



Sovereign, Undefined

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Sovereign, Undefined

Version 1.1, dated on its cover. This revision corrects two sentences that were wrong when version 1.0 was published, on a Government page of the same day as the announcement that this practice did not read: the statement, in version 1.0's note below and in its closing refusals, that no Government page carries an answer on Australian law and the CLOUD Act, and the statement, in the same note, that the public record holds one sentence in which the Government calls the arrangement sovereign. The Defence Ministers' press conference transcript of 4 July 2024 carries both [L-TSC-25b], in words unchanged across every archived capture from 17 July 2024. This revision adds that exchange, the three uses of the word, the Government's naming of the partner, what was said of the facilities, the 2020 expression of interest and Amazon's own publications, as claims in Sections 1 and 2 and as elements Sixteen to Twenty-one of the finding, the closing refusal becoming Twenty-two; no element of version 1.0 is withdrawn or narrowed. Version 1.0 was published as *Sovereign, Once*; that count was true at the four announcement pages, where the word occurs in one sentence, and the record holds three; this version is titled *Sovereign, Undefined*, which states what the record holds at any width. Version 1.0 remains served on the verification record under its own title at its own hash. The corrections register records both sentences as wrong when made, and the three served surfaces that carried the second.

Version 1.0 note, carried verbatim. Its sentence naming one sentence on the public record is the sentence corrected above, and its closing refusal on Government pages is replaced below. Version 1.0, dated on its cover. This assessment reads one sentence the Australian Government published on 4 July 2024 about its own Top Secret Cloud arrangement with Amazon Web Services, the one sentence on the public record in which the Government calls that arrangement sovereign, and sets it beside the Government's own record of the arrangement: four announcement pages, the published contract notices of the agencies the announcement names, two business registers, and the Commonwealth's own pinned uses of the same word in its hosting, protective security, cloud and information security instruments. It adjudicates nothing: it does not say whether the cloud is sovereign in any sense, whether any entity is within any definition of any instrument, which entity holds the arrangement, or who can compel any entity. It reports what the sentence says, what the record around it says, and where the record stops. Fifteen artefacts were retrieved for this case: the two Australian Business Register records, the twelve ASIC Connect captures and ASIC's service-availability page; everything else is inherited from fifteen earlier cases and general findings of this practice, each blob re-verified against its recorded hash at this case's pin. Every quotation was tested against the pinned bytes at the passage where it sits.

The limit that bounds every sentence below. The record does not name the entity. The four Government pages that announce the arrangement name "Amazon Web Services (AWS)" and "Amazon Web Services in Australia" [L-TSC-6b] and no legal entity, no Australian Business Number and no contracting party; no

published contract notice names the arrangement; and two Amazon companies, one Australian and one incorporated in the United States, contract directly with the same agencies on the published record. This practice has read the chain from a contracting party through its holding company to the United States statute and four Australian Acts, in *Where the Record Stops*, and that chain cannot be applied here because nothing published says which entity to apply it to. Every question that follows the word stops at that, and every statement below that something is absent is a statement about the documents this practice holds.

Scope

What is assessed. One word, in one sentence, on one day: “This landmark partnership will see AWS establish a sovereign TS Cloud in Australia to deliver resilient information, communication and technology (ICT) services for the Australian Government, generating up to 2,000 local Australian jobs.” [L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7]. Around it, three things the Government itself publishes: the four pages that announce the arrangement, with the Defence Ministers’ transcript of that day’s press conference and the Prime Minister’s release of 14 June 2025 added at version 1.1; the contract notices the agencies named in the announcement have published with either Amazon company, at AusTender’s searchable width; and the Commonwealth’s own definitions and uses of the word sovereign in five instruments this practice holds. Beside those, two registers: the Australian Business Register’s record of each Amazon company, and ASIC’s register of companies searched by name, by the United States company’s ABN as a number, and by the Australian company’s ACN as the control.

What is not assessed. Whether the cloud is sovereign: the announcement does not define the word and this assessment does not define it for the Government. Which entity holds the arrangement: no Government page names one. Whether either Amazon company, or any other entity, is within any definition of any Australian or United States instrument: the instruments are held and not applied. Who can lawfully compel the entity that will hold the data: that depends on which entity, and the record does not say. Each refusal is made where it would otherwise arise and again at the end.

The method. Every artefact was retrieved by this practice under its retrieval convention, each address fetched twice within the minute and every request logged, including refusals. Fifteen artefacts were retrieved for this case on 10 September 2026: the two Australian Business Register records; the twelve ASIC Connect captures, three searches executed twice each in fresh scripted sessions with the rendered page and its snapshot pinned per execution; and ASIC’s service-availability page. The seven earlier attempts on ASIC’s register that day, at which it was unreachable, are logged and their refusals pinned. Twenty-four artefacts are inherited from this practice’s general finding on the arrangement, retrieved 10 September 2026, of which sixteen, every AusTender page, the REDSPICE keyword export, the two site searches and the Prime Minister’s release, hash differently on every fetch and are marked unstable on their origin rows; each stands as served at its logged time. The remainder are inherited from fourteen earlier cases and findings, named in the References. At version 1.1, eighteen further artefacts are inherited from the same general finding, retrieved 11 September 2026: the press conference and two interview transcripts of 4 July 2024, the Prime Minister’s release of 14 June 2025, ONI’s expression of interest of 2020 as served, three Official Hansard PDFs, Amazon’s earnings exhibit and announcement, and eight Wayback Machine mementos of the transcript address, fetched raw; the contact

string was refused by three publishers and those rows were fetched in the browser form with the From header, the refusals logged. Every count below names the test that produced it. Every statement that something is absent names the population it was searched in. Pages are read by tag stripping with navigation and footer removed; documents by text extraction; exports by cell. Nothing is read from a register note where the pinned bytes can be read.

