



PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM

ABS Business Reporting: ABS response to the PIA and the addition of QuickBooks accounting software

November 2023



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PART 1 – PIA ADDENDUM

1.1 Background

In October 2023 the ABS published a privacy impact assessment (PIA) titled: *ABS Business Reporting: Enabling use of accounting software to prepare information for the ABS*. This PIA considered the privacy impacts on people whose personal information is collected and used by the ABS through ABS Business Reporting. The PIA provided details for two accounting software providers, MYOB and Xero, which enabled quicker and easier business reporting processes through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this PIA addendum is to:

- Publish the ABS's response to the recommendations,
- Communicate the privacy impacts and considerations made from the addition of QuickBooks as another accounting service provider available for business reporting, and
- Provide available updates on implementation of the recommendations.

PART 2 – ABS'S RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The ABS's response to the recommendations was not explicitly included in PIA that was published in October 2023.

The ABS is committed to implementing all three recommendations. Part 3 covers where progress has been made.





PART 3 – PIA UPDATES

3.1 PIA addendum for the addition of QuickBooks

Recommendation 1: As of August 2023 ABS Business Reporting enables connections to MYOB and Xero Accounting Software. This PIA only addresses the information flows relating to integration with these accounting software products. As additional accounting software is integrated this PIA will be reviewed and updated to consider processes relating to each Accounting Software.

Preface

From December 2023, ABS Business Reporting enables a connection to QuickBooks Accounting Software. Information flows from QuickBooks into ABS Business Reporting for the purpose of preparing a report are described in this addendum to the ABS Business Reporting PIA.

This addendum should be read together with the 2023 ABS Business Reporting PIA. This addendum provides additional PIA content from the assessment of QuickBooks. Where specific references have not been made, the 2023 PIA content remains relevant and still applies. QuickBooks's specific considerations have been added below under the headings that align with the relevant section of the 2023 PIA.

Updates to add QuickBooks have also been made to relevant ABS Business Reporting webpages on the ABS website:

- [About ABS Business Reporting | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- [ABS Business Reporting Data Usage | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- [Getting started | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)
- [Troubleshooting | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

The PIA will continue to be reviewed and updated as additional accounting software are integrated into the application.





Update to PIA content for QuickBooks

PIA section reference	2.1 Data flow and use of personal information
	Personal information coming into ABS Business Reporting

QuickBooks

Personal information does not flow from QuickBooks into ABS Business Reporting.

QuickBooks APIs do grant the ABS access to personal information, but this information is not used by the ABS in any way. For users who connect with their QuickBooks accounting software, personal information is entered directly into the application, as described in the PIA Section 2.1.

