



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

# Version Control Policy

Application Programming Interfaces on the  
Business to Government Portal



## Scope

This policy applies to any software developer or any aged care provider that implements software products or transacts digitally with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's (the Department) Business to Government Developer (B2G) Portal and the B2G Gateway.

## Background

By keeping software products up to date, software developers and aged care providers will be able to take advantage of more advanced functions that are not currently available in older versions of software products. Additionally, software developers are required to update their software to remain conformant with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)

## Version Control System

The Department will use semantic versioning, in line with API requirements found at [API.gov.au](http://API.gov.au), which is a formal convention for specifying compatibility using a three-part version number: major version; minor version; and patch.

- The major version is incremented for API changes based on the significance of the change (functionality and risk). For example, an API may require significant change to comply with new legislation or other external factors. In this case the version number would change from 1.5.3 to 2.0.0
- The minor version is incremented for releases which add new (optional), but backward-compatible, API. In this case the version number would change from 1.5.3 to 1.6.0
- The patch number is incremented for minor changes and bug fixes which do not change the web service functionality. In this case the version number would change from 1.5.3 to 1.5.4

## Version Control Requirements

The following provisions apply to APIs used to transact digitally with the Department's B2G Portal.

- The Department will provide APIs that are backwards compatible where possible.
- The agency will support the current version (n) and, where appropriate, the previous version (n-1) of an API.
- A deprecated API can continue to be used by those software developers that already have access to the API until it is retired but it will not be available to any new software developers (i.e. no new development work). To prevent interruption of services, it is advised that software developers move to a new version of the API as soon as possible as a deprecated version of an API will be removed after 12 months.
- Unless an urgent, necessary change is required to the latest version of software, the Department will aim to provide 12 months' notice to software developers and health and aged care providers prior to retiring a deprecated version of an API. Once a version of an API is retired, it can no longer be used to transact digitally with the department's B2G Gateway.
- For software changes that don't introduce breaking changes, versions may be released with shorter notice. See Figure 1.

New software developers, or software developers developing new products, must develop using the current version (n) of an API to be able to submit software for conformance. For software that has already achieved conformance, a major release of an API *could* result in software having to reapply for conformance before using it in production.

Figure 1.

