



EXTERNAL	CHARTER	1.01	21/06/2018	UNCLASSIFIED
FORMAT	DOCUMENT TYPE	VERSION	DATE	CLASSIFICATION



Australian Government
Australian Taxation Office

ATO - Digital Service Provider Architecture Reference Group (DARG) Operating Charter

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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 by ATO-DSP groups.

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

This charter supports the [ATO consultation protocol](#)

This charter has been established for the ATO-DSP Architecture Reference Group (DARG)

Documentation including the decisions and activities of the group are maintained at <https://softwaredevelopers.ato.gov.au/DARG>

2. Terms of reference

Purpose

The purpose(s) of this group is:

For the ATO and Digital Service Providers (DSPs) to establish agreed positions or recommendations in regard to messaging design and implementation matters related to eCommerce platform wholesale service interactions.

The Group helps shape decisions that impact DSP's digital service directions and provides a whole of Digital Service industry perspective. The group will annually evaluate the ongoing need to continue

The DARG deals with matters which are not able to be resolved by the Technical Committees of projects, or matters which impact across many projects or general services.

Scope

The scope of this group is:

- Technical and architectural design issues for digital services supporting the Australian taxation and superannuation system, in the context of whole of government and whole of industry.

Excluded from the scope of this group are:

- Matters which are of a business or strategic nature which should be referred to the relevant project of initiative group.
- Technical and architectural design issues that are specific only to a project or initiative, which can be managed via the normal ATO change process

3. Membership

3.1 Appropriate representation

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

3.1.1 Participating ATO staff will be selected by the ATO lead for the group.

3.1.2 The ATO will select DSPs by way of either expressions and/or direct approach in order to ensure a representative group is engaged.

3.1.3 The maximum number of Digital Service industry members is approximately 15, not including presenters and government representatives.

3.1.4 Representatives are desired from DSP service segments which are impacted according to the purpose of the group. For this group, industry segments representative selection criteria are listed in [Appendix B](#)

3.2 Term of appointment

3.2.1 ATO-DSP group membership is refreshed periodically by a selection process.

3.2.2 DSP members are selected for appointed for a maximum of two years, after which they may be re-assessed for selection.

3.3 Expectations of members

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

- 3.3.1 BE ELIGIBLE
 - 3.3.1.1 Have subject matter knowledge, skills and experience related to the purpose and scope of the group.
 - 3.3.1.2 Ensure they meet legislative requirements regarding their personal tax obligations and maintain integrity of their tax affairs.
- 3.3.2 BE REPRESENTATIVE
 - 3.3.2.1 Represent fairly and responsibly the wider group of DSPs and/or clients, rather than specific issues affecting a single individual or company.
 - 3.3.2.2 Act in the best interests of the tax and superannuation system as a whole
 - 3.3.2.3 Have a capacity and willingness to be a conduit for peers in their industry and/or market segment to provide input or receive feedback.
- 3.3.3 PARTICIPATE
 - 3.3.3.1 Contribute to the effectiveness of the group in meeting its purpose as defined in the terms of reference of the group
 - 3.3.3.2 Engage in constructive, open and frank discussion in bringing a members' perspective to group discussions (excluding commercial sensitivities)
 - 3.3.3.3 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.
 - 3.3.3.4 Maintain an satisfactory attendance record for meetings (see member role description in [Appendix A](#))
- 3.3.4 ACT WITH DUE DILIGENCE
 - 3.3.4.1 Not use their membership for any commercial advantage, including marketing or access to privileged information.
 - 3.3.4.2 Each person who represents a company or organisation on the group is responsible for making their company or organisation aware of the responsibilities associated with membership of the group.
 - 3.3.4.3 Members will declare any conflict of interest to the secretariat.

4. Operations

4.1 Roles

Definitions of these roles is in [Appendix A](#)

4.1.1 Chair: Meetings will be chaired by an ATO member of the group.

4.1.2 Secretariat: The ATO will supply secretariat support. DARG@ato.gov.au is the secretariat for this group.

4.1.3 Co-Chair: A DSP co-chair, if required, is elected periodically for one year. The 2018 DARG determined that a DSP co-chair is not required.

