informed decision making, improved service provision and support economic growth. Third parties without the resources to gather data for themselves are able to repurpose it, and utilise the information to develop new applications and services. Information provided in this way is also significant for the academic, public-sector, and industry-based research communities. Open data vastly increases the value of information and allows it to travel and be utilised to its full potential.

For data to be considered completely open, it must conform to the following:

Accessibility	Open to everyone, easy to discover
Cost	Available at no cost
Machine Readable	Available in formats easily retrieved and processed by computers
Use Rights	Licensed to enable data reuse and redistribution

This recognises that the above situation for open data is not always possible or appropriate and that in some instances more restrictive licences may be necessary or a charge may be applied.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to improve management and use of data assets to deliver value and benefits for Council, Yarra based businesses and the Yarra community.

By opening access to its data, Council's objective is to increase productivity and improve service delivery by supporting innovation, research, education and evidence based decision making.

The objective of this policy is to apply open data principles within Council (across Council business units) and to provide open data access to the private sector, Yarra residents and the general public.

By applying these principles to its operations, Council will:

- Improve the quality of council data that will support better informed decision making
- Promote transparency, improve performance, foster collaboration, innovation and community participation, drive the way we operate
- Help local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive
- Promote development of new businesses and industries that can build on council data
- Facilitate greater awareness and understanding across Council Business Units of the data for which they are responsible and its potential use.
- Improve citizen engagement with Council.
- Support evidence based policy and practice across all business units

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Council business units

The target beneficiaries of this policy are Council itself, Yarra residents, Yarra businesses and industry.

Implementing the objectives of this policy will not be instantaneous, it will evolve over time. Initially business units should focus on determining and reviewing the data that they collect, its format, frequency of capture, quality and potential use, not just within their own operations, but corporately.

4. PUBLISHING OPEN DATA

The Information Services Steering Committee (ISSC) will be tasked with overseeing the data quality processes within business units and the publishing of council data. The Information Services Steering Committee (ISSC) will have responsibility for evaluating open data against legislative requirements, the value and intended outcome against the cost and potential implications of making the data open.

All open data publishing proposals must be submitted to the Information Services Steering Committee (ISSC) for ratification.

5. DATA QUALITY

It's important that users have confidence in the data they are accessing and using and are made aware of any caveats relating to it. To enable user to determine data suitability, data should be published with a metadata (data about data) statement relating to its purpose and quality.

It may be acceptable to publish incomplete or less than optimum quality data so long as it is accompanied by sufficient information to inform users of any limitations.

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1 Open by Default

Council has adopted a position of data openness with an emphasis on data release unless there is a compelling reason to restrict or preclude access for reasons of privacy, confidentiality, sensitivity or other relevant considerations.

6.2 Cost

Whenever possible, data should be made available at no, or minimal cost to users. It is considered that this approach will encourage maximum use of the data. However, this policy recognises that there may be legitimate instances for applying a reasonable charge for the data.

6.3 Prioritised

Dataset should be prioritised for release to enable discovery and innovative use by individuals and organisations. In particular high-value datasets aligned with demand from other Council business units, the public and industry as determined through stakeholder consultation.

6.4 Discoverable

Council data will be published on the Federal Government's online portal data.gov.au. The portal provides an easy way to find, access and reuse public datasets from the government sector. The main purpose of the site is to encourage public access to and reuse of public data. The site was created following the Australian Government's Declaration of Open Government. It also provides hosting for tabular, spatial and relational data with hosted application programming interfaces (APIs) and the option for agencies to link data and services hosted by other government sources. Improving the quantity and quality of the government data and the data.gov.au stack will be an ongoing process.

6.5 Usable

Data should be published in a format that makes it easy to use, transform and reuse. Commonly accepted open data standards such as those proposed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) should be implemented as far as possible to enhance data usability. Characteristics that support data usability include:

- Machine processable formats
- Non-proprietary formats
- Completeness,
- Clear high quality metadata

Standardised metadata provides descriptive and contextual information that makes the dataset understandable and as a consequence, more useful.

Data should be licenced appropriately with clear terms surrounding copyright and use. Where possible and appropriate, a non-restrictive licence should be employed to maximise dissemination and reuse of the data.

There may be some instances where special copyright arrangements or more restrictive licences are necessary. It will be a requirement of individual business units to, where applicable, recommend any data licensing arrangements to the Open Data Committee who will be responsible for determining the appropriate course of action in these instances.

6.6 Protected where required

A large amount of data collected by Council will be suitable for public release. However there will be instances where the data will need to be protected and thus, access restricted or precluded, including:

- Privacy – where personal or sensitive information is involved that can be identified with an individual, or may be involved as an unintended result of data linking or combination.
- Security – because of the nature of the data or information;

- Confidentiality – arising because of the nature of the data or information itself or because a contractual arrangement has been made in relation to the data or information;
- Legal privilege – relating to certain legal advice;
- Commercial – such as commercial in confidence, patent pending, or intellectual property considerations; and
- Public interest – if there are public interest considerations against release and, on balance, they outweigh the public interest considerations.

6.7 Timely

Published data should be current, and if considered practical, live with real-time feeds provided as appropriate and where this enhances the utility of the dataset.

Datasets should include timestamps or other information for users to identify the currency of the data, newer, updated data should be made available to users in a timely manner.

6.8 Data Governance

It is important for user to have confidence that the data they are accessing is trustworthy and authoritative.

Data must be well managed to help ensure its ongoing integrity and efficacy for users. Council will establish a Data Governance Framework that will apply to all council business units. Once in place, it will be the responsibility of data custodians (council business units) to ensure that all data is maintained in accordance with the Data Governance Framework.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Implementation of this Policy must be consistent with and operate within any applicable legislation, policy and strategic framework. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Copyright Act 1986
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Local Government Act 1989
- City of Yarra Council Plan 2017 – 2021
- City of Yarra ICT Strategy
- City of Yarra Data Governance Framework (under development)
- Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement
- Data Vic Access Policy
- Public Records Act 1973