

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency

Ministerial Submission
For Decision
MS20-000086


To: Minister for Government Services
Subject: Update to countries involved in discussions on the Apple and Google Exposure Notification Framework

Critical Date and Reason:	Tuesday, 22 December 2020 In order to send the letters to counterparts before Christmas shutdown.
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Recommendation/s for Minister Robert: That you:

1. Sign the draft letter at Attachment A to your colleagues in first-mover countries, providing an update on your meeting with Apple and Google, and introducing the Herald Bluetooth Protocol as the way forward for Australia.	Signed / Not signed
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Minister's Comments

Minister's signature:  Date: 10 / 1 / 2020

Key Points:

- Following your recent discussions with Apple and Google, you requested an update letter be prepared for the countries who participated in discussions on the Exposure Notification Framework (ENF). On 18 June 2020 and in the following weeks, you held discussions with **Section 33**
- The letter (**Attachment A**) advises that you recently met with **Section 47G**
Australia continues to place its Health Officials at the centre of our successful public health response, which includes ensuring they have the data they need to be able to undertake mapping, identify the infection source, and contain the spread. This information is not provided under the ENF, which is intended as more of a notification service than a contact tracing tool.
- The letter explains that Australia has identified Herald as a way to improve COVIDSafe's performance. Herald improves Bluetooth performance and retains flexibility in our response to COVID-19, unlike the ENF. Australia has contributed to Herald development and will continue to share our experiences with other countries who may be interested in Herald.

Sensitivities: N/A

Financial Impacts: N/A

Regulatory Impacts: N/A

Consultation: N/A

Attachment:

Attachment A: Letter to first-mover countries on meeting with Apple and Google, and introducing the Herald Bluetooth Protocol as the way forward for Australia

Cleared: 18 / 12 / 2020

Peter Alexander

Deputy CEO

Digital Transformation Agency

M: **Section 47F**

Contact Officer:

Anthony Warnock

Chief Technology Officer

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M: **Section 47F**

BACKGROUND

- On 18 June 2020, you chaired an International Ministerial Meeting to discuss the ENF with other first-mover countries who had developed sovereign digital contact tracing solutions as part of their COVID-19 response. Section 33
 - At the time, the ENF appeared to be the only technical way to improve COVIDSafe's Bluetooth performance, especially in background on iOS devices.
 - Section 33
 - In early October 2020, the DTA discovered the Herald Protocol, an alternative technical approach to improve Bluetooth performance without relying on the ENF. On 21 October 2020, you agreed to proceed with the implementation of Herald in COVIDSafe. Herald allows us to improve the Bluetooth performance of the app, while maintaining our sovereign public health response.
 - Other countries may be interested in Herald Section 33
- Section 33