

Australian Access Federation

Strategic Plan 2013-2015

About Us

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

The AAF's growth to date has been underpinned by a number of carefully executed strategies that have enabled it to reach a critical mass to operate as a self funded service since January 2012.

The AAF continues to be a vital part of the Australian eResearch infrastructure landscape. The core value proposition of the AAF is as a shared service for the research and education sector as it minimises the cost and effort for each individual Subscriber of managing federated identity. Without the AAF, for example, individual institutions would have to negotiate a series of unique one-on-one arrangements to provide access for their staff, students and researchers to inter-institutional services. Similarly, individual institutions would have to negotiate one-on-one agreements with a range of different providers (or operators) for access to national eResearch infrastructure. Finally, a national Federation provides the capability for collaboration on a global scale through the interconnection of national federations.

The AAF continues to be focused on meeting the needs of its education and research subscribers to enhance the range of online resources that can be accessed seamlessly across organisational boundaries.

AAF Strategic Plan

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 which undertake or support higher education and research in Australia. Since commencing operations the AAF has established a functioning Australian Access Federation with a subscriber base consisting of all Australian universities, CSIRO and a number of leading research support organisations. This has been achieved through an Australian Government grant and subscription fees. From 2013, the AAF will continue to operate as a self-funded entity providing a range of services to both identify providers (university and research organisations) and service providers (owners of data or information resources).

This document sets out the AAF's strategic objectives for the next stage of its development over the period 2013-2015.

AAF Vision and Mission

AAF's **vision** is to be increasingly valued as the provider of access management services for Australian Higher Education and Research.

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

Our Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Present/potential value from the AAF
Shareholders/Subscribers	<i>Self-sustaining operation focused on achievement of company objectives</i>
Identity Providers	<i>Cost effective and simple access to a broad range of online services</i>
Service Providers	<i>Scalability enabling wide access to services / reduced account management overhead</i>
End Users	<i>Seamless access</i>
Government	<i>Support for the eResearch agenda (low Government investment, maximum impact)</i>
Other Federations	<i>Easy to deal with/compatibility/competent</i>
Sponsors	<i>Opportunities to market to end users</i>

Key AAF Objectives

AAF seeks to provide:

- Trusted authentication
- Convenient access to a broad range of online services - national and international.
- High quality support services focussed on subscriber needs
- Clear development path informed by international best practice

Sustainability

The AAF's ongoing operations are funded almost exclusively by subscribers.

Development of new functionality and services is funded through two sources:

1. Incremental development funded through an increase in subscriptions
2. Major development funded by co-investment (Government, other eResearch groups, individual subscribers, etc)

As a guiding principle, future development must be directly relevant to the broader eResearch agenda to attract funding.

Potential new funding sources include:

- Broadening the subscriber base: *AAF will assess the cost-benefit of development that may be required to attract new subscriber groups.*
- Sponsorship/advertising targeted at the end user community: *AAF will assess sponsorship/advertising opportunities and develop sponsorship plans where appropriate.*

Our Plan for Success 2013-2015

There are three key strategic objectives that the AAF intends to pursue in the period: (1) further strengthening the AAF operating model; (2) extending AAF technical capability to meet stakeholder expectations; and (3) connecting AAF services internationally.

Objective 1: Further strengthen the AAF operating model.

Initiative	Outcome	Target
Attract new Subscribers (public research organisations, broader education community, eResearch organisations, commercial research organisations)	Subscriber base is broadened to grow operating budget and meet cost increases	10% growth per annum
Lower Service Provider fees (annual fee per service and one-time joining fee) for organisations that provide products and services for education and research to attract and retain a growing number of commercial services.	Service Provider base is broadened to extend the value of AAF to Subscribers	15% growth per annum of new services
Collaborate with national eResearch services and provide architectural support and advice (NeCTAR, RDSI are key partner organisations)	AAF is central to national eResearch planning and operations	AAF collaborates with all major eResearch initiatives.
Adopt a highly customer-centric operating model	Subscribers are pleased to participate	Achievement of annual subscriber satisfaction survey result of at least 75% of customers rating the support services provided by the AAF as either 4 or 5.

Objective 2: Extend AAF technical capability to meet stakeholder expectations.

Initiative	Outcome	Target
Develop services to enable fine grained access control and group management for Service Providers	Increased utility of the federation for eResearch services	Attract \$663,000 in funding to develop a National Entitlement Service for Australian eResearch
Develop cloud-based approaches for participation in AAF	Reduced technical barriers for participation in AAF	Attract \$400,000 in funding to progress this initiative.

Objective 3: Connect AAF services internationally.

Initiative	Outcome	Target
Align with international Federation initiatives to enable international access to federated services (driven by the needs of the research community and international Federation initiatives)	Significant progress in enabling international access to federated services	Attract \$300,000 in funding to progress this initiative.