Digital Transformation Strategy 2.0 Discussion Paper

Minister's Message

Since the launch of the Digital Transformation Strategy in late 2018 we have made strong progress towards the vision of a government which is easy to deal with, informed by you and fit for the digital age.

As shown in the 2020 update of the Digital Transformation Strategy Roadmap, there are many achievements to acknowledge. Government is making it easier for more students and job seekers to access services through myGovID, veterans to find services through an enhanced dedicated portal, and older Australians through improved online experiences.

In the two years since the launch of the Strategy the world has changed more than we could have imagined. The past twelve months of bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic have showed both the strengths in how we operate as a government and the challenges we still face. In our response to the global pandemic, agencies and jurisdictions worked together to deliver support to Australians where and when they needed it, providing an unprecedented level of government support for individuals and businesses across the country.

Compounding this, the physical distancing rules needed to manage COVID-19 have led to an increase in the proportion of government business conducted digitally. In response, the capacity of myGov was increased and technology equipment was deployed to tens of thousands of public servants, enabling them to work remotely. People who may have never used online services are now adopting and actively using them, from patients who are taking video GP consultations, to school students across the country who have taken to remote learning or their parents who are working remotely.

We need to keep accelerating the transformation of government, learning from what we have done, maintaining our momentum and working together so that we achieve our goal of being one of the top three digital governments in the world by 2025.

Maintaining this focus on data and digital innovation into the future will be critical to rebuilding our economy and securing Australia's future.

CEO Message

The 2018 Digital Transformation Strategy and accompanying Roadmap set a clear vision for how Australia could become a world leader in digital government by 2025.

In the past two years we have steadily delivered against that roadmap. Practical initiatives which provide benefit to people and businesses in Australia include the Digital Newborn Enrolment service, automating tax reporting for business and the National Drought Map, where farmers can access information on drought conditions and relief services.

At the mid-point of the Strategy's life, it is time to take stock of how far we have come, what has changed both here and internationally and what we still need to do to achieve our goals.

As we refresh the Strategy, we are seeking to engage with stakeholders in government, business, academia and internationally. We will use your input to inform the updated Strategy in early in 2021, ensuring it continues to provide vision and leadership for the digital transformation of our government.

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Introduction

In 2018 the Australian Government released the Digital Transformation Strategy (the Strategy) and set a vision to be one of the top three digital governments in the world by 2025.

In November 2019, the Minister for Government Services, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, delivered the first annual update on the Strategy including the actions we have taken, the Digital Transformation Roadmap, the challenges and opportunities for action and the plan towards 2025.

This update acknowledged how the Strategy is making a positive difference to people and businesses, highlighting examples where government is delivering world-leading services. These include the New Payments Platform, which is delivering real-time payments to Australians, the Child Care Finder, which is making it easier for people to connect with child care service providers and the implementation of Automated Biosecurity Screening, designed to protect Australia's borders.

As well as showcasing numerous examples of progress from across government, the update also included a performance dashboard, providing transparent measures of progress and accountability.

Since the update in 2019, the Roadmap initiatives continue to deliver tangible results. This year's update of Digital Transformation Strategy highlights key achievements against the Strategy's 13 objectives and includes a range of case studies from across Government, including Services Australia, IP Australia and the Department of Home Affairs.

Over the last twelve months, the environment in which we are operating has changed significantly. Current events, including the global COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in a change of attitudes toward digital services.

In response to the needs of the nation, data and technology-driven transformation has accelerated rapidly. Initiatives include the rapid rollout of the JobKeeper payment, enabling Australians significantly affected by COVID-19 to quickly access the scheme, early delivery of electronic prescriptions, which helped protect people most at-risk by enabling them to access their medications through a digital environment,

and the swift deployment of COVIDSafe App to support health officials and protect Australians by helping prevent the spread of the virus.

