

Using Data Better in Victoria

Consultation summary report

Introduction

The Victorian Government is improving data sharing across government to deliver better services for Victorians. Work underway to modernise the way the government uses data includes:

- setting up the [Victorian Centre for Data Insights \(VCDI\)](#) to improve the way we share and use data within government
- developing new laws that clearly set out how data can be responsibly shared across government, with strong protections to maintain privacy and data security.

To help inform the work underway, the Department of Premier and Cabinet sought feedback from Victorians via the Engage Vic website on how and why their data should be shared and used within government.

This report summarises the feedback received. This feedback has been used in developing the [Victorian Data Sharing Bill 2017](#), and is informing the approach and work of the VCDI.

Consultation results

In total, 135 responses were received from a combination of citizens and organisations within the community (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondent type

Respondent	Number	Percent
Citizen	73	54%
Organisation	13	10%
Both	49	36%
Total	135	100%

The consultation sought feedback from respondents against the following four questions:

1. What are the key things we should focus on when setting up this new data sharing framework (including new laws) that will make sure we do this in the right way?
2. Having your trust when using data is important to us. What can the VCDI do to build your trust?
3. Which areas do you think the VCDI should focus our projects on?
4. Is there anything else we may have missed, or you think is important?

Questions one to three had pre-determined options for respondents to select from, along with an optional field for other suggestions. Question four was for respondents to add any other things they considered important, that was not covered by the previous questions.

As respondents were asked to select more than one option for each question, the figures presented are calculated as the number of votes each option attracted, as a percentage of the total votes received for that question.

Results for each question are summarised below.

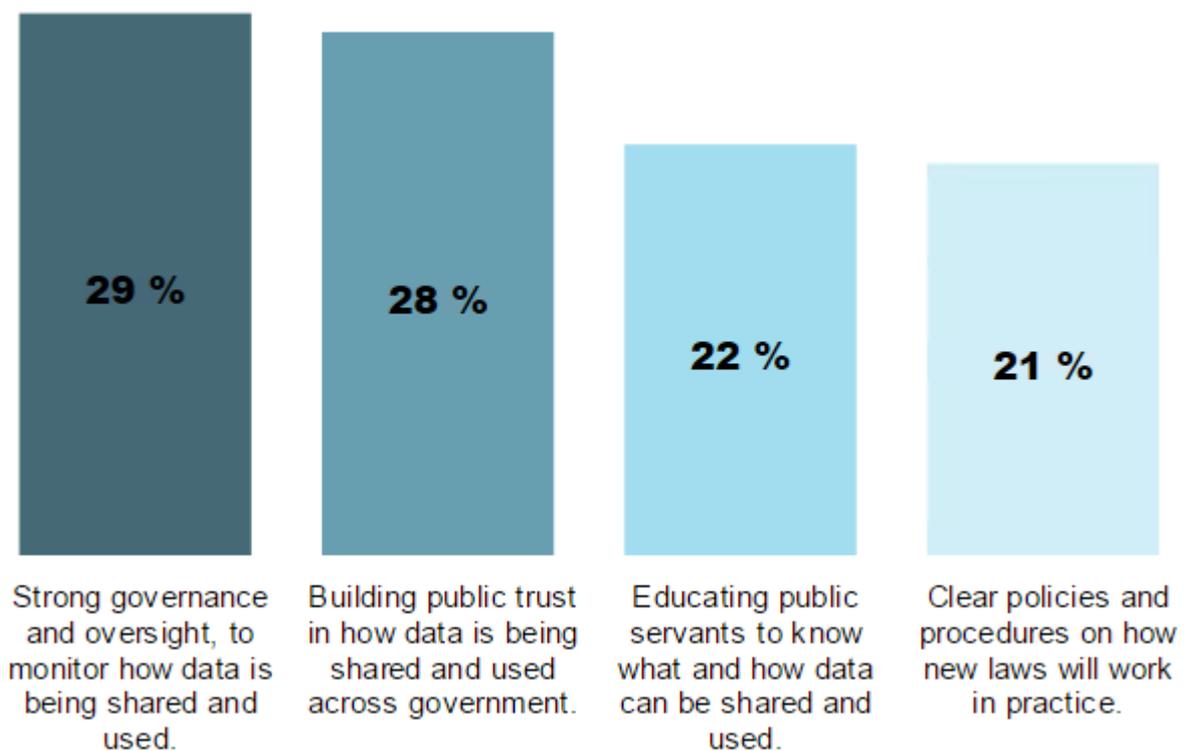
Question 1 – areas of focus

Respondents were asked to distribute two votes across four possible options on what the VCDI should focus on when setting up this new data sharing framework.

