# Business Plan
## 2014

*8 November 2013*

# Business Plan 2014

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) provides the solution for accessing online resources and services within the Australian Education and Research sector. This is achieved by delivering a secure framework which exchanges information between an individual and a provider of digital data resources. The outcome of the AAF's work is to facilitate collaboration and sharing of data for the benefit of end users in Australian universities and research organisations.

The AAF was initiated by the Council of Australian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT) in December 2008 to provide an access Federation for organisations and institutions which undertake or support education, research, or research and development in Australia.

With 71 subscribers and 109 services (as at 13 September 2013) the AAF has reached critical mass and has been operating as a self-funded service since January 2012.

The AAF has established a vital role as part of the Australian eResearch infrastructure landscape through its core value proposition of a shared service for the Australian research/education sector.  The AAF lowers the costs and effort associated with managing federated identity in each individual subscriber organisation.  The AAF also removes inter-organisational barriers to collaboration by enabling people to quickly and easily connect with resources (e.g. national eResearch infrastructure such as research data storage (Research Data Storage Infrastructure (RDSI)), virtual laboratories (National eResearch Collaboration Tools and Resources (NeCTAR)), eResearch tools (NeCTAR) and instrumentation). Conversely, resource providers are able to quickly and easily connect their services to people.  A national Federation also provides the capability for collaboration on a global scale through the interconnection of national federations.

In 2014, the AAF will continue to undertake the following operational activities:

1. Provide **operational support services** (Service Desk, Knowledge Base and technical documentation, assisting subscribers identify services of value to the Federation, best practice and technical architecture advice) to ensure existing Subscribers gain best value from their subscription;
2. Provide **business development services** (policy advice, technical support and presentations on demand) to assist new organisations to subscribe to the AAF;
3. Provide **compliance support activities** associated with the Federation Rules and annual Compliance Statements;
4. Undertake **marketing and communication** activities that focus on promoting the AAF's value proposition;
5. Develop and deliver **training workshops** aimed at increasing the skill base across the higher education and research sector with respect to federating services for access via the AAF; and

6. Ensure the **technology** on which the AAF depends is **appropriately maintained** (application patching, security bug fixes and minor enhancements to AAF's software stack where activities are critical for the successful operations of the federation).

In 2014 the AAF will commence research and development activities with eduGAIN, group management/authorisation tools as well as an enhanced version of the Federation Registry tool.

The operational activity budget for the AAF in 2014 is summarised in Table 1.

| 2014 Operating Budget Summary | |
|---|---|
| **Retained Earnings at 1 January 2014** | $215,767 |
| **Incoming** | |
| Forecast Subscription Income | $681,381 |
| Forecast Workshop Income | $12,636 |
| Forecast Interest | $19,000 |
| **Total Income** | $713,017 |
| **Total Income + Retained Earnings** | $928,784 |
| **Outgoing** | |
| Operating Expenses | $846,555 |
| Operating Surplus (2% safety margin) | $16,931 |
| **Total Outgoing** | $863,486 |
| **Retained Earnings as at 31 December 2014** | $65,298 |

**Table 1:** *2014 Operational Budget Summary*

2014 subscriptions will be set to raise $681,381 in income. This is in line with the approved 2012 Business Plan where subscription fees were forecast to increase by 10% from 2013 to 2014.

The joining fee, and base price for *AAF Publisher* subscribers, will remain at the same level as the 2013 fees in line with the strategy to grow new services connected to the federation (as outlined in the 2014-2015 Strategic Plan). The base price for *AAF Hosted* will remain at the same level as 2013 in order to continue to provide a low barrier of entry to smaller research organisations that do not have the technical capability to connect to the federation but would like to provide their end-users access to AAF connected services.

2014 will see the completion of the 2012 grant awarded (via CAUDIT Inc) by the Department of Industry to further enhance the services offered to subscribers. A key activity will be the completion of the *Identity Provider Improvement Project* and key project reporting. The budget for undertaking this in 2014 is summarised in Table 2.

