

# Simplifying secure file sharing across government.

The Department of Finance plays a critical role in supporting the Australian Government's financial operations, working closely with agencies, partners and Treasury on highly sensitive information, particularly during the Federal Budget process.

For Scott Havelberg and his team within the Finance IT team, that meant secure file sharing had become a growing operational challenge.

"We used to have a dedicated link set up with Treasury," Scott explains. "But we'd both moved around, it just wasn't practical anymore in the cloud world."

At the same time, teams were collaborating more flexibly following COVID, while still needing to securely exchange official and sensitive information across agencies and external organisations. Finance needed a way to make that collaboration faster and easier, without compromising sovereignty, visibility or control.

## The challenge.

Before SigBox, the Department relied on a combination of email, dedicated links, GovTeams and even physical media to transfer information between agencies.

But those approaches were becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Some were too complex. Some were not designed for the sensitivity of the information being shared. Others created unnecessary operational friction for teams that needed to move quickly.

"We did use things like GovTeams, but again, it's difficult because the data is classified," Scott says. "GovTeams is good, but it's a fairly public setup."

At one point, staff were physically transporting encrypted thumb drives and hard drives across Canberra to keep pace with Budget updates.

The Department also explored more complex technical approaches, including shared tenancies, conditional access policies and cross-environment accounts.

"We looked at a few different mechanisms... and these are all really complex, sticky things that just never work out for the best," Scott says.

The team needed a simpler answer: a secure, sovereign and auditable way to share sensitive files externally, without adding more complexity for users or administrators.

## Why SigBox?

The Department needed a secure and practical way to collaborate externally without introducing additional complexity for users or IT teams.

SigBox stood out because it offered a sovereign, government-aligned platform that was simple to deploy and easy for teams to use.

"At the time, there was nothing that could guarantee Australian data sovereignty," Scott says. "There was no other kind of SigBox-esque style platform that we were aware of that could guarantee the data would stay in Australia." The platform's

alignment with the Australian Government Information Security Manual (ISM) and Essential Eight cybersecurity guidelines was also an important factor. For Finance, this provided greater confidence the solution could support the strict security and compliance

expectations around sharing sensitive government information externally.

"I think having an independent third party like SigBox, that offered a simple service, is probably one of the biggest reasons we went for it," he says.

## Fast implementation under pressure.

Timing was critical. The Department needed a solution quickly to support Budget-related collaboration and secure file sharing between agencies.

"The experience was excellent," Scott says. "Because we actually needed the product then and there."

The initial implementation was completed in approximately two weeks.

The rollout also came during the back end of COVID, when remote and hybrid work arrangements were still creating operational challenges across government. Despite the timing and pressure, deployment was smooth and low-friction.

"It solved a bunch of problems that we had at the time," he says. "And it was quiet. It happened in the background. It just worked."



## Organic adoption across the department.

What began as a solution primarily supporting Budget collaboration quickly spread across other areas of the Department.

Legal teams, fraud teams, HR groups and web services teams all began using SigBox to securely exchange information with agencies, suppliers and external organisations.

“Once we made it available, word spread pretty quickly,” Scott says.

Today, the Department uses SigBox across a range of scenarios, including:

- Budget coordination with Treasury
- Legal and chain-of-custody information sharing
- HR data exchange between agencies
- Collaboration with Deloitte and other third parties
- Sharing information with the ANAO

The Department currently has 69 active users, up from an initial rollout of around 20 users approximately two to three years ago.

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It just happened in the background. It just worked.

“Once you give people this, you can’t really take it away, it’s so easy to use and the team couldn’t live without it,” Scott says.

That organic growth has been one of the clearest indicators of the platform’s value. Rather than requiring a major change-management program, SigBox was adopted because it solved a practical problem for teams across the Department.

## Security, auditability and ease of use.

For the Department, visibility and auditability remain critical requirements.

“From a government perspective, auditability is numero Uno on any system that we use,” Scott says.

The Department also wanted stronger controls around how information was being shared externally, including MFA and better visibility over access and activity. At the same time, usability was equally important.

“One of the biggest problems is that people might understand what they’re doing is not right, but will still go ahead with it anyway, just to get the job done,” Scott says.

That made ease of use essential. If the approved tool was difficult to use, staff would naturally look for workarounds. SigBox helped close that gap by giving users a straightforward way to share information securely.

SigBox’s simplicity helped drive strong adoption across the Department, with

most users able to begin using the platform immediately without formal training.

“We haven’t had a single person that hasn’t logged on and just started using it,” Scott says. “It’s a very easy-to-use platform.”

Even among what Scott describes as “pretty fussy staff”, support overhead has remained extremely low.

## Looking ahead.

Today, SigBox has effectively become the Department’s default approach for secure external file sharing.

As collaboration between agencies and third parties continues to increase, the Department sees secure, sovereign file sharing as an increasingly important capability moving forward.

For Finance, SigBox has helped replace complex and ad hoc sharing methods with a simple, auditable and government-aligned platform that teams can use confidently.

And when asked how he would describe SigBox to others, Scott’s response is simple:

“I’d probably just tell them it’s Dropbox, but for government.”