2020 has highlighted the need for data and digital capabilities that can enable the government to respond quickly and successfully to unprecedented and rapidly evolving events. It demonstrated the need for flexibility, mobility and collaboration, across government and stakeholders, to ensure the effective and timely delivery of services and outcomes.

In light of the significant changes in the operating environment, this Discussion Paper aims to advance the conversation about how the Australian Government will continue to accelerate data and digital transformation, with our vision to deliver world-leading digital services for the benefits of all Australians by 2025 remaining at the core of everything we do.

How to provide feedback

The consultation topics outlined in this paper are proposed for discussion only. They are intended to provide a wide range of stakeholders the opportunity to contribute their views on the Strategy, but are not seeking to constrain their views.

Please provide your comments in response to the topics and issues posed in this discussion paper by 18 December 2020.

If you have additional feedback on the refresh of the Digital Transformation Strategy that you wish to provide, please include it in your submissions or email us at: digitalstrategy@dta.gov.au

Strategic Context

The Digital Transformation Strategy has driven change in government service delivery by focussing on being easy to deal with, informed by you and fit for the digital age. The evolution of our transformation has made progress to ensure interactions with government are simple, smart, personalised and transparent.

In 2020, transformation initiatives continue to be delivered against 13 objectives. Key achievements include the delivery of services adapting to the data Australians choose to share, with the rollout of the COVIDSafe App which has over 7.1 million registrations; bringing people together quickly and efficiently with GovTeams, where 95,000 public servants are now connecting, collaborating and creating communities in real-time; and increased digital access to government services, with IP Australia conducting more than 99% of user transactions digitally. These achievements are bringing us closer to our goals and delivering against our strategy.

Inspire innovation, imagination, and inventiveness

The next iteration of the Strategy will seek to inspire and challenge government to drive transformation beyond the confines and limitations of business as usual approaches, ways of working and technology.

The Digital Transformation Strategy will continue to be a call to action to include transformation in all planning and delivery activities and for innovation to be applied to all aspects of our business, in our approach to identifying problems, generating news ideas, developing solutions, and implementing change.

Be adaptive and accelerate change

Traditionally, governments have been incremental adapters of change, evidenced in the steady progress made across whole-of-government in the second year of the seven-year plan for digital transformation.

Recent events, including the global pandemic, have accelerated this progress at a rate not previously experienced in Australia. An example of this is the recent refresh of the Australia.gov.au website, which, in response to COVID-19, was updated within 24 hours to a whole of government, cross-jurisdictional information platform providing critical messages from Government and National Cabinet. By October 2020, over 17 million Australians had visited the Australia.gov.au.

The refreshed Strategy will require government to continue to accelerate change and deliver at an unprecedented pace.

Harness the future

To be truly innovative in our harnessing the benefits of transformation, Government should have the ability to consider a portfolio-wide, strategic approach to advancing technologies and driving the direction of our investment, rather than simply monitoring the implementation and progress of initiatives.

The refreshed Strategy will remain a guide for Government on investments in digital transformation and help align the government's spend on ICT to improve outcomes for people and businesses.

Be collaborative

There is no doubt that Australia is leading the charge in our approach to collaboration, both locally from state to state and more broadly across the globe. The Strategy has been instrumental in driving change in the way services are delivered and offering government services around key life events rather than in a transactional way.

In response to the catastrophic bush fires of 2019 and 2020, cross-jurisdictional efforts are underway to identify whole of government opportunities for improvement in how we prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. The core group is made up of representatives from state, federal governments, and Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) around the country each contributing what they have learned and what they are working on to build a truly connected view of this vital sector. Focussing this view on the people experiencing a disaster lets us find ways to join up services, reduce duplication and respond faster when disaster strikes.

Invest in people

In the next five years it is critical we continue to build on our progress and focus on developing the people capability essential to achieving digital transformation. This covers data and digital capability within government, industry and the wider community.