1 The statement

Four Government pages of 4 July 2024 announce the arrangement: the Defence Ministers release, the Prime Minister's release of the same text, the Office of National Intelligence's news article and the National Intelligence Community's copy of it. The release opens: "The Albanese Government will invest at least \$2 billion over the next decade to bolster Australia's cyber capabilities with the announcement of a strategic partnership between the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) and Amazon Web Services (AWS) in Australia to deliver a Top Secret (TS) Cloud for the Australian Government." [L-TSC-6b].

The word sovereign occurs once on each release, in one sentence, attached to the cloud AWS is to establish, and o times on the ONI and NIC pages. The sentence: "This landmark partnership will see AWS establish a sovereign TS Cloud in Australia to deliver resilient information, communication and technology (ICT) services for the Australian Government, generating up to 2,000 local Australian jobs." [L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7]. Established by counting the string sovereign, case-insensitive, over each page's extracted text, 8,201, 7,063, 3,381 and 4,183 characters, and by reading the sentence. The word is attached to "TS Cloud in Australia" [L-TSC-6b], the thing AWS is to establish, and to nothing else on the four pages.

Nothing on the four pages defines the word, states who may access the data beyond one sentence, names a law, or names a contracting party. Over the four pages, 22,828 characters of extracted text in all, no sentence defines sovereign. The only sentence on access is the ASD Director-General's: "The Top Secret Cloud with Amazon Web Services in Australia will provide a state-of-the-art collaborative space for our intelligence and defence community to store and access top secret data." [L-TSC-6b]. The words law, contract and own occur 0 times on each page, counted as whole words, case-insensitive. Established by reading each page in full and by counting.

The announcement names no legal entity. Each page names "Amazon Web Services (AWS)" or "Amazon Web Services in Australia" [L-TSC-6b]; the strings Australia Pty, Pty and Inc occur 0 times on each of the four pages, and no ABN and no contracting party is printed. Established by counting over the four pages' whole text.

The one sentence with the verb operate has the Government operating the platform; the release has AWS establishing and building it. The Deputy Prime Minister: "The Albanese Government is enhancing Defence's cyber capabilities as a matter of priority under the National Defence Strategy by investing at least \$2 billion to establish and operate a Top Secret Cloud platform which is central to achieving this objective." [L-TSC-6b]. The release's own sentences: "This landmark partnership will see AWS establish a sovereign TS Cloud in Australia" and "It will see AWS engage Australian businesses to design and build the TS Cloud"

[L-TSC-6b]. The word operate occurs once on each release and 0 times on the ONI and NIC pages, counted over each whole text. What the pages say of the cloud's purpose: "The TS Cloud will be purpose-built for Australia's Defence and National Intelligence Community agencies to securely host our country's most sensitive information." and it "will also support greater interoperability and deeper collaboration with the United States" [L-TSC-6b]; the ONI article: "The Top Secret (TS) Cloud will facilitate rapid sharing of Australia's most sensitive information and intelligence material among the 10 agencies that make up the NIC" [L-TSC-8b]. The ASD Director-General: "For ASD, this capability is a vital part of our REDSPICE program" [L-TSC-6b]. The ONI Director-General: "As program sponsor on behalf of the National Intelligence Community, ONI considers the Top Secret Cloud will help lay the foundation for a connected, modern and resilient intelligence community." [L-TSC-6b].

No ASD page and no DTA page on the arrangement was found. asd.gov.au's own search for the phrase top secret cloud returns a page on which that phrase occurs 0 times and the strings Amazon and AWS occur 0 times [L-TSC-10]; dta.gov.au's search likewise [L-TSC-11]; ASD's REDSPICE page uses the word cloud once and the strings Amazon and AWS 0 times [L-TSC-12]. Established by counting over each page's tag-stripped text. The population is two site searches on one day and one page; the negative does not reach pages those searches index and do not surface, documents the sites hold as PDFs, or any page behind a government-only platform.

Asked whether the centres will be subject to the US CLOUD Act, the ASD Director-General answered no, handled separately, and that the centres will run under Australian law. The Defence Ministers' transcript of the press conference of 4 July 2024, verbatim: "JOURNALIST: Will the new centres be subject to the US CLOUD Act, the kind of purview the requests under that particular legislation given that it's an Amazon-based solution?" [L-TSC-25b]; "RACHEL NOBLE: No, it's handled separately and these cloud centres will run under Australian law." [L-TSC-25b]; "ANDREW SHEARER, ONI DIRECTOR-GENERAL: Fully sovereign." [L-TSC-25b]. The questioner is not named in the transcript. Established by reading. This is what was said; no sentence here says whether it is so. Version 1.0 said no Government page carried it. **The page had said it at every archived capture:** the Wayback Machine holds eight captures of the address, from 17 July 2024 to 18 May 2026, each fetched raw and read, each carrying the question, the answer "run under Australian law" and "Fully sovereign" [L-TSC-35, L-TSC-36, L-TSC-37, L-TSC-38, L-TSC-39, L-TSC-40, L-TSC-41, L-TSC-42]; the transcript text, tags stripped and whitespace folded, is identical across all eight and the page as served 11 September 2026, and the five captures before 17 November 2025 differ from the rest only inside the page's description meta tag, by one non-breaking space. The width of that dating is one archive and one address, and the archive holds no capture on 10 September 2026 itself.

