



# Data strategy

April 2026



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# Foreword

## A message from our Chief Data Officer

Data is central to how the Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care (OIGAC) delivers informed, independent oversight of how the Australian Government plans, funds, and administers the aged care system. The strength of our reviews, reports, monitoring and operational activities depends on the quality, integrity, and appropriate use of the data that underpins them.

This data strategy sets clear expectations for how OIGAC governs, manages, and uses data, recognising it as a shared organisational asset rather than the responsibility of individual teams or systems.

This strategy responds to an operating environment of increasing data volumes, heightened expectations of transparency, and growing responsibility to handle data safely, lawfully, and ethically.

The strategy establishes a clear and deliberate progression. It begins by strengthening data governance, setting the roles, accountabilities, and decision-rights that underpin responsible data use. It then focuses on embedding consistent, fit-for-purpose data management practices into day-to-day work, ensuring data is trusted, secure, and used appropriately across its lifecycle. Finally, the strategy recognises the particular responsibility involved with managing data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the need to apply our governance and management arrangements in ways that uphold Indigenous data governance rights and support culturally safe practices.

This strategy is not a standalone technical document. It is an enabling framework that:

- supports how OIGAC works as an organisation
- strengthens the evidence base for our oversight functions
- reinforces public confidence in the integrity of our work.

The success of this strategy depends on shared ownership and sustained commitment across OIGAC.

As our Chief Data Officer, I am committed to ensuring the principles and expectations set out in this strategy are embedded into our ways of working, and that OIGAC's approach to data continues to mature in line with our legislative responsibilities, corporate plan, and the needs of the communities affected by aged care policy and administration.

Liz Callaghan  
Chief Data Officer  
Agency Executive Director  
April 2026

# Strategic vision and context

## Vision

Data underpins OIGAC's ability to deliver its purpose of driving greater accountability and transparency across the Australian aged care system through independent, systemic oversight. High-quality, trusted data provides us with a strong evidence base with which to identify systemic issues, support robust reviews and reporting, and inform Government, the aged care sector, and the public.

Consistent with OIGAC's corporate plan, this data strategy recognises that our influence and impact rely on the quality, integrity, and credibility of the evidence that supports our work. Treating data as an organisational asset is essential to maintaining independence, strengthening transparency, and ensuring confidence in OIGAC's findings and recommendations.

The strategy sets out how we will do this in practice—by governing, managing, and using data in ways that are safe, lawful, ethical, and fit for purpose, while building staff capability and embedding good data practices into everyday work.

## Context

OIGAC operates in an increasingly data rich environment, drawing on a growing volume and diversity of data to support oversight, reviews, reporting, and monitoring activities. This context brings both opportunity and responsibility: the opportunity to strengthen insight and impact through better use of data, and the responsibility to ensure data is managed, protected, and used appropriately.

OIGAC's work draws on a wide range of data sources to examine systemwide issues, assess performance, and highlight the experiences of those most affected by aged care policy and administration. As a small, agile agency, OIGAC must use data efficiently and responsibly to maximise the impact of our work.

To meet these expectations, OIGAC requires:

- **Clear governance** that defines accountabilities, decision rights, and expectations for data across the organisation.
- **Consistent data management practices** that ensure data is trusted, secure, and fit for purpose throughout its lifecycle.
- **Culturally safe and rights-based approaches** to Indigenous data that respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' authority to govern data about them.

This strategy responds to this context by setting a structured pathway for maturity, recognising that effective data use depends on clear sequencing and alignment. Governance must come first; management practices must operationalise governance; and Indigenous data practices must apply these foundations in ways that uphold Indigenous data governance rights.

## Alignment with OIGAC's corporate plan

This data strategy supports delivery of OIGAC's corporate plan by strengthening the evidence base that underpins independent oversight, and by embedding consistent, accountable, and culturally safe data practices. Its sequenced focus on governance, management practices, and capability reflects the corporate plan's emphasis on integrity, transparency, and trust.