Initiatives such as the Digital and Data Profession is an example of how we are building a profession that adds value, recognises expertise, and creates strong digital leadership. Additionally, the education sector is further contributing to the enhancement of our people capability. Australian universities are fundamentally

changing the structure of their tertiary courses to account for professions of the future, including digital professions. This will result in a broader catalogue of courses relevant to digital transformation for students to consider.

Strong foundations

The Australian government is moving from siloed capabilities to a landscape of connected platforms and services.

The vision is to enable better design and investment for connected government services and capabilities for Australia through initiatives such as Sourcing Reforms and a Whole-of-Government Architecture. This will support the identification of re-use opportunities and encourage the adoption of common platforms, implementation approaches, standards and integrated, cross-agency services providing a strong foundation for transformation.

In developing the Digital Transformation Strategy, we identified 5 principles to help guide us to achieve our digital transformation vision.

- People's needs are at the heart of our policy and service design

- We prove trustworthiness in everything we do

- We partner and collaborate to deliver value

- We continuously explore and implement innovation

- We deliver best value for money for the public

Consultation Topic:

Since 2018 the 5 principles have been a foundation for agencies across government and helped guide digital transformation and the delivery of over 140 initiatives.

As the rate of transformation accelerates in the next 5 years, are there additional principles that we should elevate in the next iteration of the Strategy? Principles may cover privacy, cyber security and data retention.

Drivers

The drivers of digital transformation for government include improved service delivery for businesses and individuals, better value for money in technology investments, greater innovation and flexibility in policy development and better use of data for evidence-based decision making.

Most importantly, digital transformation must deliver capabilities that are responsive to government priorities. Currently, the government is focussed on the response to COVID-19 and the subsequent economic recovery.

These drivers should be considered holistically to ensure informed decisions about technology, process, people, policy and alliances that benefit government.

COVID-19

The impacts of the global pandemic, including the reduction of face-to-face services offered by government, have resulted in significant changes to the way users interact with government. Recent data highlights user adoption of digital technologies has advanced 5 years in approximately 8 weeks.

As the nation continues to navigate an uncertain future, the refreshed Strategy will seek to build on this level of adoption and digital interaction with users to deliver cost-effective, convenient and secure services for businesses and individuals.

Consultation Topic:

As the country moves through the recovery phase, data and digital services must continue to make a positive impact for the needs of Australians.

The Government is welcoming feedback on the opportunities and areas of focus for data and digital initiatives that would deliver the best outcomes in assisting with promoting jobs and return to growth.

Economic Recovery

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic mean our fiscal responsibility is perhaps greater than ever before, and government has been clear in its intention to maximise the value of future investments. The announcement of the Digital Business Plan provides opportunities for innovation and will contribute to economic recovery by supporting business to recover and rebuild, as well as creating jobs. The Digital Business Plan includes investment of almost $800 million and will support further development of whole-of-government capabilities including Digital Identity, e-invoicing and creation of a single, accessible and trusted source of business data.

Over the next 5 years, the government's focus on reuse of scalable, modular and secure platforms across government will remain a high priority to ensure more effective delivery capabilities and better value for taxpayers' money. Platforms and capabilities such as the Whole-of-Government Shared Enterprise Planning Solution (GovERP), Whole of Government Permissions will support this priority, while sourcing reforms will ensure increased Australian participation and a more effective partnering model with the private sector.

The Whole of Government Architecture will map the role and services available across government and enable better investment decisions and greater agility in delivering services in response to government priorities. A key principle of the Whole of Government Architecture is promoting and standardising the 'buy or build once, reuse many times' approach. Whilst several initiatives across government, including the Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation Programme, are focused on sharing capability, traditionally there hasn't been a consistent government-wide approach. Government initiatives aim to address the existing barriers including the requirement for a clear mandate to drive change, funding models that support investment in reuse, standardised legislation, a culture of collaboration and a central point of coordination.

Consultation Topic:

The Australian government has made significant progress on the development of a Whole of Government Architecture that will support the standardisation of technology approaches across government.

