



EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
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Digital Partnership Office

Operating Charter

Digital Service Provider Strategic Working Group
(SWG)



EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Contents

1. Context.....	3
2. Terms of Reference	3
3. Membership.....	4
4. Operations.....	6
Appendix A – Definitions of Roles and Responsibilities	8
Appendix B – Membership selection criteria.....	9
Version Control.....	10

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



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1. Context

This original document is provided by the ATO's [Digital Partnership Office \(DPO\)](#), as the authority on ATO engagements with Digital Service Providers (DSPs), for the purpose of standardising engagements between the ATO and DSPs.

All ATO engagement groups with DSPs are required to use a common charter (but may modify some operational details by consensus of the group).

This charter is underpinned by the [ATO consultation protocol](#).

This charter has been established for the Digital Service Provider strategic working group (DSP SWG).

2. Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of this group is:

To help shape the direction of the ATO's digital strategy by providing a whole of digital service industry perspective regarding business-focused and strategic matters.

To provide direction for the ATO to keep the Digital Service industry aware, informed and engaged with issues and initiatives, thereby facilitating collective action.

To review annually the group's achievements and evaluate the ongoing need to continue or update the Charter according to evolving need.

2.1 Scope

The scope of this group is:

- 2.1.1 Represent the Digital Service industry in relation to tax and superannuation issues, broader finance-based and whole-of-government applications.
- 2.1.2 Provide a representative view of the digital service industry rather than be a channel for individual or company issues.
- 2.1.3 Shape strategic direction, identify and address emerging issues in the industry early so that a clear strategic direction can be formed. This will enable the ATO to gain strategic industry insights.
- 2.1.4 Understand and manage the ATO/DSP partnership at a strategic level - whole of industry and whole of ATO.
- 2.1.5 Provide a forum to present feedback from the community to the ATO and government, e.g. Digital Transformation Agency (DTA)
- 2.1.6 Develop a process for identifying, documenting and addressing, in a timely fashion, issues and questions that software developers may raise.

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Excluded from the scope of this group are:

2.1.7 All matters which are of a technical or detailed nature which should be referred to the relevant groups.

3. Membership

3.1 Appropriate representation

Groups are established for the right purpose with the right people at the right time.

- 3.1.1 Membership will be organisation based, with individuals representing their respective organisation.
- 3.1.2 Membership is filled by Expression of Interest for each calendar year.
- 3.1.3 The maximum number of digital service industry members is 12, not including presenters and government representatives.
- 3.1.4 Membership will be confined to developers of software relating to taxation and superannuation obligations, finance-based applications including whole-of-government.
- 3.1.5 Membership will be determined based on size and service offering of the different firms. With an aim to get a diverse group that represents the industry. The ATO and DSPANZ will determine the attendees and membership.
- 3.1.6 The large corporate/government, medium corporate and small/micro, as well as developers from niche markets, 'in house', payroll, business accounting, financial investment, SBR, income tax preparation and super annuation developers will be represented. *List is not exhaustive.
- 3.1.7 Other government agencies and industry guests will be invited to present on an as needed basis.
- 3.1.8 Participating ATO staff will be selected by the ATO lead for the group.

3.2 Term of appointment

- 3.2.1 ATO/DSP SWG group membership is refreshed annually by a selection process.
- 3.2.2 DSP members are appointed for one year, after which they may re-apply for selection.

3.3 Expectations of members

All members (ATO and DSP) are expected to follow the [ATO consultation protocol](#); and

- 3.3.1 Members agree for the names of individuals and their company to be published by the Secretariat for the purpose of contact by Digital Service industry peers.

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

- 3.3.2 Have subject matter knowledge, skills and experience related to the purpose and scope of the group.
- 3.3.3 Ensure they meet legislative requirements regarding their personal tax obligations and maintain integrity of their tax affairs.
- 3.3.4 Be representative.
- 3.3.5 Represent fairly and responsibly the wider group of DSPs and/or clients, rather than specific issues affecting a single individual or company.
- 3.3.6 Act in the best interests of the tax and superannuation system.
- 3.3.7 Have a capacity and willingness to be a conduit for peers in their industry and/or market segment to provide input or receive feedback.
- 3.3.8 Members and their organisations commit to attend the quarterly events. Members are to nominate a proxy who will attend should they not be able to make a meeting.
- 3.3.9 Contribute to the effectiveness of the group in meeting its purpose as defined in the terms of reference of the group.
- 3.3.10 Engage in constructive, open and frank discussion in bringing a members' perspective to group discussions (excluding commercial sensitivities).
- 3.3.11 Work together in a collegiate manner with other members and other representatives associated with the group ethically and with courtesy, respect, and integrity, and abiding by any embargo arrangements.
- 3.3.12 Maintain a satisfactory attendance record for meetings (see member role description in [Appendix A](#)).
- 3.3.13 Act with due diligence.
- 3.3.14 Members of the group will not use their membership for any commercial advantage, including marketing.
- 3.3.15 While acknowledging commercial sensitivities, members of the group will be honest and open in providing input into the forum and communicating output from the forum.
- 3.3.16 Members of the group will abide by roles and responsibilities of the forum.
- 3.3.17 Members will commit to attending and contributing to the forum's activities, including abiding by deadlines and the dissemination of information to non-members that they interact with in the normal course of business.
- 3.3.18 Members of the group will faithfully and openly represent non-members.

