Online and Mobile

Victorian Government Websites Principles and Requirements

Standard

Victorian Government departments and agencies must conform to the website principles set out in this standard and, at a minimum, meet the associated requirements.

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DEPARTMENT OF
PREMIER AND CABINET

State Government
Victoria

Overview

This document sets out the standard functionality, features and practices that all Victorian Government agencies must implement across their website portfolios. These requirements are numbered and categorised under four principles of government website management, namely:

- Victorian Government websites must be identifiable;
- Victorian Government websites must be discoverable and usable;
- Victorian Government websites must communicate their purpose; and
- Victorian Government websites must be managed responsibly.

These requirements are not intended to cover the field of web best practice. Rather, they set out the unique, minimum expectations of Victorian Government websites. Agencies and website owners are encouraged to look further than these requirements and evolve their websites to accommodate shifts in technologies and customer needs and behaviours.

This document is subject to change; always check www.enterprisesolutions.vic.gov.au for the latest version.

Scope

These requirements apply to the public-facing websites of all Victorian Government departments and agencies within the scope of the Victorian Government ICT Strategy.[1] For the purposes of this document the term 'agency' encompasses both a department and an agency.

Intranets and other internal web-based information systems are not currently subject to these requirements. However, agencies are strongly advised to ensure internal, web-based systems conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.[2]

Compliance

Transitioning statement and timing

The requirements in this document were previously found within the whole of Victorian Government web standards (otherwise known as the Web Management Framework). Those individual web standards have now been retired. This document is a consolidation of some, but not all, of the requirements from those standards. Appendix A contains a schedule explaining which requirements have been deprecated and which have been carried over as ongoing requirements.

Consequently, whilst this standard comes into effect at the date stated at the head of the standard, departments and agencies should already be in compliance with these requirements.

Reporting

There are currently no whole of Government reporting requirements for this standard. Departments and agencies are encouraged to determine their own compliance and report to the appropriate internal governance group annually.

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[1] The Information Technology Strategy for the Victorian Government, 2016-2020 can be found at www.enterprisesolutions.vic.gov.au/it-strategy/.
[2] See Requirement 9.

Principles and Requirements

1. Victorian Government websites must be identifiable

Customers must be able to readily identify an official Victorian Government website and confidently engage with the information and services provided by the website.

Victorian Government websites must effectively communicate their status and authority. Customers should feel comfortable interacting with Government websites and exchanging information should they choose to do so. They should also be able to find out more about the nature of the website and its context within the Government.

Requirements

1. Use a vic.gov.au domain name[3]

2. Conform to the Victorian Government branding guidelines[4]

3. Include an About page/section which explains the nature of the website and its owner

Important considerations

- Objectively evaluate whether the website conveys to customers that it is genuine, reliable and trustworthy

- Test new domain names for suitability and ensure the relevant agency online governance group[5] approves the chosen domain name.

Related requirements

- **Requirement 10:** *Include context-specific contact details*

- **Requirement 13:** *If the website is a corporate website, include: (i) a complete list of legislation the agency operates under/administers, and a link to the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website; (ii) an organisation chart; (iii) the most recent annual report; (iv) a link to the Victorian Government media releases page; and (v) careers information and a link to the Victorian Government careers website*

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[3] Website owners must ensure that their vic.gov.au domain name conforms to the Australian Government domain name policies. Relevant DEECD websites may use the vic.edu.au domain.

[4] www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/communication/brand-victoria.

[5] See Requirement 14.

2. Victorian Government websites must be discoverable and usable

Customers must be able to simply and efficiently locate and interact with Victorian Government information and services online.

Victorian Government information and services should be readily found through both web search and — once at the website — through the website's navigation and search functionality. Customers must be able to carry out their objective simply and quickly with minimal effort. Common user-actions should be made highly visible and quick to complete.

Requirements

4. Implement the mandatory, conditional and recommended properties of the AGLS Metadata Standard on all web pages[6]

5. Implement a website search facility[7]

6. Develop, implement and maintain an appropriate website information architecture

7. Include a website site map and/or index

8. Implement a statement on each web page that informs the user when the page was last updated or reviewed[8]

9. Conform to Level AA of version 2.0 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)

Important considerations

- Understand, and implement, contemporary SEO practices to ensure the Government's customers can find and be directed to the exact location of the information and services they desire

- Engage in regular evaluation of the website's audience to better understand how the website can be evolved to suit customers' needs

- Know the most common actions of the website's customers and ensure they are easily accessible and able to be completed efficiently

- Ensure that the website can appropriately serve customers across contemporary viewing platforms, e.g. smart phones, tablets

- Where appropriate, register with the Health Translations directory[9]

Related requirements

- **Requirement 20:** *Participate in the WoVG web analytics program*

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[6] See http://www.agls.gov.au/. For information on the 'mandatory, conditional and recommended properties', see *AGLS Metadata Standard: Part 2, Usage Guide* (PDF 367kB) 13-14.