In order to deliver simple, helpful, transparent and respectful services for our users, Government is interested in exploring what opportunities exist for greater reuse of capabilities across government.

Government investment in technology

Government continues to invest in data and digital technologies to support the delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy vision. Most recently, the 2020 Federal Budget included over $3bn of investment in data and digital technology-enabled initiatives, including Digital Identity and Welfare Payment Infrastructure Programme projects, which have already positively impacted the user experience. In the next phase of investment, the government is focused on technology that can be leveraged across government and industry. This requires a collective approach in the design, development, and implementation of digital solutions, resulting in a more joined up experience for government users.

Consultation Topic:

The global challenges of 2020 created many opportunities for government to work with industry to co-design better digital services quickly. The Strategy and the Digital Service Standard both emphasise the importance of collaboration and provide guidance on how to achieve it.

Government is seeking feedback on best practice co-design approaches that can deliver ambitious outcomes at a whole of government or whole of nation level.

Innovation in digital delivery

To date, the Digital Service Standard has helped ensure government services are simple, clear, and fast. The Standard sets out best practice for how government teams are formed, how they work, and how they design and deliver a digital service. Many agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, are demonstrating the benefits of a human-centred, agile development approach to innovation that, in turn, supports a process of design, build, operate and iterate.

Recently, the COVID-19 Cruise Ship Tracker was delivered in under one week through a collaborative approach that focused on meeting the immediate need of government and then continuing to refine and improve following initial release of the solution. This approach outlines that innovation does not need to be put on hold until it delivers a perfect outcome, it only requires agencies to be willing to adapt, change and improve quickly.

Consultation Topic:

Throughout the delivery of the Strategy to date, innovation has been built into our approach through the incorporation of user centric design, iteration and collaboration. New data and digital technologies are providing even greater opportunities for innovation.

Government is interested in better practice examples of how to further embed innovation to securely deliver faster, simpler and tailored experiences for users.

Agility

Traditionally government has delivered technology initiatives in a waterfall approach. However, our national response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated both the need and our ability to deliver faster and in a more agile manner. The Australian Public Service successfully mobilised staff across government to deliver critical functions during COVID-19. This included the Government's response to the unprecedented demand for income support by redeploying APS employees to process claims for the JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments. Beyond COVID-19, Government must remain adaptive, iterative and responsive across all functions and portfolios.

Consultation Topic:

Under the Digital Service Standard over the past few years, government has made progress in agile delivery, moving towards faster deployment and iteration of solutions for people and businesses, which has resulted in the realisation of benefits and decrease in risks.

Opportunities

A significant focus for government in the period ahead is Australia's economic recovery. Maintaining the rate of accelerated digital transformation achieved during the pandemic throughout the recovery phase will be critical to achieving this. The Strategy will explore opportunities to contribute to this outcome across key domains including technology, process, policy, people and alliances.

Technology

For Australia to be a top 3 global digital government by 2025 it will require investment in proven and innovative technologies. To accomplish this, government will establish a more detailed understanding of the technology landscape and map the existing digital capability available across agencies.

In early 2021 Government will undertake a Digital Capability Review which will measure the digital capability of the Australian Public Service. Digital capability will be measured across five domains, which are policy, people, process, technology, and alliances.

The outcome of the Digital Capability Review will enable government to make informed decisions on where to invest, based on needs, as well as gaps in current capability. The refreshed Strategy will develop user driven criteria for selecting appropriate data and digital technologies to achieve outcomes.

Consultation Topic:

The Digital Review in early 2021 will provide us with a baseline of the current digital capability of the Australian Public Service. The refreshed Strategy will build on this by providing guidance on selecting appropriate data and digital technologies to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Process

Processes within government can be lengthy, complex and hard to understand. Some of this comes from the need for transparency, fairness and the proper accounting for how public money is spent. Some of it also comes from habit, tradition and a reluctance to change something that has been in place for a long time. As the world moves faster, we need to find ways to streamline our processes without compromising our obligation to provide good government. The 2019 Independent Review of the Australian Public Service identified certain processes, including the exiting technology funding and business case processes, which are inhibiting the digital transformation agenda. The refreshed Strategy will work to strengthen digital governance to support contemporary and agile ways of working.

