

## Internet of Things (IoT)

*Not a mention of 'IoT' in the budget, but there are a few 'SMART' initiatives to talk about...*

### Who's responsible?

There is not an obvious Ministerial owner of IoT initiatives, and AIIA has listed:

- the [Hon Karen Andrews MP](#), **Member for McPherson** Queensland and **Minister for Industry, Science and Technology**, for the [Department of Industry, Innovation and Science \(DIIS\)](#) as the a likely candidate due to the DIIS [Industry 4.0](#) program launched by the Government in 2017, and
- the [Hon. Michael McCormack](#), **Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Nationals, Member for Riverina**, New South Wales, and **Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development** for the [Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities](#).

### What was in the budget on IoT?

A full search of the budget documents for IoT related initiatives did not result in any explicit "internet of things" activity. This indicates more of an absence in overarching Government IoT vision and policy rather than a total lack of IoT related work, and a more lateral reading of the budget papers reveals several smart initiatives which could be tagged as "internet of things".

### IoT is out and SMART is in

For instance, one very practical example of current Government IoT activity is the implementation and continued rollout by the [Australian Border Force](#) (ABF) of [SmartGates](#) at international airports. This is a prime example of IoT connectivity, connecting ePassports, facial recognition scanners, and Government held personal data to check individual identity, and to let them into the country faster (or

not) than face-to-face entry vetting. (BP.No.1.10, P60)

### Smart Cities and Smart Farms

The budget papers reference the 2017 Smart Cities program, providing **\$50.0** million for key initiatives to support the delivery of "innovative smart city projects". (BSRC<sup>1</sup>, P219)

In March 2019 the Government signed the **Adelaide City Deal** with the South Australian Government providing a total of **\$165.0** million over ten years including:

- **\$20.0** million for a **research and engagement hub**; **\$6.0** million for a **Mission Control Facility**
- **\$6.0** million for a **Space Discovery Centre**
- **\$10.0** million for **smart technology infrastructure**. (BSRC, P224)

[Smart Farms Small Grants](#) of up to **\$55** million over five years, providing "grants to develop and extend new tools and technologies that help farmers, fishers, forresters and regional communities increase their capacity to adopt best practice land management", were referenced in the budget papers. This is a current initiative with the Round 2 funding closing pre-budget in January 2019. The list of [successful applicants](#) clearly showcase some IoT savvy landholders. (BSRC, P35: BP2, P123)

### Industry 4.0 Testlabs funding discontinued

The budget papers reference the Industry 4.0 investment — "an additional **\$1.0** million was provided in 2018-19 to establish an Industry 4.0 [Testlab](#) at the University of Tasmania", and "**\$5.0** million in 2018-19 to establish Testlabs to prepare businesses to transition to the smart factories of the future" in other states.

<sup>1</sup> [Building Stronger Regional Communities 2019-2020](#)

Again, this is Government sponsored IoT activity, but disappointingly the funding for the Testlabs was not continued in the 2019-20 budget. (BP.No.1.11, P41)

## Broadband Connectivity or IoT?

The **Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities** is allocated **\$5.2** million for the design of a **freight data hub**, **\$3.3** million for the establishment of a **freight data exchange pilot**, to allow access to freight data in real time. (BP2, P145)

In the 2019-20 Budget, the Australian Government will invest **\$2.0** million for a feasibility study to assess ways of improving **digital connectivity** in the Grainbelt region of Western Australia. (BP2, P28)

Interestingly the Western Australian Government refers to this initiative as the [eConnected Grainbelt](#), with funding being provided via the new [WA Internet of Things \(IoT\) DecisionAg Grant Program](#).

## AIIA IoT Recommendations

All that said above, and in the absence of any overarching IoT visions or policy, the Government's 2019-20 budget does not measure up well to the AIIA IoT recommendations listed in full below.

Government, industry and research institutes must work together to co-design:

- A flexible IoT strategy that addresses the implications of 'disruptive' technology and ensures discovery, secure collection and sharing of data;
- Clear communication and better understanding of IoT, including a simple definition and a greater awareness of its evolving nature and emerging applications;
- Standards and Regulations that ensure interoperability of systems and data formats across all levels of government;
- Accelerated rollout of digital infrastructure to ensure Australia is a nation of digital exemplars in the area of IoT, and
- Greater collaboration with industry and research institutes to deliver skills, innovation and growth in the IoT sector.

## Links

- [AIIA Internet of Things \(IoT\) Policy Position Statement](#)
- [AIIA Pre-Budget Submission to Treasury 2019](#)
- [Australian Government 2019-2020 Budget Papers](#)
- [Treasurer's Budget Address](#)
- The Hon Michael Keenan - [Address to the Australian Information Industry Association](#)
- Federal Government's Digital Transformation Strategy: [Vision 2025: We will Deliver World-leading Digital Services for the Benefit of all Australians](#)