The Government used the word sovereign of the arrangement three times on the record held, and defined it in none. The release sentence quoted above, once on each release; the ONI Director-General's "Fully sovereign" [L-TSC-25b], spoken immediately after the answer on the cloud centres and Australian law and attached to it; and the Prime Minister's release of 14 June 2025: "The significant investment builds on the Australian Government's strategic partnership with AWS to deliver a sovereign Top Secret Cloud which will generate up to 2,000 Australian jobs." [L-TSC-28]. Counted as the string sovereign, case-insensitive, over

the transcript page, 1; the two interview transcripts, 0 and 0; and the 2025 release, 1; each occurrence read. No sentence on any of the six pages defines the word. The population is the four pages above, the three transcripts of 4 July 2024 and the release of 14 June 2025; no other Government page was read for the word.

The Government's spoken record names the partner as Amazon Web Services Australia, once paired with Amazon Web Services, and names no legal entity. The Deputy Prime Minister: "we're also joined by Iain Rouse from Amazon Web Services Australia" [L-TSC-25b]; "in partnership with Amazon Web Services Australia, the Commonwealth will be establishing a Top Secret Cloud computing capability" [L-TSC-25b]; "I really want to thank Amazon Web Services Australia for their partnership with the Commonwealth" [L-TSC-25b]; and, asked why the Government partnered with Amazon, "it's Amazon Web Services and Amazon Web Services Australia, which are able to provide that technology for the Commonwealth" [L-TSC-25b]. The speaker line "IAIN ROUSE, AMAZON WEB SERVICES AUSTRALIA" [L-TSC-25b]. The ASD Director-General: "in partnership with AWS Australia" [L-TSC-25b]; the ONI Director-General: "this partnership with AWS Australia offers us that interoperability" [L-TSC-25b]. The string Amazon Web Services Australia occurs 5 times on the page; the strings Pty, Inc, ABN and ACN occur 0 times, counted as whole words over the whole page. The description is the Australian company's name without its suffix and is not stated as a legal name; the limit above stands beside it.

The Government said where the data will be held and who manages it, and no sentence says who owns or operates the facilities. The Deputy Prime Minister: "this data will be held in Australia in facilities which are secure and purpose-built for this capability" [L-TSC-25b]; "the location of those facilities is not something that will be public" [L-TSC-25b]; "where the data is is understood and managed by the Commonwealth and, indeed, Amazon Web Services Australia at every point" [L-TSC-25b]; "This data will be sitting in specific data centres in Australia" [L-TSC-25b]; "This is a \$2 billion spend over the course of the next decade and this capability will be in place from 2027." [L-TSC-25b]. The ASD Director-General: "these top secret data centres and the people that will access and use them in partnership with AWS Australia will be built to the same standard" [L-TSC-25b], and of the existing centres, "will remain exclusively the purview of the Commonwealth" [L-TSC-25b]. The AWS speaker: "designing, building, constructing world-class infrastructure to the standards defined by the Australian Government and secondly, something we call cloud services" [L-TSC-25b]. The ONI Director-General on process: "We initially went to market and a number of other companies were interested and put in bids" [L-TSC-25b]. Over the transcript from its subject line to the end of the questions on the cloud, 15,310 characters after whitespace folding, no sentence says who owns the facilities or who operates the data centres; the strings own, owner, operate and operator occur 0 times as whole words. The interview transcripts of the same day add "those servers, every one of them, will exist within facilities which are purpose built for this, which will be in Australia" [L-TSC-26b] and "data centres that will be built specifically for this, that will be in Australia" [L-TSC-27b]. Established by reading and counting.

2 The record

Under the Australian company's ABN, AusTender holds 134 published contract notices, 45 of them to intelligence-community or Defence agencies. The export for supplier ABN 63 605 345 891 holds 134

notices [L-TSC-1], the same count as this practice's export of 6 August 2026 [DS-AWS-2]. Of the 134, 45 are to agencies of the National Intelligence Community or Defence: Department of Defence 31, Australian Signals Directorate 12, Department of Home Affairs 1, Australian Federal Police 1, published between 26 May 2022 and 31 July 2026, summing to \$238,165,398. Sixteen are at or above \$1,000,000, fifteen of them to ASD or Defence; the largest is CN4158623-A1, "Cloud Services" [L-TSC-1], Australian Signals Directorate, 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2028, \$72,883,769.13. Established by counting over the export's 134 rows, the agency read from the Agency column and the value from the Value (AUD) column.

The six largest ASD and Defence notice pages name the Australian company and describe nothing beyond a title of two to four words; the largest is flagged confidential with a statutory reason.

