Senate estimates

Digital Transformation Agency

CEO – opening statement

27 February 2018

Chair, I would like to give a brief opening statement.

As I have noted in my previous opening statements, the Digital Transformation Agency works with Australian Government agencies to achieve three key objectives.

Firstly, develop the capability that allows for more government services to be delivered digitally.

Secondly, improve the experience for people using those services.

Thirdly, help government make sound digital investment decisions and ensure change programs are being well executed.

With this as a backdrop, and recognising there is always much to be done, I believe there is evidence of solid progress being made in a range of areas.

Increasingly, I am encouraged by the willingness of agencies to work collaboratively with the DTA to bring about change, adopting a digital mindset, actively striving to uplift their skills and capability, and seeking our help and guidance in a range of areas.

There are a number of high profile and large-scale initiatives that are delivering to the government's digital transformation objectives.

Well publicised examples include the Department of Home Affairs' Smartgates, the Australian Tax Office's myTax and the Digital Health Agency's My Health Record.

There are also many lesser known, but nonetheless, great examples of smaller agencies delivering on their own digital transformation programs.

For example, The National Blood Authority adopted the Digital Service Standard to overhaul their Bloodnet platform, which orders and tracks about 28,000 litres of blood each month.

They put the needs of their users at the centre of the redesign, and in the process, changed their culture and their internal structure to better align with the service they are delivering.

The Department of Veteran Affairs MyService project gives veterans a faster and simpler experience, changing the process from a 16-page form to a two-screen registration and short survey. The average processing time for rehabilitation claims has dropped from 107 days to 30.

The National Archives has been continuing to move its processes online making significant savings for government.

Our National Library's transformation has simplified and streamlined the way the library collects, manages, preserves and delivers its collections.

The process of digitising an object has gone from weeks of work down to a single day. As of January, the library had digitised 1.8 million book and journal pages.

I highlight these examples to make the point that digital transformation is not about any single initiative but rather a range of initiatives, large and small, all centred around faster, simpler and more cost effective service delivery.

The level of engagement the DTA is having across the Australian public service is continuing to grow, as too is our external engagement with industry, as we increasingly involve the private sector in our initiatives.

Over the past 6 months, the DTA has had more than 1,000 engagements.

We worked with 39 federal and 6 state government agencies to develop our Secure Cloud Strategy.

We have supported 35 agencies to develop and champion women working in technology through our Women in IT Executive Mentoring and Coaching Program.

We are collaborating with the Queensland and ACT governments to identify opportunities to grow the Digital Marketplace and increase the opportunities for governments and sellers, particularly small and medium enterprises.

Our digital identity program to date has involved more than 20 agencies and organisations, including federal, state and territory government, privacy groups and financial institutions.

Public service staff from 64 agencies have attended our DTA-hosted capability events and seminars to increase digital awareness and uplift digital skills.

We are currently working with 8 agencies to bring greater consistency to the look and feel of government services and to support rapid prototyping of new services.

We are engaging with more than 20 agencies through our Digital Investment Review work, which is designed to help set up major ICT projects for best success. We are "actively engaged" on 17 individual projects due to their complexity, the significant amount of money invested in them, or their strategic importance.

Since starting this work in May, we have provided advice to government on 47 new and major ICT initiatives put forward by agencies.

In addition to our growing engagement activities, we are also focused on our own initiatives.

Over the past six months, we have delivered significant pieces of work and achieved important milestones.

Last week, we completed and published the first component of the Trusted Digital Identity Framework. This sets out the rules and standards for a nationally-consistent approach to a digital identity program.

The framework sits alongside the cloud-based technology platform that we are using to build and test prototypes. We are now moving to the beta version of the platform – the intention of the next phase is to take it live. This will allow people to set up a digital identity online and apply for a tax file number.

We recently released a whole-of-government Secure Cloud Strategy, which aims to increase agency take-up of cloud services and address some of the barriers preventing adoption.

We have built an open source cloud "Platform as a Service" and have shared this with agencies so they can use the platform for their applications rather than needing to invest in their own infrastructure.

We've built and delivered a live dashboard for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Smart Cities program – this recently took out an innovation award.

We've completed user research and developed a prototype for the DTA's new agency website that will be the go-to digital shopfront for government agencies, private sector companies and individuals to access the many best practice toolkits and guides the DTA has developed.

In November, we took on responsibility for the data.gov.au and National Map platforms. As part of this, we've partnered with Data61 to build a new search and discovery interface, which will make it easier for people to search and access the 28,000 open data sets discoverable through data.gov.au

With our building capability work, we've partnered with the Australian Public Service Commission and are creating training standards for the digital skills and capability needed in government.

As part of this, a pilot with the Department of Human Services is underway. They are engaging an external training provider to train their staff in user research, applying the user research training standards we've developed.

We've brought in fresh digital talent to the public service this year with our ICT entry level graduate program, having just placed 140 graduates, cadets and apprentices across 16 agencies.

In recent months, we negotiated a whole-of-government coordinated procurement agreement with SAP Australia and a whole-of-government agreement with Concur Holdings.

We recently established within the DTA a cross-agency task force comprising 7 agencies to develop the new framework to guide decision making on ICT procurement policy.

Finally, we are pleased to be in the process of signing off a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Information and Industry Association, aimed at strengthening our engagement and collaboration with the industry sector on key pieces of work, in particular the ICT procurement reforms and digital identity program.

Senators, I thank you for this opportunity to highlight the level and breadth of digital transformation activity occurring across government, the highly collaborative nature of the engagement between our agency and others, and to share the progress of our work and most recent achievements.

There is a high level and increasing demand for the DTA's expertise, advice and support. I believe this is indicative of the genuine desire of our government agencies to deliver meaningful change and make a difference to users of Australian Government services.

I am happy to take your questions.

GAVIN SLATER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AGENCY

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