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

- 3.3.19 Members of the group are considered as equals and will be treated accordingly by others.
- 3.3.20 Members of the group will act professionally, interact, and communicate with courtesy and diplomacy and use appropriate language during meetings.
- 3.3.21 Members of the group will abide by embargo arrangements.
- 3.3.22 Members of the group will not take unfair advantage of access to privileged information.
- 3.3.23 Each person who represents a company or organisation on the group is responsible for making their company or organisation aware of the ethical responsibilities associated with forum membership.
- 3.3.24 Members will declare any conflict of interest to the secretariat. E.g. conflicts regarding procurement opportunities.
- 3.3.25 Members will act in the best interests of the Australian economy.

4. Operations

4.1 Roles

NB: Definitions of these roles are in [Appendix A](#).

- 4.1.1 Chair: Meetings will be jointly chaired by the ATO and Digital Service Providers Australia New Zealand (DSPANZ).
- 4.1.2 Secretariat: The ATO will supply secretariat support. The secretariat can be contacted at DPO@ato.gov.au
- 4.1.3 Co-Chair: A DSP co-chair is appointed annually and must represent DSPANZ.
- 4.1.4 Members: Actively participate in meetings.
- 4.1.5 Funding: The ATO will cover costs for the venue, hospitality, and administration for meetings; representatives will cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

4.2 Frequency of meetings

- 4.2.1 Meetings are scheduled three times per year, aligned to industry events. Consideration will be given to more frequent but shorter meetings where circumstances do not allow face to face meetings.

4.3 Format of meetings

- 4.3.1 Meetings are conducted face-to-face as a preference, with telepresence and WebEx where necessary.

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
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Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

4.3.2 Where possible, face-to-face meetings should be organised to leverage off the travel of members (for example, to align with DSPANZ or other events).

4.4 Participation

4.4.1 Member substitutions in meetings can only be the person nominated on the Expression of Interest (EOI) form as the 'nominated authorised replacement'. In exceptional circumstances the Chair can approve a substitution.

4.4.2 Guest participants may be invited to contribute to meetings from time to time by the chair or secretariat (usually to provide subject matter expertise).

4.5 Documentation and record keeping

Documentation is distributed according to agreed principles established with DPO in addition to the following:

4.5.1 All artefacts and documentation should be made available to all DSPs via an authenticated environment within the [Online services for DSPs](#). Draft documents can be withheld at the discretion of the chair.

4.5.2 All meetings will be posted in advance on the [upcoming engagements page](#) in an effort to avoid clashes which may cause inconvenience to participants.

4.5.3 Action items and issues should be recorded in a [common register](#) hosted by the ATO's DPO and made available for members.

4.5.4 Membership lists (name & company) will be maintained and published for public visibility.

This group's operating documents (agendas, artefacts, outcomes, etc) can be found [here](#).

4.6 Governance

This group reports outcomes and organisational details to:

- [ATO Consultation Hub](#)

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
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Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Appendix A – Definitions of Roles and Responsibilities

1. Chair

- 1.1. Defining and approving the direction of the agenda and forward roadmap of the group.
- 1.2. Ensuring that outcomes are reported to the appropriate stakeholders in a timely manner.
- 1.3. Representing the group in other forums.
- 1.4. Conducting meetings.

- 2.1. Defining and setting the agenda for discussion and forward roadmap.
- 2.2. Administrative and organisational tasks.

3. DSP Co-Chair (in conjunction with the chair and the secretariat)

- 3.1. Defining and setting the agenda from the perspective of DSPs.
- 3.2. Conducting meetings.
- 3.3. Taking appropriate actions to organise the industry as per the action items.

NB: A Co-Chair position is desirable for this group.

4.

- 4.1. Attending and participating as per member expectations.
- 4.2. Notifying of substitutions on the original Expression of Interest form.

NB: For SWG substitutions, only the nominated persons can attend on behalf of the member. The Chair may allow another substitution in exceptional circumstances.

EXTERNAL	CHARTER	V2.01	16/02/2022	OFFICIAL
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Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

Appendix B – Membership selection criteria

1. DSP service segments

Representatives are desired from DSP service segments which are impacted according to the purpose of the group. For this group, industry segment representatives may include (but not exclusive to):

- Business Accounting
- Business Registry Services
- E-Invoicing
- Investment bodies
- Payroll
- Procure2pay
- Tax preparation
- Superannuation
- Other segments that are approved by the chair

2. Levels of experience

Representatives are desired from DSPs with different levels of market audience (Niche | Small | Medium | Large).

3. DSPANZ

DSPANZ representation (maximum 2 members).

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v0.01	14/11/2017	Draft - internal	First Draft combining Template; multiple previous charters and current directions	Edwina Johnson	N/A
v0.02		Draft - internal			
v0.03	13/11/2018	Draft - internal	Updating current published version		
v2.0	16/02/2021	Draft - internal	Updating current published version	Sonya Summers	
v2.01	11/02/2022	Published	Updating current published version. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated ABSIA references to DSPANZ - Item 2.1.5: updated to remove reference to Treasury - Item 4.2.1: updated to include instances where circumstances don't allow for face-to-face meetings - Items 4.5.1 and 4.5.2: updated to provide clarity on availability of artefacts, documents and meeting information - Appendix B: updated to align with current market audience 	Sonya Summers	Sonia Lark