Each of the six pages names "AMAZON WEB SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD" and "ABN: 63 605 345 891" and "Procurement Method: Limited tender" [L-TSC-14], and a description that is its title: "Cloud Services" [L-TSC-14], \$72,883,769.13, ASD, 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2028; "Cloud Services" [L-TSC-20], \$33,506,683.31, Defence, 16 July 2025 to 30 April 2028; "Cloud and Web Services" [L-TSC-22], \$17,717,709.00, Defence, 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2026; "Software Licence" [L-TSC-24], \$16,233,736.33, Defence, 30 June 2026 to 12 June 2028; "Software Services" [L-TSC-16], \$8,950,052.43, ASD, 1 October 2025 to 24 October 2027; and "ICT Support" [L-TSC-18], \$5,280,836.55, ASD, 17 July 2025 to 16 July 2028. Five print "Confidentiality - Contract: No" [L-TSC-16]. One, CN4158623, prints "Confidentiality - Contract: Yes" and "Confidentiality - Outputs: Yes", each with the reason "Privacy Act 1988 Statutory secrecy provisions" [L-TSC-14]. Established by reading the six pages as printed; the population is those six of the 45.

No published contract notice carries Top Secret Cloud or REDSPICE. The AusTender contract notice search for the keyword "Top Secret Cloud", all agencies active and retired, all dates, all words, returns a file stating "There are no results that match your selection." [L-TSC-2], and the search for "REDSPICE" returns the same [L-TSC-3]. The population is AusTender contract notices' searchable fields, title, description, category and parties, over every agency and every date. The negative does not reach any contract's text, any standing offer, any grant, any notice withheld under a confidentiality flag or never published, or a notice for the arrangement published under another title. Established by reading the two exports.

The United States company also contracts directly with the same agencies on the published record. The keyword search for "Amazon Web Services" returns 255 notices [L-TSC-4], of which 50 are to intelligence-community or Defence agencies whose supplier is printed as "AMAZON WEB SERVICES, INC." or "Amazon Web Services Inc" [L-TSC-5]: the earliest by contract start CN3343320, 1 July 2015, \$19,556; the latest CN4213306-A1, 4 November 2025, \$754; the largest CN3407874-A5, Australian Signals Directorate, 21 February 2017, \$1,986,700. The keyword "Amazon" returns 264 notices with 51 such rows [L-TSC-5]. The exports carry no ABN column, so the entity is read from the Supplier Name column as printed. Established by counting over 255 and 264 rows.

The United States company holds an Australian Business Number as an incorporated entity with no Australian business location, since 2012. The Australian Business Register's current details for ABN 15 242 571 122, as served 10 September 2026: "Entity name: Amazon Web Services Inc", "ABN status: Active from 12 Nov 2012", "Entity type: Other Incorporated Entity", "Main business location: 0000" with no state,

and “ABN last updated: 27 Jun 2013” [A-ABR-2]. The name search that located it returns both Amazon Web Services entities, the Australian company at “2000 NSW” [A-ABR-1], and states “Your search for Amazon Web Services was stopped before all matching names could be retrieved.” [A-ABR-1]. Established by reading, twice within the minute, on one register on one day; the population of the name search is what the register returned before it stopped, and the record page is one ABN’s current details as served.

On ASIC’s register, on the searches captured, no row is a registered foreign company and none is named Amazon Web Services Inc; the control reaches the Australian company’s record. The register was searched in the method this practice used for the Microsoft arrangement: each search in a fresh scripted browser session, executed twice within the minute, the rendered page captured each time with its accessibility snapshot beside it. The name search “AMAZON WEB SERVICES” returns “2 results found” [A-ASIC-N1]: “AMAZON WEB SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD”, “ACN 605 345 891”, “Australian Proprietary Company”, “Registered”, “SYDNEY NSW 2000”; and “AMAZON WEB SERVICES USER GROUP (AWSUG)”, “VIC B2387495N”, “Business Name”, “Cancelled”, no address [A-ASIC-N1]. No row reads Foreign Company, no row carries an ARBN, and no row is named Amazon Web Services Inc, tested as three spellings over the extracted text of both executions. The number search “15242571122”, the United States company’s ABN, returns “0 results found” [A-ASIC-B1]. The control, the Australian company’s ACN “605345891”, reaches the record directly: “Name: AMAZON WEB SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD ACN: 605 345 891 ABN:” “63 605 345 891”, “Registration date: 22/04/2015”, “Status: Registered”, “Type: Australian Proprietary Company, Limited By Shares”, “Locality of registered office: SYDNEY NSW 2000” [A-ASIC-C1]. A number known to be on the register is found by the same method, so the nil on the ABN is a result about that number. The rendered bytes differ between the two executions of each search while the extracted text is identical within the name pair and the number pair; the control pair differs only in the order of the third-party links below the record, the record fields identical.

What that establishes, and at what width. That among the rows ASIC returned to these three searches on 10 September 2026, no row is a registered foreign company, none carries an ARBN, and none is named Amazon Web Services Inc; that the ABN as a number returns no row; and that the control returns the Australian company. It does not establish that the company does not carry on business in Australia, that it is not registered under another name, or what ASIC’s search covers. ASIC’s own statement of what its search covers is unread.