# Objective 1: Data governance

*Laying the groundwork for consistent data practices that recognise data as an organisational asset, supported by emerging enterprise governance and executive leadership.*

Objective	Priorities	Actions
Embed strong data governance to maximise data value across OIGAC	Build accountable data frameworks aligned to strategic priorities and outcomes	Establish and embed effective data governance across the agency

## What does this look like?

	<p><b>Our objective</b></p> <p>Define, communicate, and implement a good data governance framework to ensure OIGAC uses data safely, consistently, and in ways that maximise its value. Embed a strong data governance culture.</p>
	<p><b>Our priorities</b></p> <p>Develop a data framework and related policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide clear accountability for data</li> <li>• promote safe, lawful, and ethical use of data</li> <li>• improve data quality, consistency, and fitness for purpose</li> <li>• support better decision-making and outcomes</li> <li>• supports OIGAC's strategic priorities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Our actions</b></p> <p>Establish and implement a data governance framework to embed a strong data governance culture.</p>

## Our data governance framework

In establishing a data governance framework, we will provide a structured, principles-based approach to how data is managed, used and protected across OIGAC. It will establish clear decision rights, roles, and accountabilities for data throughout its lifecycle, ensuring data is handled safely, lawfully and ethically. The framework will support consistent practices across the agency, improve data quality and fitness for purpose, and ensure data is accessible, discoverable and usable to support effective decision-making and oversight.

The framework will be supported by aligned policies, standards and guidance that embed data governance into everyday business practices. It will promote a strong data governance culture by clarifying individual and collective responsibilities for data stewardship, managing risk, and maximising the value of data as a strategic organisational asset. Implementation of the framework will strengthen trust in OIGAC's data, support transparency and accountability, and ensure data use is aligned with legislative obligations and our strategic priorities.

## Actions

To establish a data governance framework, OIGAC will:

- define the scope, principles, and objectives for data governance, aligned to legislative and strategic requirements.
- establish clear data governance roles, accountabilities and decision rights across OIGAC.
- develop and endorse a data governance framework covering data across its lifecycle.
- develop supporting policies, standards, and guidance to enable safe, lawful, and ethical data use.
- embed data governance into business processes and decision-making.
- build organisational capability and awareness to support a strong data governance culture.

# Objective 2: Data management and practices

*Embedding consistent, whole-of-lifecycle data management practices that ensure data is trusted, secure and fit for purpose, enabling robust oversight, evidence-based assurance and informed scrutiny of aged care systems.*



## What does this look like?



## Our data management and practices

Data management practices at OIGAC ensure staff understand and apply good data practices throughout the data lifecycle to support high-quality, efficient, and reliable use of data.

Fit-for-purpose policies and procedures will underpin consistent data handling, reduce duplication and manual effort, and ensure confidence in the data we use to deliver our functions.

These practices will align with OIGAC's operational and strategic needs, ensuring data is managed and used in ways that enable effective oversight and evidence-based outputs. Building data awareness and capability across teams supports consistent application of good data management practices, strengthens data quality, and enables staff to use data appropriately and effectively in delivering OIGAC's functions.

## Actions

To operationalise data governance through consistent data management practices, the OIGAC will:

- define clear, fit-for-purpose data management principles and expectations that support operational and strategic oversight needs.
- develop and implement data management policies and procedures that support consistent handling of data across the full data lifecycle.
- align data management practices to OIGAC's functions and activities to ensure data is trusted, secure, and fit for purpose.
- reduce duplication and manual effort through more consistent, efficient data handling practices.
- provide practical guidance, tools, and standards to support staff in managing and using data appropriately in their day-to-day work.
- build staff skills to strengthen data quality, efficiency, and evidence-based oversight.

# Objective 3: First Nations data governance principles

## Background

OIGAC has publicly committed to developing and implementing Indigenous data practices that uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights to govern data about them. This ensures culturally safe, transparent, and accountable use across the data lifecycle.

The [Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data](#) (the Framework) sets out four guidelines for APS agencies in this area:

1. Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
2. Build data-related capabilities
3. Provide knowledge of data assets
4. Build an inclusive data system.

Along with the Framework, the following four [Priority Reforms](#) under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap have informed the development of our First Nations data Governance Principles:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision making
2. Building the community-controlled sector
3. Transforming government organisations
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

The [Commonwealth Priority Reforms Roadmap](#) is a practical guide to help the Australian Public Sector (APS) implement these Priority Reforms. It emphasises:

- Genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Cultural safety and elimination of deficit-based approaches
- Shared power and accountability
- Building APS capability and changing 'business as usual'.

These themes have been embedded across our First Nations data governance principles.

## Principles over procedures

These are principles, rather than procedures, intended to guide decision-making across the data lifecycle, consistent with how the Framework is intended to be applied across the APS. This approach also aligns with the [Inspector-General's Statement of Commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), which rejects a 'we know best' approach and calls for 'shared power' and 'deep listening reflected in action'.