4.1.4 Members: Participate

4.2 Frequency of meetings

4.2.1 Meetings are scheduled bi-monthly on a Thursday afternoon.

4.2.2 Meetings may also be held “out-of-session” at the discretion of the chair.

4.3 Format of meetings

4.3.1 Meetings are conducted via web-conference or otherwise as agreed by participants.

4.3.2 Face-to-face meetings may be scheduled by agreement of members. Where possible, face-to-face meetings should be organised to leverage of the travel of members (for example, to align with ABSIA or other events)

4.4 Participation

4.4.1 Member substitutions in meetings are only allowed if agreed in advance by the group and the chair

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 and according to the following principles:

4.5.1 All artefacts and documentation should be made available to all DSPs via an externally accessible open system. (e.g. [DPO website](#)). Draft documents can be withheld at the discretion of the Chair.

4.5.2 All meetings will be posted in advance on the ATO’s [internal DSP Event Calendar](#) and the DPO website [upcoming engagements page](#) to avoid clashes causing 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) are published to

<https://softwaredevelopers.ato.gov.au/DARG>

4.6 Governance

This group reports outcomes and organisational details to:

- The [ATO’s Digital Partnership Office](#)
- [ATO Consultation Hub](#) for the [Consultation Steering Group](#)

5. Appendix A - Definition of roles

5.1 Chair is responsible for:

5.1.1 Defining and approving the direction of the agenda and forward roadmap of the group

- 5.1.2 Ensuring that outcomes are reported to the appropriate stakeholders
- 5.1.3 Representing the group in other forums
- 5.1.4 Conducting meetings

5.2 Secretariat is responsible for:

- 5.2.1 Defining and setting the agenda for discussion and forward roadmap
- 5.2.2 Administrative and organisational tasks

5.3 A DSP Co-Chair is responsible (in conjunction with the chair and the secretariat)for:

5.3.1 Defining and setting the agenda from the perspective of DSPs

5.3.2 Conducting meetings

5.3.3 Appointing a co-chair position is optional

5.4 Members are responsible for

5.4.1 Attending and participating as per member expectations

5.4.2 Note: Substitutions are permitted using the following policy

5.4.3 SUBSTITUTION POLICY: Member substitutions are possible only if pre-arranged and approved by the chair. Substitutions will only be considered if they meet the membership criteria

6. Appendix B – Membership selection criteria

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

- Business Accounting - including specialist Business Management Software
- Enterprise Resource
- Finance and Investment
- Gateway services
- Government agencies
- Payroll systems
- Point of Sale
- Superannuation
- Tax Preparation
- Other segments that are approved by the chair

6.2 Representatives are desired from DSPs with different levels of experience sets. (new to established; entrepreneur to large corporate)

6.3 ABSIA representation is desirable

6.4 Representatives qualify as per section 3 “Membership” in this Operating Charter

7. Version Control

Ver	Date	Distribution	Description	Author(s)/modified by	Approved by / date
0.01	05/12/2017	Draft	First draft for establishing the DARG, and membership, leveraging the operating charters of the SWG and charter of the TWG , and using charter template from DPO	Gary Anderson	n/a
1.00	1/2/2018	DARG Web-page	Ratified by DARG 01 FEB, with change as 5.3.3 Appointing a co-chair position is optional 4.1.3 Co-Chair: A DSP co-chair, if required, is elected periodically for one year. The 2018 DARG determined that a DSP co-chair is not required.	Gary Anderson on behalf of DARG members 01 FEB '18	DARG 01/02/2018
1.01	21/6/2018	DARG Web-page	Modified 4.2.1 to read as: 4.2.1 Meetings are scheduled bi-monthly on a Thursday afternoon.	Gary Anderson (DARG Secretariat)	DARG meeting 21/6/2018