The register answered after seven attempts on the same day at which it did not. Earlier on 10 September 2026 the register was unreachable at seven attempts across two methods, scripted and manual: six logged, HTTP 503 to a scripted session three times with the body “Failure of Web Server bridge:” and “No backend server available for connection: timed out after 10 seconds or idempotent set to OFF or method not idempotent.” [A-ASIC-P2] and a 403 to the fetcher three times, and one manual attempt by the director, recorded on the director’s word. ASIC’s own service-availability page, read in that hour, states “We are currently experiencing an issue affecting the availability and display of some business name information.” and lists planned outages of “ASIC Connect Search - Business Names and Companies” [A-ASIC-SA] on 9 September, 12 to 13 September, 19 to 20 September and 20 September 2026. The searches were made when it

answered, between 12:31 and 12:35 UTC the same day.

The corpus's entity work establishes the Australian company's contracting position and chain, and names the arrangement nowhere. Amazon Web Services Australia Pty Ltd, ACN 605 345 891, is the contracting party for an Australian account, the provider's own table reading "Amazon Web Services Australia Pty Ltd (ABN: 63 605 345 891)" [T-AWS-2]; its declared ultimate holding company on the ASIC extract is Amazon.com, Inc. [H-AWS-1]; and Amazon Web Services, Inc. is listed in that company's Exhibit 21.1 as "Amazon Web Services, Inc. Delaware 100 %" [S2]. Its Service Terms describe what it sells [A-AWS-ST-1]. Established by reading, inherited from *Where the Record Stops*. The strings Top Secret and REDSPICE occur 0 times in those four artefacts' text, counted over each whole text.

The arrangement's origin on the Government's own record is a 2020 expression of interest and a National Intelligence Community project co-led by ONI and ASD, naming no party. AusTender approach to market P20/49942, "Agency : Office of National Intelligence" [L-TSC-29b], "ATM Type : Expression of Interest" [L-TSC-29b], "Publish Date : 11-Dec-2020" [L-TSC-29b], "Close Date & Time : 8-Feb-2021" [L-TSC-29b]: "ONI intends to identify potential commercial partners with the capabilities, qualities, interest, and commitment to partner with the NIC to provide value for money TOP SECRET, scalable, private, community cloud services." [L-TSC-29b]. Senate estimates, 25 May 2021, an ASIO officer: "there was an open market tender recently on behalf of the whole of the national intelligence community regarding top secret cloud" [L-TSC-32b]. 13 February 2023, the ONI Director-General: "We are working to establish a shared top-secret cloud environment that all of the 10 agencies of our national intelligence community can use together" [L-TSC-30b] and, asked if it is an ASD project, "It's a National Intelligence Community project but it is co-led by my office, ONI and ASD." [L-TSC-30b]. 1 December 2025: "the development of a common, top-secret cloud environment" [L-TSC-31b]. None of the four names a commercial party. Established by reading; the population is those four documents, and the negative does not reach the expression of interest document itself, which is behind AusTender login and not held.

Amazon's own publications name no entity. Amazon.com, Inc.'s earnings exhibit of 1 August 2024: "Announced an AUD \$2 billion strategic partnership with the Australian Government to provide a "Top Secret" AWS Cloud to enhance the nation's defense and intelligence capabilities." [L-TSC-33]; About Amazon Australia, 4 July 2024: "AWS Cloud (TS Cloud) to enhance the nation's defence and intelligence capabilities" [L-TSC-34]. The strings Pty and Inc occur 0 times on the announcement page outside its footer, and the exhibit names Amazon Web Services, Inc. 0 times. Established by reading and counting; the population is the two documents.

3 The word on the Commonwealth's own record

One Commonwealth framework defined sovereignty for hosting and retired the word from its tier name. The Hosting Certification Framework document, March 2021: "the term sovereign was taken as excluding any level of foreign investment or control in a hosting provider"; "For clarity, sovereignty refers to the ability of the government to specify and maintain stringent ownership and control conditions."; "Certified Strategic (previously referred to as sovereign)" [S-HCF-1]. The word occurs 3 times in the document, each

quoted. Established by counting and reading.

The other pinned instruments use the word of the nation or not at all. PSPF Release 2026 uses sovereign 2 times, both of “Australia’s sovereignty” [IR-PSPF-1]: “The national interest is Australia’s sovereignty, security, prosperity, independence of decision-making and the freedom and social cohesion of its people.” and, of foreign actors, “to interfere with Australia’s sovereignty and decision making” [IR-PSPF-1], never of a provider or facility. The ISM’s Guidelines for procurement and outsourcing use it 0 times [I-ISM-2]; ASD’s Cloud assessment and authorisation 0 times [6-ASD-1]; the Whole-of-Government Cloud Computing Policy 0 times [L-CCP-4b]. Established by counting the string, case-insensitive, over each whole extracted text; the population is those four instruments and no other chapter or document of their publishers.

The one instrument held that speaks to the class names no provider. The ISM: “Control: ISM-1529; Revision: 2; Updated: Dec-21; Applicable: S, TS; Essential 8: N/A Only community or private clouds are used for outsourced SECRET and TOP SECRET cloud services.” [I-ISM-2]. Established by reading.

What this section carries and what it does not. It sets three Government uses of the word, none defined, beside the Government’s own pinned uses of the same word; each side is the Commonwealth’s text and the comparison is a count. One sense is on the record: the ONI Director-General’s “Fully sovereign” [L-TSC-25b] follows the answer that the centres will run under Australian law and that the CLOUD Act is handled separately, and attaches the word to that answer. It is quoted as what was said and not adopted as the meaning. No sentence here says what the Government meant by the word, whether the framework’s sense, the PSPF’s, the Director-General’s or another; that is a reading the reader makes. A claim that the announcement reverted to a retired term, or contradicts the framework, reaches past what three uses, none defined, can bear and is not made.