## Relationship between OIGAC's Data Governance Framework and First Nations data governance principles

Our Data Governance Framework provides the overarching structure for how data is governed, managed, and used across OIGAC, including roles, accountabilities, decision-making, and lifecycle management. Our First Nations data governance principles operate within this framework as a focused application of the principles to data specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While the Data Governance Framework establishes consistent, agency-wide governance arrangements, our First Nations data governance principles provide additional guidance to ensure Indigenous data is handled in culturally safe, transparent, and accountable ways that respect rights and interests.

Together, they ensure culturally appropriate data practices are embedded within OIGAC's broader data governance approach, rather than treated as a standalone or parallel process, supporting coherent, defensible, and evidence-based oversight activities.

## The principles

### 1. Leadership, partnership, and shared power

Data relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be governed through genuine partnership, recognising their right to exercise leadership and share decision-making power over how data about them is collected, used, shared, and interpreted. This includes early and ongoing engagement across the data lifecycle, rather than consultation at the point of use. Data governance practices should support shared accountability, respect priorities, and avoid approaches that assume we know best.

#### What this may look like in practice

- Considering early whether an oversight activity (e.g. review, report, or monitoring program) involves data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and seeking appropriate internal advice on engagement, partnership, and governance before data is requested or analysed.
- Engaging relevant policy or governance stakeholders when designing data requests, analytical approaches, or lines of inquiry that rely on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data.
- Allowing time and space for feedback from relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples or appropriate organisations, representatives, or stakeholders, on how data is interpreted and reflected in draft findings, where appropriate.

### 2. Data sovereignty and authority

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data should be handled in ways that recognise their rights, interests, and authority over data about them. Data governance arrangements should support data sovereignty by enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a meaningful say in how decisions about data access, use, and governance are made. Data practices should contribute to self-determination and reflect priorities and aspirations, rather than treating data as solely a government asset.

#### What this may look like in practice

- Treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data used in reviews or reports as requiring additional governance consideration, rather than assuming it can be used in the same way as other administrative data, and including any expectations expressed by Indigenous stakeholders.
- Clearly documenting why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data is needed for an oversight activity, how its use aligns with OIGAC's statutory role, and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights and interests have been considered.

- Being cautious about secondary use of data obtained for one oversight purpose in other reviews, briefings, or activities, particularly where this use was not originally contemplated.

### 3. Culturally safe and respectful use

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data must be collected, analysed, shared, and reported in culturally safe ways that respect knowledge systems, lived experience, and context, and avoid deficit-based or harmful interpretations. Cultural considerations should inform both how data is handled and how findings are communicated.

#### What this may look like in practice

- Avoiding deficit-based framing when reporting on Indigenous outcomes in oversight reports, and ensuring findings are presented with appropriate context and limitations.
- Checking that comparative analysis does not unintentionally stigmatise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities.
- Considering whether disaggregation, aggregation, or suppression is appropriate before publishing Indigenous-related findings.

### 4. Transparency and accountability

There should be clear, accessible information about what Indigenous data is held, how it is used, and how decisions about access and use are made. Data governance arrangements should support transparency, accountability, and trust, both within OIGAC and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

#### What this may look like in practice

- Being able to clearly explain the source, purpose, and limitations of data used to support oversight findings or recommendations.
- Maintaining records of approvals, conditions, or advice received about data use during reviews or inquiries.
- Clearly distinguishing evidence drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data from other data sources in reports and briefings.
- Where appropriate, being able to explain to relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples or stakeholders how data has been used, interpreted, and reflected in oversight findings, including any key limitations or assumptions.

### 5. Purpose-driven and beneficial use

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data should be used for clear, agreed purposes that deliver public value and, where possible, provide tangible benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Data use should avoid unnecessary duplication, extractive practices, or uses that do not align with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' priorities.

#### What this may look like in practice

- Using data only where it is directly relevant to OIGAC's oversight questions and adds value to assurance or scrutiny.
- Avoiding the inclusion of data in reports simply because it is available, where it does not materially inform findings.
- Ensuring data use supports fair, evidence-based oversight rather than reinforcing pre-determined conclusions.

## 6. Capability and shared understanding

Handling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data requires appropriate capability. Staff should be supported to build understanding of data governance, cultural safety, and their responsibilities when working with information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Capability-building should support consistent, respectful application of these principles in practice.

### What this may look like in practice

- Providing staff with guidance on when data considerations apply and where to seek advice.
- Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data governance awareness into existing data, evaluation, or assurance training.
- Sharing lessons learned from previous oversight activities involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data to improve future practices.

## 7. Inclusive and evolving governance

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data governance should be embedded in broader data governance arrangements and evolve over time as relationships, capability, and expectations mature. Practices should be reviewed and improved in response to feedback, experience, and emerging guidance.