[7] There may be practical reasons why some websites cannot meet this requirement, e.g. the website is not content managed or is small in size. In these instances the relevant agency governance group (see Requirement 14) may decide to exempt the particular website.

[8] For example, 'Page last reviewed on 5 January 2014'.

[9] www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au.

3. Victorian Government websites must communicate their purpose

Customers must be able to understand the function of the website and determine its owner

Regardless as to how, or on what page, a customer enters a Victorian Government website, they should be able to quickly discern the intent of the website and how it can assist them. Customers should also be able to learn more about the owner of the website and how to contact them.

Requirements

10. Include context-specific contact details[10]

11. Include information on government publications relevant to the website, if any[11]

12. Include information on any services/programs relevant to the website, if any[12]

13. If the website is a corporate website, include: (i) a complete list of legislation the agency operates under/administers, and a link to the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website;[13] (ii) a high level organisation chart; (iii) the most recent annual report; (iv) a link to the Victorian Government media releases page;[14] and (v) careers information and a link to the Victorian Government careers website[15]

Important considerations

- Ensure that website content is written for the web, i.e. succinct and clear, and not a mere reproduction of lengthy printed materials

- Ensure that the website design and information architecture accommodate users who arrive on pages other than the home page, and that those customers are able to quickly orient themselves and appreciate the function of the website

Related requirements

- **Requirement 3:** *Include an About page/section which explains the nature of the website and its owner*

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[10] For example, a website that addresses the delivery of health services may offer physical addresses, whereas a website providing information on a particular subject may only have an email address or phone number.

[11] This requirement relates only to those publications which are not available on the website itself. The information should include how to access the respective publications. In this context, a publication is any document intended for public use, e.g. a pamphlet, booklet, book, report etc.

[12] Only services/programs relevant to the particular intent or subject matter of the website are required. The agency and the relevant website owner may exercise discretion as to what and how much information is displayed.

[13] www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

[14] www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases.html.

[15] careers.vic.gov.au.

4. Victorian Government websites must be managed responsibly

Customers must be able to trust that the website they are interacting with complies with the law and protects their interests

Victorian Government agencies must ensure that all online presences and online activity are managed appropriately. Website owners must ensure that their content is managed appropriately and that customers are informed about the website's conditions of use and, where relevant, how information about them will be used.

Requirements

14. Agencies must appoint and maintain a governance group that oversees all online activity for the agency, using the model terms of reference for guidance[16]

15. Ensure all website content has an owner, approver and forward review date

16. Ensure the necessary permission(s) are obtained before publishing third party materials

17. Ensure the website conforms to all applicable legislation[17]

18. Implement a process for the immediate removal of content[18]

19. Develop and include statements addressing the website's terms of use, copyright obligations, disclaimers, privacy policy and approach to website accessibility.[19] Include links to the statements in a consistent location on each page of the website[20]

20. Participate in the WoVG web analytics program[21]

Important considerations

- Know the obligations of the agency with respect to customer privacy and information security

- Agencies should consider creating standardised processes for content control (requirement 15), securing third party rights (requirement 16) and content takedown (requirement 18)

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[16] This has in the past been referred to as a Web Management Taskforce. The model terms of reference can be found on the Digital Government website (www.enterprisesolutions.vic.gov.au/online-and-mobile/).

[17] For example, the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic), *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic), *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic), *Spam Act 2003* (Cth).

[18] To address, for example, content that is found to contravene the law or where ownership and usage of the content is disputed.

[19] Whilst generic statements (for use across more than one website) may be appropriate in some circumstances, in other instances it may be more appropriate to develop tailored statements for the particular website. Agencies should seek further advice if they are unsure of how to address this requirement.

[20] For example, in the footer of the website.

[21] www.intranet.vic.gov.au/wovg-google-analytics (VPS only).

Further information

For further information regarding this standard, please contact enterprisesolutions@dpc.vic.gov.au.

