August 2025

# Automated Decision-Making Reform: Public Consultation Summary

## Consultation Process

### Overview:

The Attorney-General’s Department is considering the development of a consistent framework for the use of automated decision-making (ADM) in the delivery of government services. A public consultation process to inform the development of the ADM framework opened on 13 November 2024 and concluded on 15 January 2025. This document provides a summary of the consultation process and key findings.

#### Consultation Process

The consultation process involved:

* A consultation paper discussing key policy issues and seeking public views about transparency and safeguard mechanisms required for the use of ADM in government services.
* A plain language summary of the consultation paper to support accessibility for the broader public.
* An online survey focussing on users’ experiences with ADM.
* A series of stakeholder roundtables and bilateral discussions with civil society and government.
* The survey and plain language summary of the consultation paper were translated into 7 languages.

#### Responses received

* 41 Public Submissions
* 20 Survey Responses
* 8 roundtable meetings
* 3 bilateral discussions

#### Who we heard from

* General Public
* Computer Scientists
* Legal experts
* State and territory government agencies
* Peak advocacy bodies (including those representing vulnerable end users, employees and businesses)
* Private Sector

## Survey Findings

#### The following results are from the survey data only.

#### Where did we hear from?

* 1 from Western Australia
* 1 from South Australia
* 4 from Queensland
* 1 from New South Wales
* 4 from Canberra
* 5 from Victoria
* 4 not answered or prefer not to say

#### Who did we hear from?

* 20% LGBTQIA+
* 30% with a disability
* 40% regional, rural or remote
* 10% culturally and linguistically diverse
* 10% First Nations
* 65% female

#### What is helpful?

##### Share of respondents (per cent)

Respondents were given two statements about ADM and were asked to choose whether they considered the statement was ‘very helpful,’ ‘helpful,’ neutral,’ ‘not helpful.

* Question 1: For agencies using ADM, we could have rules to make sure the system is working correctly
  + 55% of respondents agreed this was very helpful
  + 10% of respondents agreed this was helpful
  + 10% of respondents were neutral
  + 15% of respondents found this was not helpful
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* Question 2: We could have rules to make sure agencies assess and deal with any risks before using ADM
  + 55% of respondents agreed this was very helpful
  + 5% of respondents agreed this was helpful
  + 15% of respondents were neutral
  + 15% of respondents found this was not helpful
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question

#### What is Important?

##### Share of respondents (per cent)

Respondents were given a series of statements about ADM and were asked to choose whether they considered the statement was ‘very important,’ ‘important,’ neutral,’ ‘not important’.

* You can ask for a review of a decision made by ADM
  + 90% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* A human can fix an error made by ADM
  + 85% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 5% of respondents found this not important
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* The agency tells you that an ADM system has been used to make a decision about you, at the same time as it tells you about the decision
  + 80% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 5% of respondents agreed this was important
  + 5% of respondents were neutral
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* The agency explains why the ADM system made a decision
  + 80% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 10% of respondents agreed this was important
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* The agency publishes statistics about its use of ADM systems
  + 75% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 10% of respondents agreed this was important
  + 5% of respondents were neutral
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* The agency publishes on its website that it uses ADM for certain services
  + 75% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 10% of respondents agreed this was important
  + 5% of respondents were neutral
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question
* The agency gives an overview on its website of how the computer program makes decisions
  + 75% of respondents agreed this was very important
  + 20% of respondents agreed this was important
  + 5% of respondents did not answer the question

#### Experience with ADM

Respondents were given statements about their experience ADM and were asked to choose whether they considered the statement to be ‘very important,’ ‘important,’ neutral,’ ‘not important’.

* Were you aware that government agencies are using ADM systems to make decisions
  + 1 respondent did not answer the question
  + 6 respondents answered ‘no’
  + 13 respondents answered ‘yes.’ Their experiences with ADM are as follows:
    - 2 respondents confirmed the statement ‘only a human has made a decision about me to date’
    - 5 respondents confirmed the statement ‘I’m not aware that an ADM system has made a decision about me’
    - 1 respondent confirmed a positive experience with ADM
    - 1 respondent confirmed a neutral experience with ADM
    - 2 respondents confirmed a negative experience with ADM
    - 2 respondents confirmed a very negative experience with ADM

#### ADM Rules

* Should we have the same rules whether an ADM system or a human makes a decision
  + 40% of respondents agreed the rules should be the same for ADM systems and humans
  + 50% of respondents agreed the rules should be more strict for ADM systems
  + 10% did not answer the question.
  + No respondent answered that the rules should be less strict for ADM systems.
* Should the same rules apply to all decisions a government agency can make about you using an ADM system
  + 25% of respondents agreed the rules should be the same for all types of decisions
  + 35% of respondents agreed the rules should change depending on the type of decision
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question.
* Should all government agencies have the same rules when they use ADM systems to make decisions about you
  + 35% of respondents agreed that every government agency that uses ADM should have the same rules
  + 55% of respondents agreed that government agencies should be able to change their rules to suit their specific needs or needs of the public
  + 10% of respondents did not answer the question.

The is the end of the results from the survey data.

## Consultation Key Themes

#### Stakeholders care about

* Transparency, fairness and accountability
* Consistency across government

#### Key themes are derived from the analysis of

* Consultation paper submissions
* Roundtable meetings and bilateral discussions

#### Stakeholder concerns

* Awareness of ADM use
* Access to timely, adequate and clear explanations of decisions
* Access to review mechanisms

#### Key Themes

##### Transparency

##### Importance of Transparency: Transparency rules are needed to keep people informed about ADM use and how it affects them.

##### Notifications: Notifications should include reference to the extent of ADM use.

##### Meaningful Explanations: People should be given accessible, clear and meaningful explanations of decisions about them made using ADM.

##### Defining the Boundaries of transparency: Transparency should apply generally with exceptions for sensitive information.

##### Public Disclosure: Releasing information about ADM use (e.g. on agency websites) helps keep people informed.

##### Easily accessible information on ADM: The public needs information about government use of ADM to be accessible and easy to understand.

##### Safeguards

###### Importance of using a range of safeguards: Using a range of safeguards can help mitigate risks associated with ADM use.

###### Evaluating risks and doing checks (pre-implementation): Evaluating risks and impacts, and establishing suitable checking mechanisms are important pre-implementation safeguards.

###### Human Intervention: ADM systems should include clear pathways for human intervention at different and appropriate stages e.g. for oversight, review or substitution of incorrect decisions and auditing.

###### Exemptions should be limited: Exemptions to safeguards should be applied in exceptional circumstances, such as for national security, law enforcement or protecting individuals from harm.

###### Oversight mechanisms: Ongoing monitoring, error verification and correction and auditing can help ensure ADM systems are functioning as intended.

###### Review rights: People should be informed of pathways for internal and external review of ADM decisions, and how to make a complaint.

#### Next Step

###### Feedback from this consultation process is being considered in the development of a consistent framework for the use of ADM in the delivery of government services.