CHANGES IN VIEWS ON DATA PRIVACY IN AUSTRALIA DURING COVID-19

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Intro: Why do we care about data privacy?

- Australian Productivity Commission (2022)
  - ‘community trust in new applications of technology is critical for future uptake, as businesses and governments need to maintain their social licence to deliver digital and data-enabled services’

- Use of QR codes for COVID-19 check-in in August 2021 by trust in institutions
Intro: Country and survey context

• Australia had a relatively successful COVID-19 period
  ▪ Low mortality, high vaccination rates, positive economic growth, minimal social disruption, substantial reporting of data

• Two very large data breaches in 2022 (including large telecommunications company in September) and many smaller ones
  ▪ Around one-third of Australians exposed to a data breach in previous 12 months

• COVID-19 Impact Monitoring series
  ▪ Life in Australia panel: Aged 18 years +; Online and offline population; English speaking; Longitudinal; Probability recruited
  ▪ 13 waves of data collection (first in April 2020, most recent in October 2022)
    • 6,690 respondents that completed at least one of the waves of data collection.
    • 18.3 per cent completed one wave and 7.4 per completed two waves.
    • 20.5 per cent completed all thirteen waves and 6.3 per cent completed twelve of the thirteen waves.
Question: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no trust at all and 10 is trust completely, how much would you trust the following types of organisations to maintain the privacy of your data?
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Question: Governments across Australia collect a range of information on Australian residents. On the whole, do you think the Commonwealth Government should or should not be able to do the following?

- 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
Levels and change for support for data use

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>October 2018</th>
<th>August 2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide the data to researchers to research ways to improve outcomes for individuals and communities</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>70.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide the data to researchers to research ways to improve the delivery and targeting of government services</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>68.4</td>
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<td>Use the data within government to evaluate the effectiveness of government programs</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>84.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the data within government to target resources to those who need it most</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>86.1</td>
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<td>Use the data within government to ensure residents aren’t missing out on their entitlements</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>85.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the data within government to ensure residents aren’t claiming benefits they are not entitled to</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>82.0</td>
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Agreement on statements regarding data breaches – October 2019 to October 2022

- Companies must be proactive about data breaches: 98.3% (October 2019), 96.9% (October 2021), 96.8% (October 2022)
- Government should regulate companies’ use of data: 86.1% (October 2019), 83.6% (October 2021), 90.6% (October 2022)
- Government regulation of new technologies is crucial for consumer protection: 91.1% (October 2019), 90.4% (October 2021), 92.8% (October 2022)
- Companies are better equipped than government to protect their data: 65.5% (October 2019), 68.3% (October 2021), 53.6% (October 2022)
- Government is ineffective in ensuring fair use of data: 74.6% (October 2019), 72.7% (October 2021), 74.2% (October 2022)
- The responsibility of protecting data rests with the company collecting the data: 94.7% (October 2019), 93.8% (October 2021), 94.9% (October 2022)
- Companies that do not adequately protect consumer data should face significant sanctions: 97.0% (October 2019), 94.9% (October 2021), 96.2% (October 2022)
- It is the responsibility of consumers to ensure their data is secure: 63.6% (October 2019), 63.0% (October 2021), 46.5% (October 2022)

It is the responsibility of consumers to ensure their data is secure.
Results from regression modelling and concluding thoughts

• Modelling of factors associated with data trust (August 2022)
  ▪ Lower level of trust for young Australians (particularly those aged under the age of 35) and a higher level of trust for those aged 75 years and over.
  ▪ Those who speak a language other than English at home had a higher level of trust.
  ▪ Those who had not completed Year 12 and those with a Certificate III/IV having a lower level of trust.
  ▪ Those in the lowest household income quintile having much lower levels of trust than the rest of the population.

• Relationship between change in trust (October 2021 to 2022) and exposure to a data breach
  ▪ Conditional on above factors and trust at baseline, exposure to a data breach associated with a decline in average trust (0.117 * 1SD)
  ▪ Significant effects for trust in telecommunications companies, but also state/territory governments; banks; and social media

• Concluding thoughts
  ▪ Initial increase in trust during COVID-19 has held, but converging to baseline
  ▪ National and individual-level exposure to data breaches reduces trust and increases support for government intervention
  ▪ Worrying decline in support for data to be shared with academic researchers.