

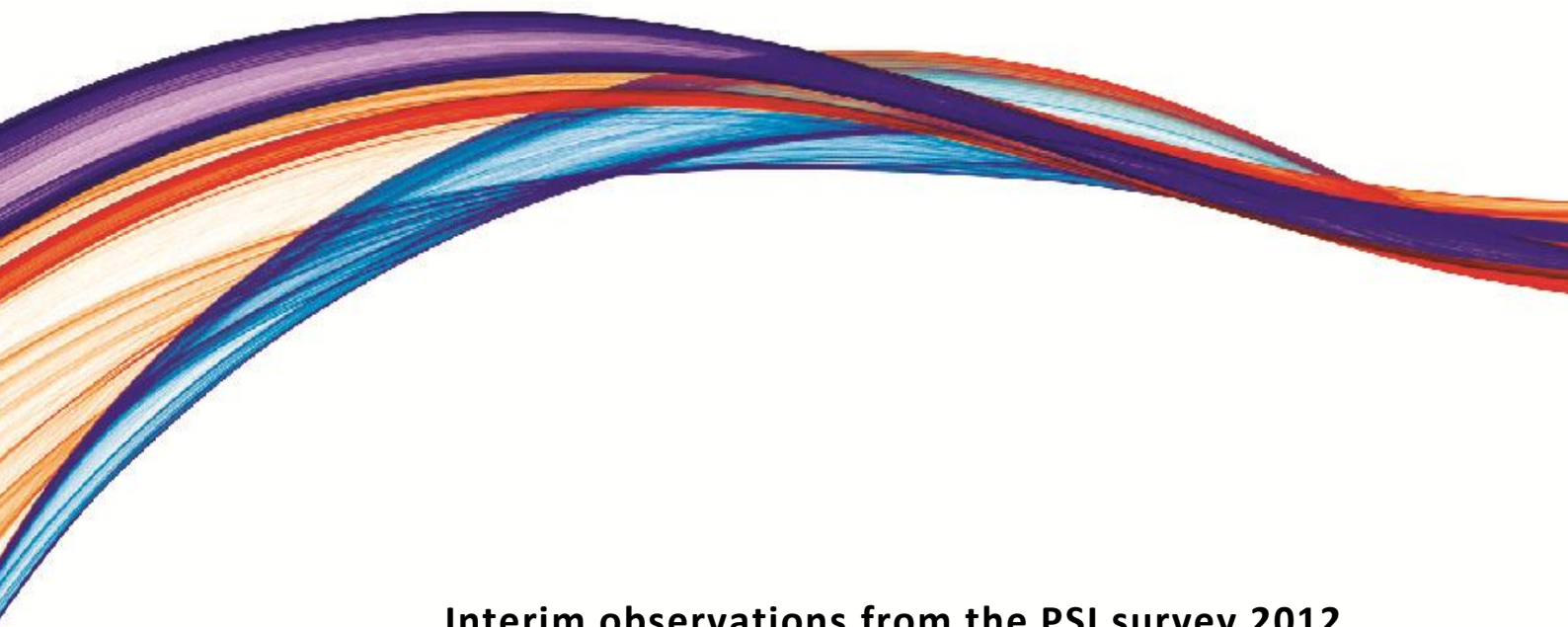


**Australian Government**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

# **Open public sector information: government in transition**

**August 2012**

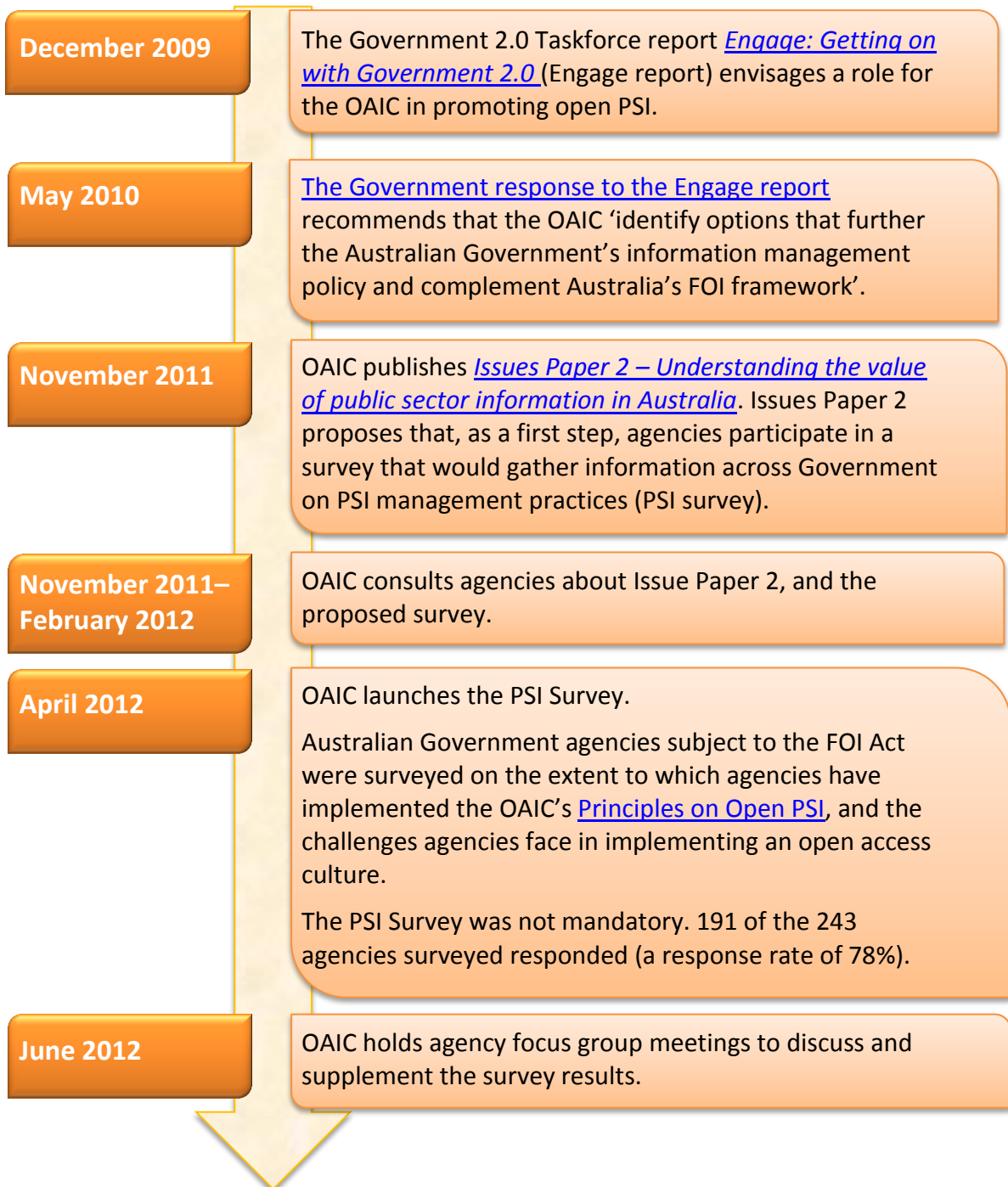


**Interim observations from the PSI survey 2012**

# Open public sector information: government in transition

The OAIC is currently examining how Australian Government agencies manage public sector information (PSI).

## Background



## Open PSI – what are agencies doing well?

The preliminary PSI survey results confirm that Australian Government agencies are embracing an open access and proactive disclosure culture. Work is underway in most agencies to make a greater amount of information easily discoverable and available via the web.

The transition to an open information culture is most successful when built on three elements – agency leadership, officer innovation and community engagement.

*Some things are in place. Having said that though, compared to a year ago, there's a lot of buy-in and drive, but we're not quite there yet. We're on our way.*

