

Recommendation

That the Council establish a pilot open data program involving the initial release of 3-5 datasets to an Australian open data portal such as data.gov.au.

Key points

- Governments around the world are increasingly giving the community and businesses free access to non-sensitive data (known as 'open data').
- Local governments in Victoria are already starting to see benefits of open data in the form of cost savings, community engagement and innovation.
- Councils have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and connect with the broader community by releasing data in accordance with recognised open data principles.

Further Information

About Open Data

Open data is non-personal data released by governments using formats and licences that allow the data to be freely used and shared.

Benefits

To date, a number of councils across Victoria have released open data covering topics such as waste collection zones and the location of council-owned trees.

These councils are already beginning to report cost savings. Some councils now spend fewer resources processing data requests, as the public can now access data online.

As open data progresses at the local government level, further returns can be expected. Some councils are already beginning to see these benefits in the form of:

- new connections with community experts through open data events such as GovHack; and
- the development of prototype apps to improve public education or service delivery.

Costs

Open data typically does not require a significant initial investment. A number of councils have reported that their first datasets were ready for publication in a matter of hours.

The pilot open data program will focus on simple datasets that can be prepared for release with minimal resources.

Open Data and Privacy

Open data is fully compatible with the protection of privacy. Datasets will be reviewed before they are proposed for release to ensure they do not contain any personal information. This will ensure there are no privacy implications.