In 2014 AAF will seek to enter into strategic partnerships with key infrastructure providers (AARNet, NeCTAR and RDSI) on projects that will achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for Australian education and research.

| 2014 Project Initiatives Budget Summary (Department of Industry Funded) | |
|---|---|
| **Retained Earnings at 1 January 2014** | $36,000 |
| **Total Income + Retained Earnings** | $36,000 |
| **Outgoing** Operating Expenses | $36,000 |
| **Total Outgoing** | $36,000 |
| **Retained Earnings as at 31 December 2014** | $0 |

**Table 2:** *2014 Project Initiatives Budget Summary*

# 2. Introduction

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) provides the solution for accessing online resources and services within the Australian Education and Research sector. This is achieved by delivering a secure framework which exchanges information between an individual and a provider of digital data resources. The outcome of the AAF's work is to facilitate collaboration and sharing of data for the benefit of end users in Australian universities and research organisations.

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) was initiated by the Council of Australian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT) in December 2008 to provide an access Federation for organisations and institutions which undertake or support education, research or research and development in Australia.

With 71 subscribers and 109 services (as at September 2013), the AAF has reached critical mass and has been operating as a self-funded service since January 2012.

The AAF has established a vital role as part of the Australian eResearch infrastructure landscape through its core value proposition of a shared service for the Australian research and education sector. The AAF lowers the costs and effort associated with managing federated identity in each individual subscriber organisation. The AAF also removes inter-organisational barriers to collaboration by enabling people to quickly and easily connect with resources (e.g. national eResearch infrastructure such as research data storage (RDSI), virtual laboratories (NeCTAR), eResearch tools (NeCTAR) and instrumentation). Conversely, resource providers are able to quickly and easily connect their services to people. A national Federation also provides the capability for collaboration on a global scale through the interconnection of national federations.

## Our Vision and Mission

AAF's **vision** is to be the authoritative provider of access management services for Australian higher education and research.

AAF's **mission** is to support the collaboration and resource sharing objectives of its subscribers through provision of effective access management technologies and services.

# 3. Operational Business Activities in 2014

This section outlines the key operational business activities planned for 2014.

## 3.1 Operational Support Services

AAF personnel will provide a range of support services to Subscribers including:

1. Identifying services of value to other federation Subscribers;
2. Ongoing support to Subscribers via the service desk, technical documentation and knowledge base;
3. Consulting advice on implementing best practice technical architecture, as well as Service Provider and/or Identity Provider configurations; and
4. On-request, and where practical, professional service engagements (billed at market rates).

## 3.2 Business Development Services

AAF personnel will support new organisations to subscribe to the AAF during 2014. In particular the AAF will provide:

1. Consulting advice on interpreting and complying with the Federation Rules;
2. Technical support via the service desk, technical documentation and knowledge base to connect as an Identity Provider and/or Service Provider to the Federation;
3. On-request, and where practical, professional service engagements to install and configure Identity Providers (billed at market rates); and
4. Introductory presentations on demand.

## 3.3 Compliance Support Activities

AAF will support the following key activities:

1. Federation Rules:
   AAF Personnel will assist Subscribers meet their compliance requirements, in particular to submit their annual Compliance Statement on or before 30 June 2014.
2. Compliance with any applicable legislation in relation to data protection and privacy including, without limitation, the Australian Privacy Act 1988.
3. The AAF will establish advisory groups and communities of practice as required to assist with the above activities.

## 3.4 Marketing and Communications

The AAF will execute a comprehensive marketing and communication plan that focuses on promoting its value proposition. Activities include:

- Presence at key industry events (e.g. eResearch Australasia, QuestNet, TERENA Networking Conference and REFEDS meetings);
- AAF quarterly newsletter;
- Regular technical newsletters;
- Content rich 'product centric' website which describes AAF products to Service Providers, Identity Providers and End Users; and
- An AAF Dashboard providing intuitive links to AAF's key technical products.

