

Australian Greens' additional comments

Summary

1.1 The Australian Greens support improving the digital delivery of government services and welcome the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

1.2 In order to effectively deliver government services digitally to Australians, all Australians will need to have access to affordable, quality broadband internet.

1.3 Australians will also need to feel assured that the Government is prioritising the security and privacy of their personal information and communications.

1.4 We will also need to ensure that the needs of all Australians are met, particularly vulnerable groups and communities, by co-designing and testing with vulnerable groups, providing learning resources, using intuitive design principles, retaining adequate provision of non-digital channels, using plain English, and providing unmetered access to digital government platforms.

Affordable, quality broadband internet

1.5 Affordable, quality internet is fundamental to the future of our economy, jobs, education, essential services, and way of life. Fast, reliable broadband has the potential to transform the lives of Australians. The NBN is not just a piece of infrastructure; access to digital networks is a right and it is incumbent upon government to make it fast and affordable.

Prioritising security and privacy

1.6 Security of digital government platforms needs to be a priority, as noted in the submission by ACCAN:

As the digital sharing of consumers' personal and biometric details becomes an unavoidable part of government interactions, consumers need to be assured that their personal and business information is safe from unauthorised third-party access. A technical analysis of digital government's capacity to store and safeguard consumer data is timely in light of the Federal Government's ambitious adoption of cloud technology to deliver its digital services and the heightened debate over data security on de-centralised cloud storage.¹

1.7 ACCAN also notes that the Government's use of biometric data increases the need for review and discussion of the Government's security practices:

A detailed discussion on the ability of digital government to manage private data securely is pertinent in light of the Federal Government's move towards using biometric data to identify individuals.²

1 ACCAN, *Submission 11*, p. 68.

2 ACCAN, *Submission 11*, p. 68.

The reliance on biometric technology as a recognition tool calls for answers on the procedures in place when one's biometric data is compromised by identity theft. Unlike passwords, an individual's biometric details are assigned at birth and cannot be reset.³

Needs of all Australians

1.8 ACCAN's submission⁴ defines the needs of eight vulnerable consumer groups and offers recommendations on how digital government can be more inclusive for all groups:

- Free or subsidised digital literacy resources;
- Co-design with vulnerable consumer groups that begins early in development;
- Use of intuitive design principles, such as a 'breadcrumb trail' and universal symbols;
- Retention of existing, non-digital channels alongside digital platforms;
- Use of plain English to increase clarity for everyone, including people with lower English proficiency; and
- Unmetered access to digital government platforms to partially address affordability issues.

Recommendation 1

1.9 The Australian Greens support the recommendations made by ACCAN in their submission.

Senator Jordan Steele-John

Senator for Western Australia

3 ACCAN, *Submission 11*, p. 69.

4 ACCAN, *Submission 11*, p. 66–68.