The highest percentage of votes were allocated to:

- strong governance and oversight to monitor how data is being shared and used (29%)
- building public trust in how data is being shared and used across government (28%)

Figure 1. Factors VCDI should focus on when setting up a new data sharing framework



Respondents were also asked to suggest any other factors VCDI should focus on when setting up this new data sharing framework. Suggestions received included:

- strong penalties for misuse
- mechanisms to preserve privacy and security, and respond to potential breaches
- transparency around data collection and use
- consultation with the public on data use
- individual control over what data is shared

Question 2 – building trust

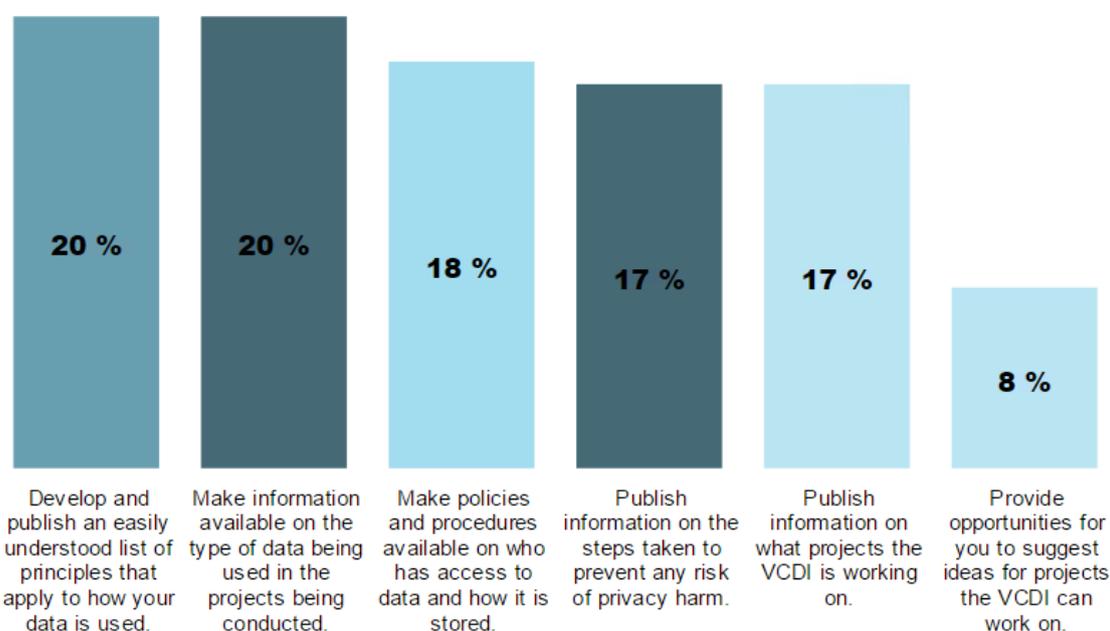
Respondents were asked to distribute three votes across six possible options for how the VCDI can build trust when using citizen data.

The highest percentage of votes were allocated to:

- make information available on the type of data being used in projects (20%)
- develop and publish an easily understood list of principles that apply how citizen data is used (20%)
- make policies and procedures available on who has access to data and how it is stored (18%)

Only a small proportion of respondents (8%) think it's important to provide opportunities to suggest ideas for projects the VCDI can work on.