## 3.5 Training Workshops

The AAF's training strategy aimed at increasing the skill base across the higher education and research sector commenced in 2012. To date, AAF's training workshops have received a positive and growing response from Subscribers. Subject to suitable demand, in 2014 the AAF will hold five Federating Services workshops (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth). The workshops will continue to focus on providing developers with a basic toolkit to federate applications. All attendees will be levied an attendance fee to cost recover expenses.

## 3.6 Technology Maintenance

The AAF will maintain the software stack of the Federation. This includes planned maintenance activities for application patching, security bug fixes and minor enhancements to the AAF software stack where activities are critical for the successful operations of the AAF.

# 4. Operational Support Model

This section outlines the operational support model for 2014.

## 4.1 Personnel
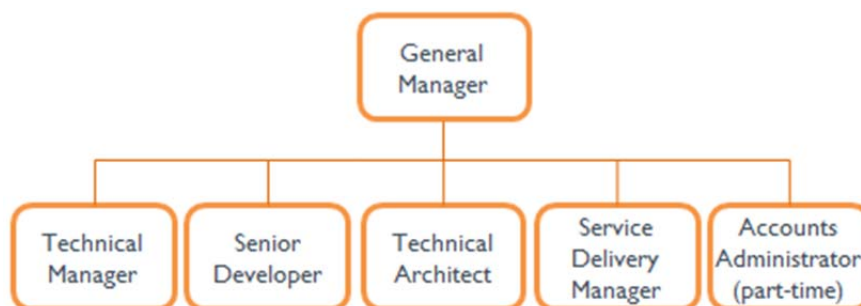
The AAF core operational support model is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** *Core operational support personnel for 2014*

## 4.2 Infrastructure Hosting

To maintain high availability of the Federation infrastructure, the AAF will continue (where appropriate) to enter into agreements with its Subscribers to host *Where are You From* servers (WAYFs). At a minimum, WAYFs will continue to be hosted in Brisbane, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

The Test Federation infrastructure will continue to reside on the NeCTAR National Server Program (NSP) subject to satisfactory performance. Other options will be assessed as required.

The AAF will continue to use cloud-based services for its support systems (email, help desk, mail campaigns and source code repository).

## 4.3 Member Meeting Support

Given the considerable overlap in the Primary Representatives for CAUDIT Inc and AAF Inc, AAF Inc will work with CAUDIT Inc to schedule the AAF Inc Annual General Meeting (AGM) and General Meeting (GM) in conjunction with major CAUDIT meetings. This approach should reduce travelling costs for AAF Members.

# 5. Research & Development:
## *Extending AAF's services*

This section outlines two key research and development activities for extending AAF's services in 2014.

## 5.1 Co-federation

In Q3 2013, the AAF signed the eduGAIN policy declaration to be part of the global eduGAIN framework for co-federation. In 2014, the AAF will begin to evaluate the technical and policy requirements to provide this service to its subscribers.

## 5.2 Expanding AAF's Identity and Access Management services

In 2014, the AAF will continue to work with its Subscribers to identify their needs and to evaluate and develop service offerings for fine-grained access control and group management.

## 5.3 Version 3 of AAF Federation Registry

Version 2 of the Federation Registry (AAF's core self-service Identity Provider and Service Provider registration tool) was developed and open-sourced by the AAF in 2012. The software has been adopted by other federations as well as other educational institutions in the USA and Canada. Since its release, the AAF has identified a number of enhancements and feature requirements that need to be developed. The AAF will undertake a project to develop these enhancements into Version 3 of the software in 2014.

# 6. Project Initiatives and Strategic Partnerships

This section outlines the project initiatives and strategic partnerships for 2014.