4 The finding

Each element below is stated with its own artefact and its own date. Each is what the artefact shows. No sentence here says what they compose into, and none says which entity holds the arrangement.

One. The word sovereign occurs once on the Defence Ministers release and once on the Prime Minister’s, in one sentence, attached to the cloud AWS is to establish in Australia, and 0 times on the ONI and NIC pages. L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, L-TSC-8b, L-TSC-9b, as served 10 September 2026.

Two. Over the four pages, 22,828 characters, no sentence defines the word, one sentence speaks to access, and the words law, contract and own occur 0 times. L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, L-TSC-8b, L-TSC-9b, as served 10 September 2026.

Three. The four pages name “Amazon Web Services (AWS)” and “Amazon Web Services in Australia” [L-TSC-6b] and no legal entity, ABN or contracting party; the strings Australia Pty, Pty and Inc occur 0 times on each. L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, L-TSC-8b, L-TSC-9b, as served 10 September 2026.

Four. The one sentence with the verb operate, the Deputy Prime Minister’s, has the Government investing to establish and operate the platform; the release’s own sentences have AWS establishing, designing and building

it. L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, as served 10 September 2026.

Five. asd.gov.au's and dta.gov.au's own searches for top secret cloud return pages naming it 0 times, and ASD's REDSPICE page names neither AWS nor the cloud. L-TSC-10, L-TSC-11, L-TSC-12, as served 10 September 2026.

Six. Under ABN 63 605 345 891, AusTender holds 134 published notices, 45 to intelligence-community or Defence agencies, \$238,165,398 in all, the largest a \$72,883,769.13 ASD cloud services contract from May 2025 to April 2028. L-TSC-1, export of 10 September 2026; DS-AWS-2, export of 6 August 2026.

Seven. The six largest of the 45 name the Australian company, are limited tenders, and describe themselves in a title of two to four words; the largest is flagged confidential in contract and outputs with the reason "Privacy Act 1988 Statutory secrecy provisions" [L-TSC-14]. L-TSC-14, L-TSC-16, L-TSC-18, L-TSC-20, L-TSC-22, L-TSC-24, as served 10 September 2026.

Eight. AusTender's keyword searches for Top Secret Cloud and for REDSPICE return no result over every agency and every date. L-TSC-2, L-TSC-3, exports of 10 September 2026.

Nine. Amazon Web Services, Inc. is the printed supplier on 50 notices to the same agencies from 1 July 2015 to 4 November 2025, the largest \$1,986,700 to ASD in 2017. L-TSC-4, L-TSC-5, exports of 10 September 2026.

Ten. The United States company holds ABN 15 242 571 122 as an "Other Incorporated Entity" [A-ABR-2], active from 12 November 2012, with a main business location of 0000 and no state, last updated 27 June 2013. A-ABR-2, A-ABR-1, as served 10 September 2026.

Eleven. On ASIC's register, searched three ways on 10 September 2026, the name search returns the Australian company and a cancelled business name and no registered foreign company, the United States company's ABN as a number returns no row, and the Australian company's ACN as control returns its record; the register was unreachable at seven attempts across two methods earlier that day. A-ASIC-N1, A-ASIC-N2, A-ASIC-B1, A-ASIC-B2, A-ASIC-C1, A-ASIC-C2, 10 September 2026 12:31 to 12:35 UTC; A-ASIC-P2, A-ASIC-SN1, A-ASIC-SN2, A-ASIC-SA, 10 September 2026 08:56 to 09:08 UTC.

Twelve. The Australian company is the contracting party for an Australian account, its declared ultimate holding company is Amazon.com, Inc., and Amazon Web Services, Inc. is a Delaware subsidiary of that company; none of those four artefacts names the Top Secret Cloud or REDSPICE. T-AWS-2, as served 6 September 2026; H-AWS-1, ASIC extract held 18 July 2026; S2, as served 5 September 2026; A-AWS-ST-1, as served 7 September 2026.

Thirteen. The Hosting Certification Framework, March 2021, defines sovereignty for hosting as the government's ability to specify and maintain ownership and control conditions, records that the term sovereign was taken as excluding any foreign investment or control, and names its top tier Certified Strategic, previously referred to as sovereign. S-HCF-1, as served 17 August 2026.

Fourteen. PSPF Release 2026 uses the word twice, of Australia's sovereignty; the ISM procurement guidelines, ASD's cloud assessment document and the Whole-of-Government Cloud Computing Policy use it 0

times. IR-PSPF-1, as served 31 July 2026; I-ISM-2, as served 15 August 2026; G-ASD-1, as served 19 August 2026; L-CCP-4b, as served 9 September 2026.

Fifteen. ISM-1529 requires that only community or private clouds are used for outsourced SECRET and TOP SECRET cloud services, and names no provider. I-ISM-2, as served 15 August 2026.

Sixteen. Asked whether the centres will be subject to the US CLOUD Act, the ASD Director-General answered no, handled separately, and that the centres will run under Australian law, and the ONI Director-General said “Fully sovereign” [L-TSC-25b]; the page carries the exchange in the same words at every archived capture from 17 July 2024 to 18 May 2026, with no capture on 10 September 2026. L-TSC-25b, as served 11 September 2026; L-TSC-35 to L-TSC-42, mementos of 17 July 2024 to 18 May 2026.