Figure 2. What the VCDI can do to build your trust



Other suggestions of things the VCDI could do build trust included:

- outline a clear and transparent framework for data sharing and use
- mandatory breach reporting
- reduce risks of re-identification
- transparency on how data is being used, and how it can improve lives
- secure storage of data
- auditing by external data experts and specialised training for Victorian Public Service (VPS) staff

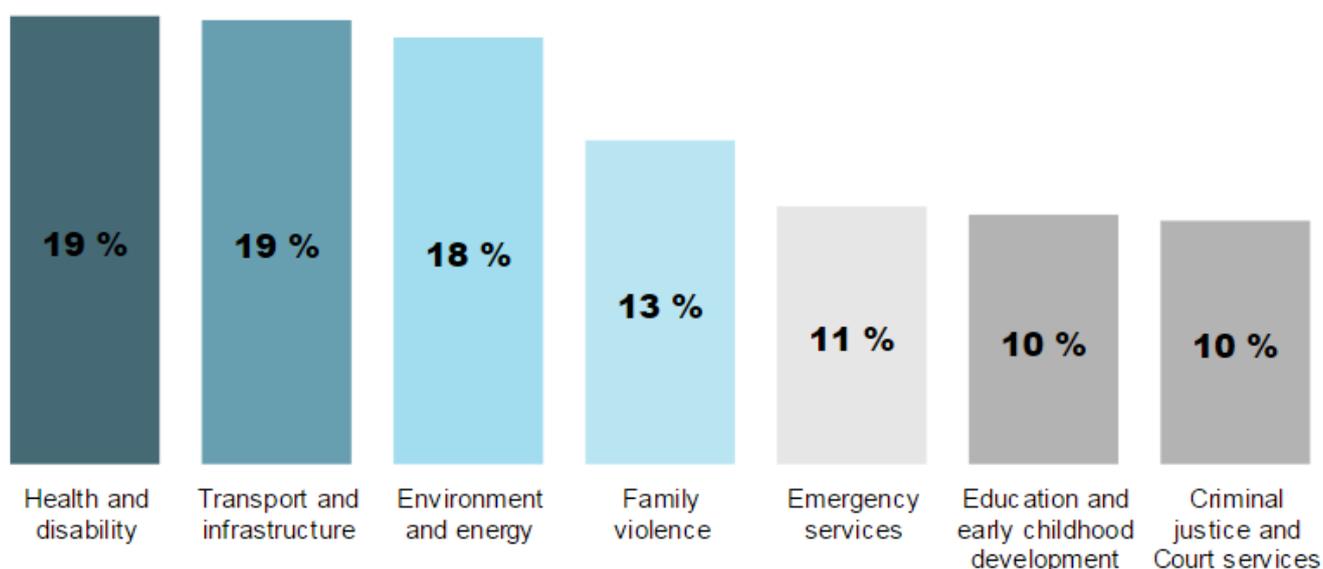
Question 3 – areas of focus for VCDI projects

Respondents were asked to distribute three votes across seven possible options for areas the VCDI should focus projects on.

The highest percentage of votes were allocated to:

- health and disability (19%)
- transport and infrastructure (19%)
- environment and energy (18%)

Figure 3. What areas the VCDI should focus projects on



Other suggestions for areas for projects included:

- equality
- urban planning
- aged care
- mental health
- child protection

Additional feedback

Respondents were asked if there was anything else they think is important. Common themes raised are outlined below.

- **Complexity of the term:** data is an ambiguous term and government should more clearly explain to citizens what data is.
- **Community participation:** government should explain to the community what data is being used, how it's being used, and where possible work in collaboration on projects.
- **Making sure data is used in the right way:** concerns were raised that data could be used to negatively impact citizen's lives, rather than improve policy making and service design.

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- **Citizen control of personal information:** individuals should be able to opt-out of information collection, and request or delete their own information.
 - **Security of personal information:** concerns were raised about the ability of the government to keep their personal information safe, and to respond effectively to potential hacks.
 - **Reducing duplication across government:** the importance of the new data sharing framework considering existing data initiatives in Victoria and across jurisdictions, so it does not duplicate work already underway.
 - **Guidance and training for VPS staff:** the importance for VPS staff to have guidance and opportunities to build capability in order to make better use of data.
 - **Public release:** that data be used as an asset, and where possible, opportunities for the public release of data be taken to enable its use beyond government.