### What this may look like in practice

- Periodically reviewing how data is governed and used in oversight products to identify gaps, risks, or emerging good practice.
- Updating templates, guidance, or quality-assurance materials to reflect improved data governance practices as expectations, capability, and guidance evolve.
- Using reflections, lessons learned, and, where appropriate, feedback from relevant Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples or stakeholders to strengthen data practices in future oversight work.

## Mapping the principles to the Framework

The below table provides a clear line of sight between our principles and the Framework guidelines.

Principle	Framework guidelines	How it aligns
<b>1. Leadership, partnership and shared power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 1:</b> Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</li> </ul>	Directly reflects the Framework's requirement for genuine partnership by emphasising Indigenous leadership, shared decision-making and shared accountability across the data lifecycle, rather than consultation at the point of use.
<b>2. Data sovereignty and authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 1:</b> Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</li> <li>• <b>Guideline 4:</b> Build an inclusive data system</li> </ul>	Supports Indigenous authority over how data is governed and used, embedding Indigenous rights and interests within broader APS governance arrangements in a way that advances self-determination and inclusion.
<b>3. Culturally safe and respectful use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 4:</b> Build an inclusive data system</li> </ul>	Aligns with the Framework's emphasis on cultural change within agencies so Indigenous perspectives, knowledge systems and context are respected in how data is interpreted, shared and reported.
<b>4. Transparency and accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 3:</b> Provide knowledge of data assets</li> </ul>	Reflects the Framework's expectation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can understand what data is held about them, how it is used, and how decisions about access and use are made.
<b>5. Purpose-driven and beneficial use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 1:</b> Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> <li>• <b>Guideline 4:</b> Build an inclusive data system</li> </ul>	Reinforces the Framework's focus on using data in ways that reflect Indigenous priorities and deliver benefit, while avoiding extractive or misaligned uses of Indigenous data.
<b>6. Capability and shared understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 2:</b> Build data-related capabilities</li> </ul>	Directly supports the Framework's requirement to build APS staff capability in Indigenous data governance, alongside shared understanding with Indigenous partners.
<b>7. Inclusive and evolving governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guideline 2:</b> Build data-related capabilities</li> <li>• <b>Guideline 4:</b> Build an inclusive data system</li> </ul>	Aligns with the Framework's expectation of organisational and cultural change over time, supported by learning, reflection and continuous improvement in Indigenous data governance practices.

# Alignment between the principles and the Priority Reforms

The below table shows how each of our principles align with the Priority Reforms.

Principle	Relevant Priority Reform(s)	How it aligns
<b>1. Leadership, partnership and shared power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 1:</b> Formal partnerships and shared decision making</li> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 3:</b> Transforming government organisations</li> </ul>	Embeds expectations of genuine partnership, shared decision-making and shared accountability in how Indigenous data is governed, supporting structural and cultural change in government approaches to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
<b>2. Data sovereignty and authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 1:</b> Formal partnerships and shared decision making</li> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 4:</b> Shared access to data and information at a regional level</li> </ul>	Supports shared decision-making by recognising Indigenous authority over data governance, and contributes to improved access, control and use of Indigenous data in ways that reflect Indigenous priorities and self-determination.
<b>3. Culturally safe and respectful use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 3:</b> Transforming government organisations</li> </ul>	Aligns with the Priority Reforms' focus on changing institutional behaviours, embedding cultural safety, and avoiding deficit-based or harmful practices that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
<b>4. Transparency and accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 1:</b> Formal partnerships and shared decision making</li> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 4:</b> Shared access to data and information at a regional level</li> </ul>	Supports trust and shared accountability by improving transparency about what Indigenous data is held, how it is used, and how decisions about access and use are made.
<b>5. Purpose-driven and beneficial use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 3:</b> Transforming government organisations</li> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 4:</b> Shared access to data and information at a regional level</li> </ul>	Reinforces expectations that government activity delivers real benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, avoids extractive data practices, and uses data in ways that support Indigenous priorities.
<b>6. Capability and shared understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 3:</b> Transforming government organisations</li> </ul>	Supports workforce capability and cultural change by building understanding of Indigenous data governance responsibilities and improving consistency in practice across the organisation.
<b>7. Inclusive and evolving governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 1:</b> Formal partnerships and shared decision making</li> <li>• <b>Priority Reform 3:</b> Transforming government organisations</li> </ul>	Reflects the Priority Reforms' emphasis on sustained, system-wide transformation through ongoing learning, reflection and improvement in governance arrangements.