Seventeen. The Government used the word sovereign of the arrangement three times on the record held, in the release sentence, in the Director-General’s interjection and in the Prime Minister’s release of 14 June 2025, and defined it in none. L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, as served 10 September 2026; L-TSC-25b, L-TSC-28, as served 11 September 2026.

Eighteen. The Government’s spoken record names the partner as Amazon Web Services Australia five times, once paired with Amazon Web Services, and speaks no legal entity, ABN or ACN. L-TSC-25b, as served 11 September 2026.

Nineteen. The Government said the data will be held in purpose-built facilities in Australia at locations not made public, managed by the Commonwealth and Amazon Web Services Australia at every point, and that it went to market and took bids; no sentence says who owns or operates the facilities. L-TSC-25b, L-TSC-26b, L-TSC-27b, as served 11 September 2026.

Twenty. The arrangement’s origin on the Government’s own record is ONI’s expression of interest of December 2020 for top secret community cloud services and a National Intelligence Community project co-led by ONI and ASD, and none of the four documents names a commercial party. L-TSC-29b, as served 11 September 2026; L-TSC-30b, L-TSC-31b, L-TSC-32b, Official Hansard as served 11 September 2026.

Twenty-one. Amazon.com, Inc.’s one filed sentence on the arrangement and its Australian announcement name the Australian Government and AWS and no entity. L-TSC-33, L-TSC-34, as served 11 September 2026.

Twenty-two. Nothing in this assessment states whether the cloud is sovereign in any sense, which entity holds the arrangement, whether any entity is within any definition of any instrument, whether the Director-General’s answer is so, or who can lawfully compel the entity that will hold the data.

Limitations

The four Government pages are read as served on 10 September 2026, and are the announcement’s whole public text as this practice found it. Any parliamentary evidence, estimates transcript, ASD or ONI page the two site searches did not surface, AWS page, or later statement is outside every negative here.

The AusTender exports are read at their searchable fields. The six notice pages are the largest six of 45;

the other 39 are read from the export only. The keyword exports carry no ABN column, and the United States company's notices are counted by its printed name.

The ABN Lookup name search stopped before retrieving every matching name. The two entities it returned are the two this assessment needed, and the cap is stated where the search is used.

Every AusTender page and the Prime Minister's release hash differently on each fetch. Each stands at its logged fetch, under the origin finding's unstable marking.

The United States company's position is read from the Australian Business Register and from ASIC's register as searched three ways on 10 September 2026. The ASIC result is the rows returned to those searches on that day; ASIC's own statement of what its search covers is unread, and the register was unreachable at seven attempts across two methods earlier the same day.

The ASIC extract for the Australian company is held at 18 July 2026 and is not re-fetched; its holding-company field is read as at that date.

The record does not name the entity, and every question after the word stops there.

Added at version 1.1. The transcript is the Defence Ministers' published transcript and is read as the Government's record of what was said, not as a recording; the Parliamentary Library's copy of it carries an errors-and-omissions caveat, which is not pinned, and the ministers' page does not. The dating of the two corrections rests on one archive and one address, with no capture on the day of publication. The three Hansard PDFs are read at the passages that name the top secret cloud and not whole. The expression of interest document is not held. Whether any other Government page of any date uses the word of the arrangement, or answers the CLOUD Act question, was searched at the width of this practice's read of 11 September 2026 and not further.

What this assessment is not

It is not a finding that the cloud is or is not sovereign in any sense. The announcement does not define the word, and this assessment does not.

It is not a finding of which entity holds the arrangement. No Government page names one, no notice names the arrangement, and nothing here connects any notice to it beyond its parties and its date.

It is not a finding that any entity is or is not within any definition of any instrument, or is or is not compellable by any state. The four Australian Acts and the United States statute this practice holds are inherited and not applied.

It is not a claim about what any word in the announcement means beyond what the announcement says, and not a claim that the announcement reverted to, adopted or contradicted any other Commonwealth sense of the word.

It is not a reading of any contract, none being published, and not a claim about the contents of the confidential notice.

It is not an adoption of, and not a contradiction of, the ASD Director-General's answer that “these cloud centres will run under Australian law” [L-TSC-25b] and that the CLOUD Act is “handled separately” [L-TSC-25b]; the answer is quoted as what was said, and whether any instrument reaches the data is not adjudicated in either direction.

It is not advice to any agency or provider.

Related published assessments

- **AOS-AWS-2026-001**, *Where the Record Stops*, v1.1. Who can lawfully compel Amazon Web Services Australia Pty Ltd, read from its terms, its register, the United States statute and four Australian Acts, and where that record stops. The entity and chain artefacts this assessment inherits are pinned there and in the cases it names.
- **AOS-CPI-2026-001**, *Who the Record Names*. The same question put to the Microsoft arrangement, and the method this assessment used for ASIC's register.
- **AOS-HCF-2026-001**, *Jurisdiction of Control in the Hosting Certification Framework, Strategic Tier*. The framework's definition of sovereignty for hosting, and the entity resolution that stops at Amazon.com, Inc.
- **AOS-CS0-2026-001**, *What the Certification Is Over*. The framework document quoted in Section 3 is pinned there.
- **AOS-CMP-2026-001**, *The Compellability Gap in Commonwealth Cloud Assurance*, v1.4. The Amazon artefacts and the United States statute this assessment inherits.
- **AOS-ISM-2026-001**, *Stated, Not Required*, v1.2. The ISM chapter that carries ISM-1529.