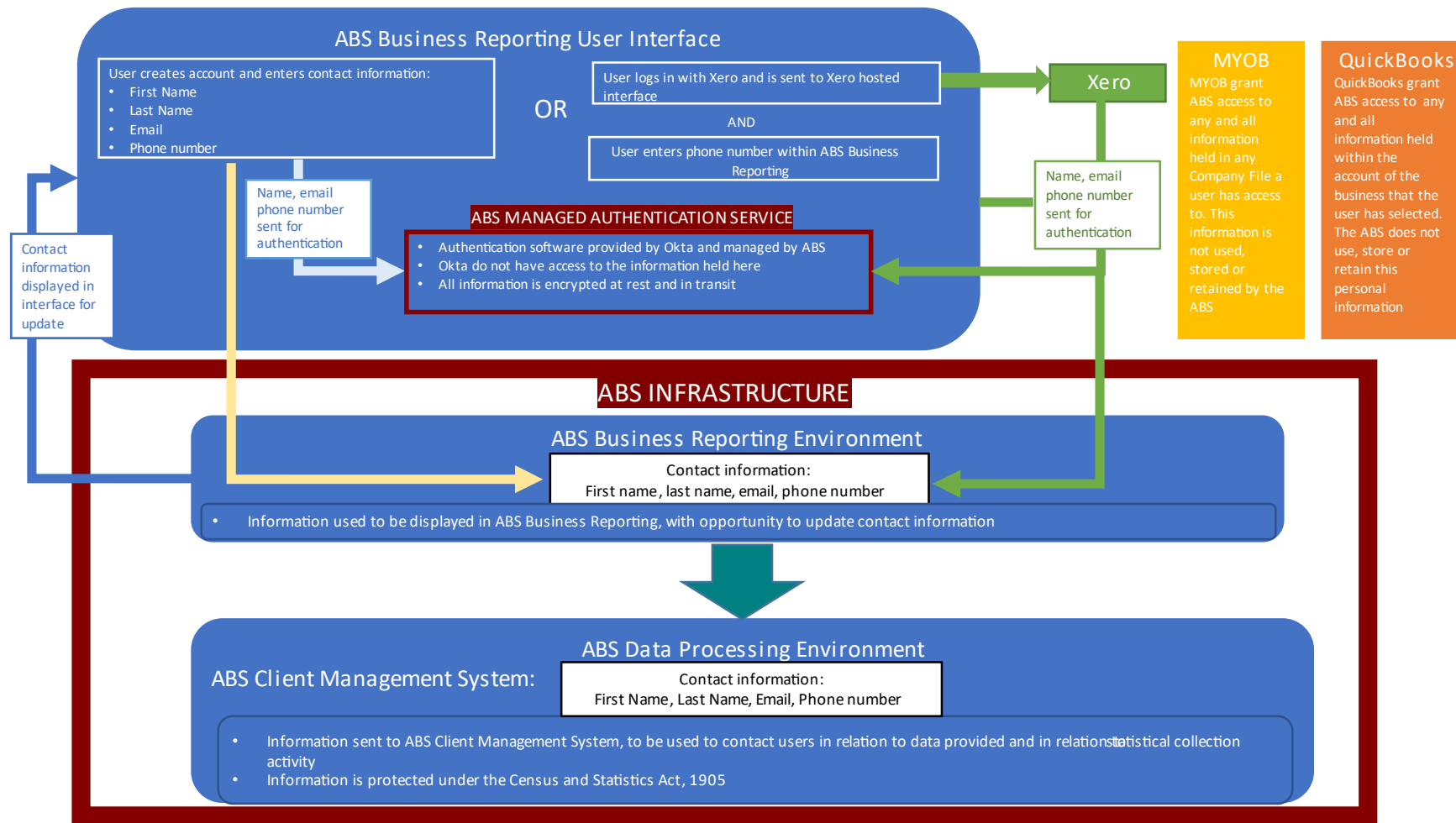
When a user connects ABS Business Reporting to QuickBooks accounting software, QuickBooks APIs grant access to the name, address, phone number, contact email and ABN of the business. This information may also include details of employees, customers, suppliers, or personal details that the business has added, and could include names, addresses, email and phone numbers if these have been added to QuickBooks.

While QuickBooks allows ABS to access this information, the ABS restricts ABS Business Reporting to only access information required to help the user to complete a report for a selected business. This does not include any personal information contained within QuickBooks.





PIA section reference	2.1 Data flow and use of personal information
	Figure 1 Data flow diagram – Flow of personal information into and out of ABS Business Reporting.





PIA section reference	2.2 Data flow and use of financial information
	Financial information coming into ABS Business Reporting
	From accounting software

