

It's Trace Time! The COVIDSAFE App is Open for Business--Part 1

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The Commonwealth Government released its COVIDSafe App for download at 6.00pm AEST on Sunday 26 April, and it surpassed 1.13 million downloads within the first 12 hours. This was far greater than expectations, with Health Minister Greg Hunt [commenting](#) that, at best, the hope was that “we might get to 1 million in five days.”

The App has generally been well received in the media, which we expect is thanks to the Commonwealth Government’s communications and [resource](#) efforts that have been made available in the rollout.

Despite exceeding expectations, there are still privacy concerns amongst the general public. The Commonwealth Government intends to respond to these concerns by releasing the source code within two weeks. Mr Hunt has indicated that the release will ensure that there is “a constant review of the safety and security” of the App.

In addition to releasing the source code, the Commonwealth Government is looking to legislate rules regarding the App which will ensure, amongst other things, that the information collected in the App will only be used for contact tracing purposes. According to Mr Hunt, the new laws will [ensure](#) that “not even a court order during an investigation of an alleged crime” can access the data. The rules will also mandate that the data must remain in Australia, with the potential for jail terms of up to 5 years to be imposed on anyone for breaching the rules.

In [Part II of this blog, we will run through some of the functionality safeguards](#) that feature in the App, which were implemented in response to privacy concerns.

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