Version history

Version	Date	Details
1.0	1 December 2014	First published
1.1	16 March 2017	Updated URL's and email address

Appendix A — Schedule of transitioned and deprecated requirements

Overview

This document represents a consolidation of the requirements found in the 11 web standards of the Victorian Government's Web Management Framework. The table below summarises which of the standards' requirements have been carried over and which have been deprecated. The three columns of the table should be construed as follows:

- **Requirements in original standard** — refers to the number of requirements in the original web standard (e.g. Discoverability standard).

- **Requirements transitioned to this document** —refers to the number of requirements (of the original standard) that have been carried over into this document.

- **Requirements deprecated** — refers to the number of requirements (of the original standard) that have been deprecated and no longer exist in their original form.[22]

In some cases, multiple original requirements have been combined into a single new requirement.

Original web standard	Requirements in original standard	Requirements transitioned to this document	Requirements deprecated
Discoverability	13	2	11
Content Ownership, Approval and Review	2	1	1
Legal Compliance	6	4	2
Privacy	1	0	1
Accessibility	1	1	-
Consistent User Elements	13	2	11
Domain Names and Allocation	5	1	4
Information Architecture and Classification	4	1	3

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[22] Requirements that have been deprecated have in some instances been reformulated under the *Important considerations* of the relevant principles. For example, the important consideration '*Understand, and implement, contemporary SEO practices to ensure the Government's customers can find, and be directed to the exact location of, the information and services they desire*' encompasses many of the requirements that were found in the Discoverability standard.

Minimum Information Provision	21	11	10
Web Analytics	1	1	-
Web Management Taskforces	1	1	-
	68	25	43

Per-standard breakdown

The following information expands upon the summary provided in the table above. Please note that the numbering on the far left side, e.g. R4, reflects the original numbering of requirements within the web standards. The numbers in the text with blue background reflect the numbering of requirements within this document.

WEB/STD/01 – Discoverability

Requirements transitioned to this document

R4   Implement descriptive and meaningful values for the mandatory and recommended properties of the AGLS Metadata Standard (AS 5044-2010) on all web pages. Now Requirement 4

R13   Implement a website search facility for users. Now Requirement 5

Requirements deprecated

R1   Conduct keyword research to determine the most relevant keywords for users and incorporate the findings into website content and metadata.

R2   Implement unique, descriptive and meaningful page titles for all web pages using the HTML title element.

R3   Implement descriptive and meaningful values for the keywords and description attributes of the HTML meta element on all web pages.

R5   Ensure all non-HTML documents have complete, accurate and descriptive document properties.

R6   Register with Victoria Online.

R7   Register with the Open Directory Project (Victorian Government category).

R8   Register with Business Licensing Information Service (where licensing is involved) and/or Health translations directory (where non-English health information is involved).

R9   Register with external search engines.

R10   Implement and register a discoverable XML sitemap that conforms to the sitemaps.org protocol and/or provide an A-Z html index.

R11   Implement the robots.txt protocol for controlling search engine content-indexing.

R12   Implement one primary domain name and permanent redirects (301 Moved permanently) from alternate domain names.

WEB/STD/02 - Content Ownership, Approval and Review

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   All website content must have an owner, an approver and a forward review date. These details must be readily available through the website's content management system and/or an operational document (or equivalent). Now Requirement 15

Requirements deprecated

R2   All websites must have documented processes to ensure that all website content is assigned a responsible owner, approved for publishing and regularly reviewed.

WEB/STD/03 - Legal Compliance

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   Ensure disclaimer, copyright and privacy notices are prominently displayed in line with relevant whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) standards. Now Requirement 19

R3   Ensure third party materials are not published without adequate rights to do so. Now Requirement 16

R4   Ensure compliance with all applicable Acts, taking into account the purpose and functionality of the website. Such Acts may include, but are not limited to the… Now Requirement 17

R5   Ensure that adequate documented processes are in place to enable the immediate removal of any material on the site that is: found to be in breach of any law or regulation; or contrary to policy or the function of the department/agency. Now Requirement 18

Requirements deprecated

R2   Ensure conformance to all department/agency and government guidelines.

R6   Ensure that the terms of service of all third party products and services are reviewed on commencement of use and regularly thereafter by legal counsel.

WEB/STD/04 – Privacy

Requirements deprecated

R1   Departments and agencies will comply with the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) in the design, management, operation and content of websites under their control.[23]

WEB/STD/05 – Accessibility

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   All websites must conform to version 2.0 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). Now Requirement 9

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[23] Nb, this requirement is now addressed in requirement 17 of this document.