## 6.1 Project Initiatives

In June 2012 the Department of Industry (formally the Department of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE)) awarded $330,000 funding to undertake a program of initiatives to enhance the utility of the AAF. CAUDIT Inc entered into a grant agreement with the Department as the lead agent for the projects, with the AAF subcontracted to undertake the work. A number of the project activities were completed in 2013 with two remaining activities scheduled for completion by June 2014. AAF staff will continue to be seconded to complete these activities in 2014.

### 6.1.1 Identity Provider Improvement Program

Completing in June 2014, the Identity Provider (IdP) Improvement Program will work with a target sub group of AAF Subscribers that require assistance with maturing the technology of their identity provider. AAF will continue to work with this targeted sub group of IdPs in 2014 to develop a reusable package of 'technology best practice' content for use by all subscribers.

### 6.1.2 Project Reporting

CAUDIT Inc has subcontracted AAF Inc to undertake the following reporting for the grant's deliverables in 2014:

- Progress Report 4 (31 March 2014); and
- Final Report (30 September 2014).

## 6.2 Strategic Partnerships

### 6.2.1 Partnering with AARNet

In late 2013 the AAF began discussions with AARNet regarding collaboration on a number of service enhancement areas for common federated access management requirements to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for Australian education and research.  Key areas of potential collaboration included:

- Connecting the Global Net+ program to the AAF;
- Global inter-federation (based on eduGAIN);
- Developing group-based authorisation services;
- AAF authentication to non-web services; and
- Unified policies for federated access policies, service usage monitoring, metrics capture and best practice support models.

In 2014 the AAF will continue to work with AARNet to develop plans and prioritise activities that are of benefit to AAF Subscribers.

### 6.2.2 Partnering with eResearch Infrastructure Projects

The AAF will continue to partner with the NeCTAR project and the RDSI project to assist with developing and supporting their identity management needs. This work will be done on a cost recovery basis.

# 7. Operating Costs & Subscriptions

This section outlines the operating costs and subscriptions for 2014.

## 7.1 Operating Costs

The AAF was incorporated in June 2009 with funding provided by a $2.0M grant from the Department of Industry. A subscription model has been applied since 2011. As at the end of 2013, the AAF expects to have retained earnings of $215,767, noting that this amount will be reduced to an estimated $65,298 at 31 December 2014.

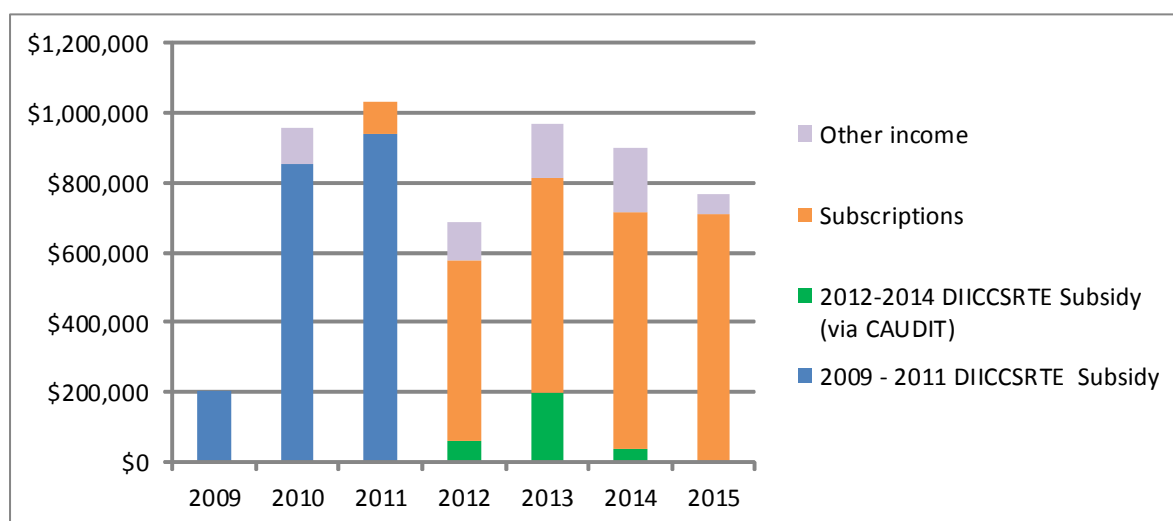Operating costs have risen with the addition of the Senior Developer position (July 2013 - December 2014).



