Australian Government

Department of Health

PBS DATA DISTRIBUTION – SOFTWARE VENDOR WORKING GROUP

MEETING NOTES – 8 DECEMBER 2020

DATE AND TIME	Tuesday, 8 December 2020 at 11:00AM – 1:00PM
VENUE	Microsoft Teams Call

KEY POINTS DISCUSSED

AGENDA NO.	KEY POINTS DISCUSSED
1	**Welcome & Background – see slide 3** Participants were welcomed, and provided a brief background of the PBS Data Distribution project.
2	**Project Overview + Recap of last meeting (10th November 2020) – see slides 4-6** Participants were provided with a brief re-iteration of the previous meeting and the goals of the PBS Data Distribution project, including the current status, progress so far, planned outcomes, data model and API discussion.
3	**Summary of pain points – see slide 7-9** An overview of the Alpha API was provided including the type of API, current constraints, access options. Additionally we discussed longer term API design principles regarding long term use of the API once complete.

4	**Activity – Data model review – see slides 10-19**
	
	A series of API commands were walked through to demonstrate increasingly complex examples for browser based API requests. These included different formatting filtering options from the Schedule, Item and Summary of Changes tables.
	
	Questions:
	• Several software vendor representatives asked, throughout the meeting, about the transition approach and likely timing.
	    ○ The Department explained that we have not yet committed to a date. It will depend on the feedback from this working group on the Alpha API. Once refined we will move to a Beta build, before transitioning to a production API.
	    ○ Noting that transition duration will be determined in consultation with the working group.
	• A question was asked regarding notification of changes. For example, web hooks.
	    ○ The Department welcomes any feedback and requests for preferred notification mechanisms. RSS, API News Feed etc.
	• A software vendor representative asked after some peculiar capitalisations in the column headings.
	    ○ It was re-iterated that the department is sharing this Alpha API as an early prototype so we are able to adjust to the needs of the software community

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	before too much is invested, making it difficult to change later. As such, it will not be as polished as a finished product.
	• A software vendor representative asked about the embargo data.
	  o The Department described the intent to have a separate API endpoint for the embargo data. A 'latest month' flag can be used to identify the schedule that is embargoed (once published).
	• A software vendor representative asked after the ability to add multiple values in a single call. For example, Program Code = GE and IN
	  o The Department thanked the representative for the question; this is currently not a feature and noted that we can look at adding this as a future feature. The department asked all representatives to include requests like in their feedback so we can understand how to prioritise requests.
	• A representative of the Digital Health Agency asked if there would be the ability to output XML from the API.
	  o The Department currently has no plans to include XML. As per the feedback of this group, it is focused on JSON and CSV. This was accepted with JSON being the likely method for them to use.
	  o It was re-iterated that the working group members raise how they would like to consume the data and we can consider adding other output formats based on demand.
	• It was requested to include the example URL's demonstrated in the presentation.
	  o These were provided in a follow-up email after the meeting.
	• A software vendor representative asked what fields can be used to filter and search the data.
	  o All columns are searchable; this information is available via the API documentation provided after the meeting on the project site, and is available in the data dictionary and data model ER diagram.
	• A question was asked regarding plans for an Open API endpoint / Swagger.
	  o The Department confirmed it is currently investigating the preferred API Gateway architecture. It is not confirmed yet how that will look but it is being worked on.
	• A Digital Health Agency representative asked for a full list of filters and codes to be shared.
	  o The department confirmed that the API Documentation would be published after the meeting. This in both online and downloadable format provides all filters and provides examples.
	• A software vendor representative asked after the nature of the summary of changes information and if it was going to provide changes between each published schedule (monthly) or intra month.
	  o The department explained that it is currently showing changes between published schedules.
	  o A good discussion among the group concluded that it would be useful to have changes for each release or update within the month, agreeing that this is only relevant to the Embargo schedule.
	• A software vendor representative testing the API during the meeting asked if there should be any item with the supply only indication flag set as true - there were none.
	  o The Department confirmed this was testing and development data, however this still should not be the case and will investigate.
	• A software vendor representative asked if the text files would still be available.
	  o The Department explained that they would cease at some point but that will not happen without warning. Additionally, the point was made that the text files can be closely replicated through API queries.

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	- A representative asked about versions within each schedule for the embargoed data, and what will the data look like as it is updated. - The longer conversation earlier regarding embargoed data requiring intra schedule summary of changes in addition to the monthly schedule of changes was summarised. - A software vendor representative asked if the restriction text would be simpler. - It was clarified that the data content was not being modified as a part of the data distribution project and therefore the text would remain unchanged. However, noting that the alternative text used in the legislative instruments is currently included and additionally the format of the restriction text via the API will make the more verbose restriction text easier to work with. - A working group member asked about existing fields provided that have historical context included, and asked if they will need to look back at each schedule to determine this once the API is in place. - The department confirmed that the data content will not be changed and several examples of fields that included historical context were mentioned (streamline codes). - A software vendor representative asked after the source of the data. - A brief description of the data journey was provided. Internal Systems to the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), to a tailored DataMart, which is then exposed via the API. - A representative asked after the progress with EFC data. - The Department explained that the data mart has its foundation in the publishing of legislative instruments and includes the relevant data in the current model. The software vendor community is asked to include this in there testing where relevant. - A representative asked about complex queries. - The Department will look at providing examples and functionality once feedback is received. The example mentioned was searching within a given date range. - A software vendor representative asked about authentication for the Alpha API. - The Department has not setup any authentication on this pilot as it only includes currently public data. No embargoed data will be available via the Alpha API. - A brief discussion elaborating on a previous comment around a separate API end-point for embargoed data followed. Once in production, embargo data will only be available with authentication, the exact method is being developed.
5	**Discussion – Testing and Feedback – see slides 20-21** The Department has requested that all software vendor working group members who conduct any testing please record their successes and issues. A suggested structure for feedback and recording the testing being undertaken has been provided (both in the slides and via an excel attachment after the meeting). Throughout the testing process any questions can be directed to PBSdataproject@health.gov.au.
6	**Next Steps – see slide 23** The planned next steps were explained to participants. The testing and feedback points were re-iterated. The next working group meeting will be scheduled during the week commencing 8 February 2021.

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	Any feedback can be sent to PBSdataproject@health.gov.au.
7	**Other Business and Close** The consensus across the group was positive and enthusiastic to begin testing the Alpha API. The meeting was closed.