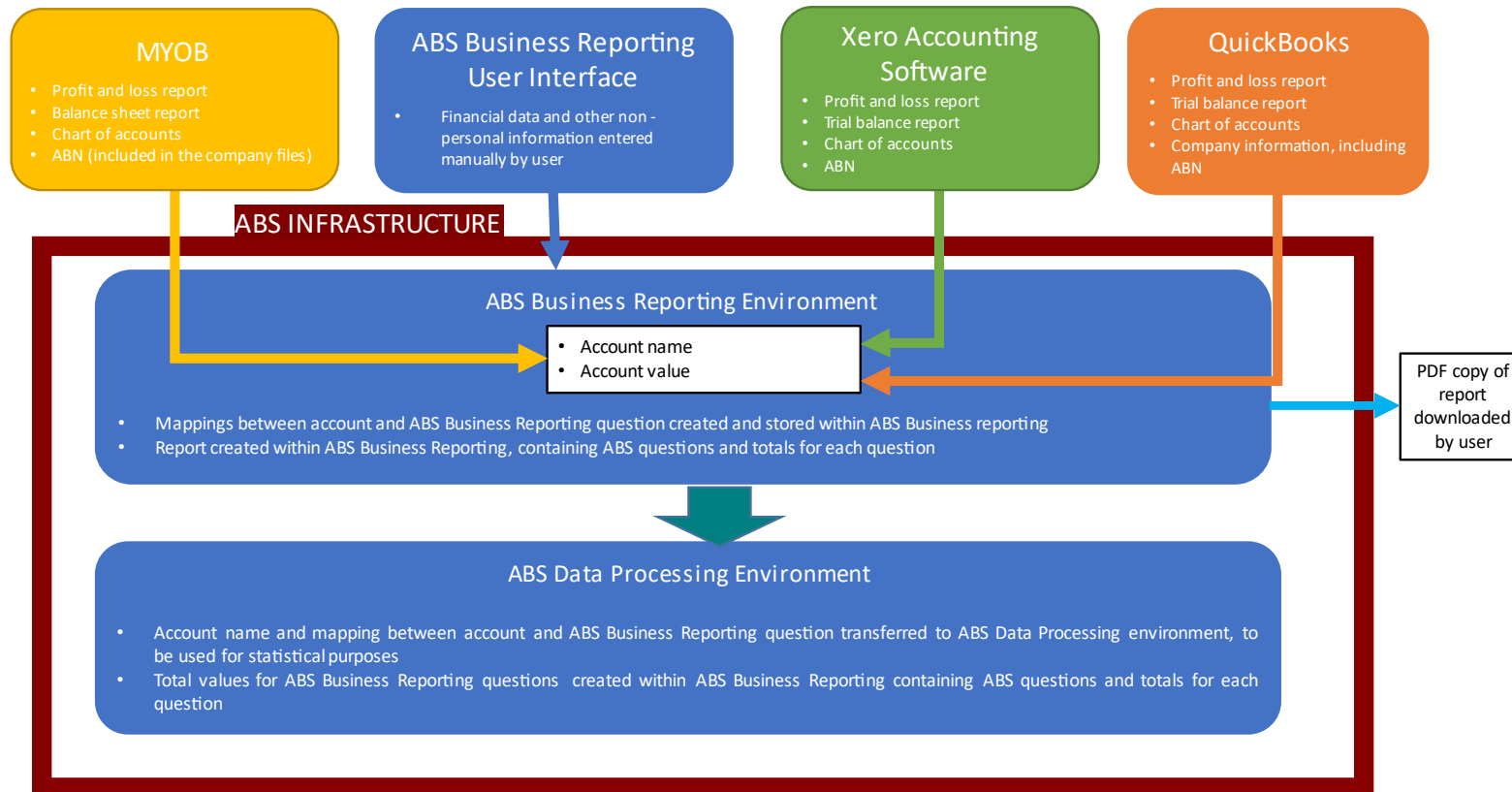
QuickBooks

When ABS Business Reporting is connected to a QuickBooks account, users will be asked to select a specific business and grant ABS Business Reporting read-only access to that business':

- chart of accounts
- profit and loss report
- trial balance report
- company information, including Australian Business Number (ABN).



PIA section reference	2.2 Data flow and use of financial information
	Figure 2 Data flow diagram – Flow of financial and statistical information into and out of ABS Business Reporting





3.2 Update on the recommendations

Recommendation 1: As of August 2023 ABS Business Reporting enables connections to MYOB and Xero Accounting Software. This PIA only addresses the information flows relating to integration with these accounting software products. As additional accounting software is integrated this PIA will be reviewed and updated to consider processes relating to each Accounting Software.

The exercise of adding QuickBooks has helped clarify and shape the process required when new accounting software products are integrated with ABS Business Reporting. A similar approach will be used in future to assess privacy impacts of new software and information will be published as a PIA addendum.

Recommendation 2: Retention of information collected within ABS business reporting will be reviewed as the implementation of ABS Business Reporting is developed. Currently, retention of information is aligned with a quarterly collection cycle. Implementation of the application is due to be expanded to include annual data collection from August 2024. Retention of information within ABS Business Reporting will be reviewed at that time.

The ABS agrees to reviewing the retention of information within ABS Business Reporting after August 2024 following the expansion to include annual data collection.

Recommendation 3: ABS has consulted with a range of users and stakeholders throughout the design and development of ABS Business Reporting. While ABS Business Reporting is still in development (until 2026), an annual review of those stakeholders and users consulted will be conducted to ensure a balance of views and expectations can be heard and considered.

The Terms of Reference and membership of the ABS's Accounting Software Project Advisory Board was last reviewed in July 2023. This Advisory Board comprises accountants, bookkeepers and small business advocates across the private sector and government. The expertise and experience of this group help to shape the development and application of ABS Business Reporting.

The ABS also sought feedback and advice from 36 small businesses through trials of ABS Business Reporting conducted in April and July 2023.