References

Every artefact is pinned by SHA-256 in this case's register or in the register of the case or general finding named beside it, and re-verified against its recorded hash at this case's pin.

- A-ABR-1, A-ABR-2 — ABN Lookup name search, “Amazon Web Services”, active ABNs, capped; ABN Lookup current details, ABN 15 242 571 122. This case, 10 September 2026.
- A-ASIC-SA, A-ASIC-P2, A-ASIC-SN1, A-ASIC-SN2 — ASIC, Service availability page; ASIC Connect search landing page, HTTP 503 body and the two scripted-session snapshots. This case, 10 September 2026.
- A-ASIC-N1, A-ASIC-N2, A-ASIC-B1, A-ASIC-B2, A-ASIC-C1, A-ASIC-C2, each with a snapshot row beside it — ASIC Connect, Organisations and Business Names searches, rendered DOM, two executions each: “AMAZON WEB SERVICES”; “15242571122”; “605345891” as control. This case, 10 September 2026, 12:31 to 12:35 UTC.
- L-TSC-1 to L-TSC-5 — AusTender contract notice exports: supplier ABN 63 605 345 891; keyword “Top Secret Cloud”; keyword “REDSPICE”; keyword “Amazon Web Services”; keyword “Amazon”. `general-findings/asd-aws-top-secret-cloud-2026-09`, 10 September 2026.

- L-TSC-6b, L-TSC-7, L-TSC-8b, L-TSC-9b — Defence Ministers, media release of 4 July 2024; Prime Minister, the same release; Office of National Intelligence, news article of 4 July 2024; National Intelligence Community, the same article. The same finding, 10 September 2026.
- L-TSC-10, L-TSC-11, L-TSC-12 — asd.gov.au and dta.gov.au site searches for “top secret cloud”; ASD, REDSPICE page. The same finding, 10 September 2026.
- L-TSC-13 to L-TSC-24 — AusTender notice search pages and notice pages for CN4158623, CN4198492, CN4172725, CN4175631, CN4124201 and CN4265588. The same finding, 10 September 2026.
- L-TSC-25b, L-TSC-26b, L-TSC-27b, L-TSC-28, L-TSC-29b, L-TSC-30b, L-TSC-31b, L-TSC-32b, L-TSC-33, L-TSC-34, L-TSC-35 to L-TSC-42 — Defence Ministers, transcripts of the press conference, the ABC Afternoon Briefing interview and the Sky News interview of 4 July 2024; Prime Minister, media release of 14 June 2025; AusTender approach to market P20/49942, ONI, as served; Official Hansard, Senate estimates, 13 February 2023, 1 December 2025 and 25 May 2021; Amazon.com, Inc., Form 8-K exhibit 99.1 of 1 August 2024; About Amazon Australia, 4 July 2024; eight Wayback Machine mementos of the press conference transcript, 17 July 2024 to 18 May 2026, fetched raw. The same finding, 11 September 2026.
- H-AWS-1 — ASIC current company extract, Amazon Web Services Australia Pty Ltd, held 18 July 2026. `hcf-strategic-2026-07`, inheriting `cba-compellability-2026-07`.
- S2, S5, S7 — Amazon.com, Inc. FY2021 10-K Exhibit 21.1; ABN Lookup, ABN 63 605 345 891; 18 U.S.C. § 2713, United States Code 2024 edition. `compellability-gap-2026-07`, 5 September 2026.
- T-AWS-1, T-AWS-2 — AWS Customer Agreement; AWS Contracting Party table. `general-findings/strategic-service-terms-2026-09`, 6 September 2026.
- A-AWS-ST-1 — AWS Service Terms, “Last Updated: September 1, 2026”. `aws-compellability-2026-09`, 7 September 2026.
- DS-AWS-2 — AusTender contract notice export, supplier ABN 63 605 345 891. `general-findings/demand-side-tractability-2026-08`, 6 August 2026.
- L-TIA-1, L-TA-1, L-CA-7, L-ASIO-4 — Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979, Compilation No. 134; Telecommunications Act 1997, Compilation No. 117; Crimes Act 1914, Compilation No. 167, volume 1; Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979, Compilation No. 84. `general-findings/tia-act-2026-09` and `general-findings/telecommunications-act-2026-09`, 7 September 2026; `general-findings/crimes-act-2026-09` and `general-findings/asio-act-2026-09`, 9 September 2026. Held and not applied.
- I-ISM-2 — ISM, Guidelines for procurement and outsourcing, June 2026. `ism-procurement-2026-08`, 15 August 2026.
- S-HCF-1 — Hosting Certification Framework, March 2021. `certification-scope-2026-08`, 17 August 2026.
- IR-PSPF-1 — PSPF Release 2026. `general-findings/irap-assessor-scoping-2026-07`, 31 July 2026.

- G-ASD-1 — ASD, Cloud assessment and authorisation, January 2024. assurance-method-gap-2026-08, 19 August 2026.
- L-CCP-4b — Whole-of-Government Cloud Computing Policy, Version 1. general-findings/wog-cloud-policy-2026-09, 9 September 2026.

End of document.