# Adding a new dataset to the Master Linkage File

In 2008 the *Privacy Committee of South Australia* agreed on the approval process to be used by SA NT DataLink and SA Government Data Custodians when seeking to add a new dataset into the enduring Master Linkage File. This is process is reflected in MOUs / Data Access Agreements signed with Data Owners and delegated Custodians.
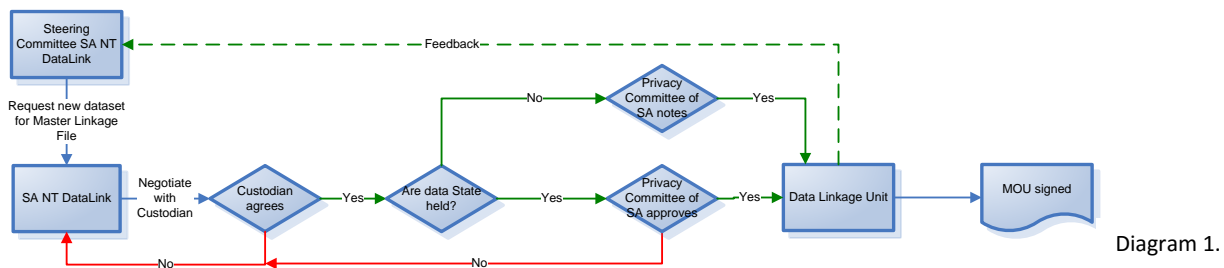
The procedure used by SA NT DataLink is in accordance with the South Australian Government Cabinet Administrative Instruction: Information Privacy Principles, Premier and Cabinet Circular 12 (as amended 18 May 2009). NT Information (Privacy) Commissioner has been consulted.

For reference: The Master Linkage File is the table in a database that contains the association between linkage keys and unit record level identifiers for individuals across multiple data sources, that is securely held and maintained by a data linkage unit.

The key benefit for adding datasets into the Master Linkage File is the enduring ability to build high quality linkages with other datasets, and to take advantage of this cleaning, loading and verifying allowing it to then be considered for later approved use; ie build once and use many times.

Where the data being added into the Master Linkage File is not South Australian Government, eg Commonwealth Government, Private Sector, Northern Territory Government, Non-For-Profit etc, per Diagram 1, the Privacy Committee of SA is notified of these occurrences only.

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## Adding a new dataset to the Master Linkage File decision tree



Diagram 1.

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Adding a new dataset into the Master Linkage File commences with the SA NT DataLink Steering Committee authorising staff to negotiate with the appropriate Custodian. The Custodian firstly confirms the feasibility and any conditions for providing both identified linkage variables to the Data Linkage Unit (for the sole purposes of linking into the Master Linkage File), and on a case by case basis the release of the de-identified content data to researchers for approved statistical research studies and data integration projects.

SA NT DataLink then works with the Data Custodian to obtain exemptions from the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs in SA and APPs in Privacy Act, 1998 Cwth) and formal agreements.

When exemptions have been granted an Memorandum of Understanding or Deed of Agreement is signed confirming the frequency of release and updates of data intending to go into the Master Linkage File, that lists the frequency of updates and the personally identifying 'linkage' variables being released to SA NT DataLink, and any other research usage applicable conditions.

For more information please refer to the following reference documents available online:

1. **SA NT DataLink commitment and explanation of Privacy and Information Security**

2. **SA NT DataLink's explanation of the Separation Principle**

3. **SA NT DataLink's Privacy Statement**

4. **SA NT DataLink's Large Flow Diagram for adding new datasets**

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