Consultation Topic:

The refreshed Strategy will work to overcome barriers to digital transformation, including in funding and business case processes.

Government is looking for examples of new and innovative approaches to digital service delivery that would achieve better outcomes for the people of Australia.

Policy

Government policy is often developed by specialist groups within the responsible portfolio agencies. This means that policies can affect one another in unexpected ways. Many government policies were developed years, if not decades, ago and have not kept up with technological changes and community expectations.

A contemporary digital government needs to be supported by contemporary digital policy tools and approaches. The Australian Data and Digital Council, formed in September 2018, is an example of State and Territory Government working

collaboratively to align services and strategies across Australia to achieve improved data and digital policy outcomes.

Policies to keep data safe and secure must also be developed. The Data Availability and Transparency Bill is an example of the steps being taken to provide safeguards for the use of data across government.

The refreshed Strategy will explore and encourage ways of integrating existing policy and developing new policy which is in line with the needs of the digital age.

Consultation Topic:

In the Strategy, a key pillar was the concept of a government that is fit for the digital age. Ensuring that digital and data policy supports contemporary digital government will form an important part of the refreshed Strategy.

Government is interested in innovative ways to overcome the policy barriers to achieving digital transformation.

People

People are at the heart of our digital transformation journey.

There are growing examples across government where services are being developed with the user in mind. The Digital Transformation Strategy has committed to transforming services around life events, an approach which is being progressed and guided through the Australian Data and Digital Council. This includes new Employment Services Model, which is being piloted as an integrated service that enables seamless integration of steps and interactions for job seekers, before being implemented nationally. This is an example where customers benefit from services being integrated across multiple tiers of government and even private sector and not-for-profit partners.

Developing the responsive, adaptive and innovative services required to meet the challenges of the modern world requires a workforce who can solve today's problems as well as anticipate tomorrow's. This type of workforce is flexible, digitally skilled and always learning and growing. The Australian Public Service Commission is working

towards this approach and is focused on training options that help uplift digital capability of public servants. An example is the APS Digital Profession Stream, which is growing and advancing digital careers in the public service.

Our challenge for the future is to better understand and predict emerging roles and extend collaborations across industry and academia to strengthen capability development and engage subject matter experts where required.

The refreshed Strategy will help guide the development the professions needed to support digital transformation and the government of the future.

Consultation Topic:

The Strategy puts people at the heart of digital transformation, not just those engaging with government services, but those designing, building and implementing those services. The refreshed Strategy will build on our current work to help develop the professions we need now and in the future.

Government is looking for opportunities on how government can collaborate better with industry and academia to better develop the digital profession for the future.

Alliance

Traditionally we engage with stakeholders to answer specific questions at a point in time in essentially separate activities.

We need to develop deeper relationships and long-term alliances with our stakeholders, so they become partners in the digital transformation of government. In many parts of the private sector, stakeholders co-design digital solutions and are involved in all stages of the development of a product, solution or idea. A similar approach could be used to help digital transformation make government more inclusive and provide better services for all Australians.

The Defence Innovation Hub is just one example of government drawing together industry, academia and research institutions to collaborate on technologies.

In the next 5 years government will be required to solve problems not previously encountered and will be heavily reliant on collaboration such as this to do so successfully. The refreshed Strategy will seek to build more relationships beyond the confines of government, including internationally, and demonstrate the value of collaboration in delivering successful outcomes.

Consultation Topic:

The refreshed Strategy will help us develop deeper relationships and long-term alliances with our stakeholders, so they become partners in the digital transformation of government.

Government is keen to explore innovative models and approaches to stakeholder engagement that lead to better outcomes.