**Figure 2:** *Total AAF Operating Costs 2009-2015*

## 7.2 Subscriptions

The subscription fees outlined in Table 3 are based on the strategy that was outlined in the 2012 Business Plan to increase subscription fees by 10% between 2013 and 2014. Based on the current operating expenses forecast for 2014, subscriptions will be set to raise income of $681,381 in 2014.

The joining fee, and base price for *AAF Publisher* subscribers will remain at the same level as the 2013 fees in line with the strategy to grow new services connected to the federation (as outlined in the 2014-2015 Strategic Plan). The base price for *AAF Hosted* will remain at the same level as 2013 in order to continue to provide a low barrier of entry to smaller research organisations that do not have the technical capability to connect to the federation but would like to provide their end-users access to AAF connected services.

| Subscription Component | AAF Enterprise | AAF Team | AAF Hosted | AAF Publisher |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joining fee | $6,006 | $6,006 | N/A | $3,413 |
| Base price | $6,109 | $6,109 | $750 | $975 |
| Fee per FTE/user | $2.66 | $18.48 | $18.48 per account > 40 | N/A |
| Identity provider registration | $7,722 | $7,722 | N/A | N/A |
| Extra Service provider registration | $4,290 | $4,290 | $4,290 | $975 |

**Table 3:** *Subscription Fees for 2014*

### 7.2.1 Reciprocal Subscriptions - Tuakiri and the AAF

In 2012 the AAF and Tuakiri (New Zealand Federation) agreed to provide higher education and research institutions that are members of each other's Federation a reciprocal subscription arrangement. There has been no uptake from either federation for this arrangement and it will be discontinued from 2014.

## 7.3 Expenses

Tables 4 and 5 outline the operating expenses and strategic initiative expenses for 2014.

| AAF Operating Expenses | |
|---|---|
| ICT Equipment | $5,000 |
| General supplies and Expenses | $6,600 |
| Printing and Publications | $1,550 |
| Travel and Accommodation | $21,520 |
| Telecommunications | $7,693 |
| Promotions | $2,500 |
| Professional Fees | $23,240 |
| Bank Charges | $1,500 |
| Software Licenses and Certificates | $9,328 |
| Hosting Services | $12,000 |
| Conference / REFEDS Activities | $27,650 |
| Professional Development | $6,300 |
| Salaries | $712,638 |
| Long Service & Leave Provision | $9,036 |
| *Total* | *$846,555* |

**Table 4:** *2014 Operating Expenses*

| Strategic Project Initiative Expenses | |
|---|---|
| Salaries | $36,000 |
| *Total* | *$36,000* |

**Table 5:** *2014 Operating Expenses for Strategic Project Initiatives*

## 7.4 Budget Summary

Tables 6 and 7 outline the 2014 budget summaries for AAF Inc operations and project initiatives (funded by a Department of Industry Grant via CAUDIT Inc).

| 2014 Operating Budget Summary | |
|---|---|
| **Retained Earnings at 1 January 2014** | $215,767 |
| **Incoming** | |
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| Operating Surplus (2% safety margin) | $16,931 |
| **Total Outgoing** | $863,486 |
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**Table 6:** *2014 Operational Budget Summary*

| 2014 Project Initiatives Budget Summary (Department of Industry Funded) | |
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| **Total Income + Retained Earnings** | $36,000 |
| **Outgoing** | |
| Operating Expenses | $36,000 |
| **Total Outgoing** | $36,000 |
| **Retained Earnings as at 31 December 2014** | $0 |

**Table 7:** *2014 Project Initiatives Budget Summary*