**1/2 agencies reported that they have mechanisms for consulting with the community about what information to publish**

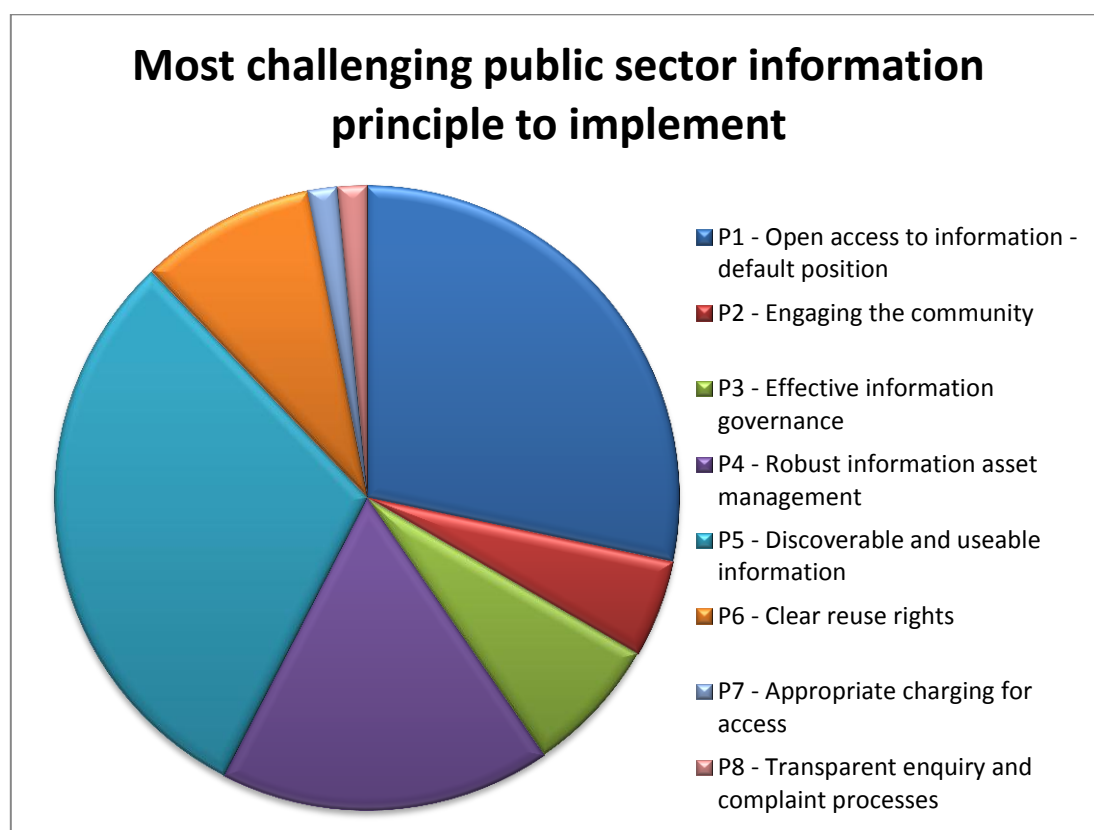
**2/5 agencies reported that they use social media to publish public sector information**



*We need to work collectively—[open government] is an agency wide issue. We cannot pass it all to one section of the department.*

*... the top down push is vital to ensure that change occurs*

## Open PSI – what challenges do agencies face?



Agencies were asked which public sector information principle was the most challenging to implement:

- 30 per cent of agencies identified that the most challenging principle was Principle 5: Discoverable and useable information.
- 28 per cent of agencies identified Principle 1: Open access to information – a default position and
- 17 per cent identified [Principle 4: Robust information asset management](#).

The OAIC invited agencies to provide detail about why these particular principles were challenging to implement. Agencies advised that there were number of interrelated reasons:

- existing systems for record keeping and information release are not designed for the new era of open PSI
- open PSI systems don't apply across the agency; information is held and managed differently across branches and locations
- transitioning to open access and proactive publication requires cultural change, including more active sponsorship of this philosophy by agency leaders
- much of the information held by agencies is in legacy documents that must be reformatted for digital publication

- agencies lack the technical specialisation and capacity to implement open PSI
- agencies have identified information that is *required* to be published under the Information Publication Scheme, but have not been as successful in identifying other information that can be published
- budgetary restrictions limit the capacity of agencies to implement an open PSI culture.

## Open PSI – what assistance do agencies need?



### ***Making information more discoverable and applying metadata***

Two out of five agencies do not routinely apply metadata to the information they publish. Lack of technical capacity in the agency may be a big factor.



### ***Complying with WCAG 2.0***

Almost a quarter of respondents find compliance with WCAG 2.0 a challenging issue. A major area of difficulty is in converting special categories of information into an accessible text format (e.g. images, maps, dynamic content such as radar captures). Lack of technical expertise and the inherent difficulty in translating images to text are also contributing factors.



### ***Adopting open licensing***

Fewer than 1 in 10 agencies have a default position of releasing data under open licensing terms that facilitate public reuse. Agencies question the adequacy of the Creative Commons licence.

***I know we should be doing better but I don't know what exactly we should be doing.***

## What next?

The OAIC will continue to analyse the PSI survey results and feedback obtained from the focus groups.

The OAIC will release a full report on the PSI Survey and focus group discussions in **November 2012**. The full report will make recommendations about how to address the specific problems and impediments identified by agencies.