WEB/STD/06 - Consistent User Elements

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   All Victorian Government websites must conform to the Victorian Government Website Branding Guidelines. Now Requirement 2

R12   All web pages must contain a human-readable reference identifying when the page content was last updated, checked or modified. Now Requirement 8

Requirements deprecated

R2   Primary navigation must be located in a single, consistent location on the far left side of the page design or immediately underneath the header banner.

R3   If used, breadcrumb navigation must appear at the top of the content area and contain active links for every breadcrumb except the rightmost, final breadcrumb.

R4   Navigation items must not be duplicated.

R5   Each web page must contain a descriptive and meaningful title at the top of the content area.

R6   Links to the website terms of use, copyright, disclaimer, privacy and accessibility statements must be contained in the website footer only.

R7   All web pages must contain a link to the 'About us' page.

R8   All web pages must contain a link to the 'Contact us' page.

R9   All web pages must contain a link to the website feedback mechanism.

R10   All web pages must contain a link to the website site map and/or index.

R11   All link types must have consistent colours and behaviour throughout a website.

R13   Website search fields must be located in a single, consistent location on the far right hand side of page design, immediately above or underneath or within the header banner.

WEB/STD/07 - Domain Names and Allocation

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   All Victorian Government websites must have a vic.gov.au domain name. Now Requirement 1

Requirements deprecated

R2   All new domain names must be considered and approved by the agency's WMT before implementation and use.

R3   Domain names must be user-tested for suitability before submission to the relevant WMT.

R4   Vic.gov.au domain names must be consistent with the Commonwealth Government's domain name policies.[24]

R5   All domain names must have accurate technical and administrative contact details in their respective domain name registry entries.

WEB/STD/08 - Information Architecture and Classification

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   Departments/agencies must develop and maintain: a documented information architecture (IA) strategy which describes, justifies and provides a strategic direction for the IA of their portfolio

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[24] Nb, this requirement is now addressed in requirement 1 of this document.

of websites; and/or documented IA plans for each individual website within their portfolio. Now Requirement 6

Requirements deprecated

R2   IA plans must, at a minimum, address and document all of the following IA components: business needs analysis; user research and analysis; content inventory; controlled vocabularies and metadata; website navigation and hierarchy; website layout; search model and behaviour; usability testing; monitoring and maintenance; change management; and ongoing review.

R3   All IA strategies and plans must be reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and relevant to users.

R4   All new and refreshed IA strategies and plans must be endorsed by the department's/agency's Website Management Taskforce (WMT).

WEB/STD/09 - Minimum Information Provision

Requirements transitioned to this document

R2   An 'About us' page that describes the website owner. Now Requirement 3

R3   Copyright, disclaimer, privacy and accessibility statements. Now Requirement 19

R4   A website site map and/or index. Now Requirement 7

R5   A complete list of legislation the respective agency operates under and/or administers, accompanied by a link to the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website. Now Requirement 13

R6   The agency's organisation chart. Now Requirement 13

R7   The agency's most recent annual report. Now Requirement 13

R10   Information on services provided and/or program details, including hours of opening or other availability and service delivery points. Now Requirement 12

R11   Information on available publications and how they may be accessed if not available online. Now Requirement 11

R12   A 'Contact us' page containing detailed contact information for the agency including street address and/or postal address, phone and fax numbers (with national and international codes) and an email address. Now Requirement 10

R13   A link to the Victorian Government media releases page. Now Requirement 13

R14   Careers information and a link to the Victorian Government Careers Website. Now Requirement 13

Requirements deprecated

R1   A statement that outlines the purpose of the website on the home page.

R8   The agency's corporate plan, business plan and/or organisational strategy (or equivalent).

R9   Information on the agency's Minister(s), including responsibilities and contact details.

R15   A complete list of legislation under which the agency or program operates accompanied by a link to the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website.

R16   Information on services provided and/or program details, including hours of opening or other availability and service delivery points.

R17   Information on available publications and how they may be accessed if not available online.

R18   A 'Contact us' page containing contact details for the program the website is representing.

R19   A link to the parent agency's corporate site.

R20   A 'Contact us' page containing contact details for the initiative the website is representing.

R21   A link to the parent agency's corporate site.

WEB/STD/10 - Web Analytics

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   All public-facing websites must participate in the Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) Web Analytics Program. Now Requirement 20

WEB/STD/11 - Web Management Taskforces

Requirements transitioned to this document

R1   Each agency will appoint and maintain a WMT. Now Requirement 14