AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ
5 APRIL 2019

Today, the Australian Digital Council met in Melbourne, where the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers considered the range of data collaboration projects and digital transformation priorities underway nationally to improve services for the benefit of all Australians.

The meeting was chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation, the Hon Michael Keenan MP. The following State and Territory Ministers also attended the meeting:

- The Hon Victor Dominello MP (NSW)
- The Hon David Pisoni MP (SA)
- The Hon Mick Gentleman MLA (ACT)
- The Hon Lauren Moss MLA (NT)

Victoria and Tasmania were represented at the meeting by senior officials.

'State of the data and digital nation' report

Ministers endorsed the 'State of the data and digital nation' report, which showcases the progress of key digital and data initiatives underway across the nation, and highlights potential areas for collaboration to improve government services.

This publication can be found on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website www.pmc.gov.au/public-data

Redesigning government services around key life events

There are key moments in life where people's interaction with different levels of governments can be time-consuming and seemingly duplicative. Ministers discussed a new approach to streamlining how the public engages with government at critical 'life events'. By considering government services through the lens of a particular life event – such as, the birth of a child, death of a loved one, or looking for work – government services can be redesigned to be human-centered.

Ministers noted the traditional approach to service design was limited by agency or jurisdictional silos, which increased the burden on the individual. However, by putting the person at the centre, Ministers noted this could find new ways of meeting peoples' needs. Ministers asked Senior Officials to continue to explore what services could be streamlined through a 'life event' methodology.

Simplifying businesses' engagement with government through improving procurement processes

A common theme across all jurisdictions is the complexity and cost of government procurement arrangements. It can be difficult and time-consuming for businesses to interact with governments at all levels. Ministers agree to a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory working group focussed on streamlining and improving these arrangements. The working group will liaise with the Australian Procurement and Construction Council and report on its findings later in 2019.

Addressing the digital divide

The Council noted the importance of ensuring no one is left behind in the digital transformation of public services. This was of particular importance for jurisdictions with large regional and remote communities. Ministers discussed the range of digital inclusion initiatives already underway across jurisdictions and considered opportunities for further collaboration.

Ministers agreed to continue to prioritise digital inclusion when agreeing future digital transformation initiatives.

The way forward

At previous Council meetings, ministers agreed to progress a range of data and digital initiatives (see table below). These projects are at various stages of implementation. At this meeting, Ministers had a wide-ranging discussion about the strategic priorities for the Council, including additional areas for focus which would offer national and cross-jurisdictional benefits.

Ministers agreed to new areas of focus:

- Ministers agreed to work towards national Application Programming Interfaces (API) design guides to simplify interactions between people, businesses and systems. Ministers noted the great examples where APIs have delivered greater business outcomes for lower cost and enhanced the sharing of information.

- The Council agreed to scope a project to improve services associated with skilling up Australians to participate effectively in the workforce, including in STEM fields, taking into account actions being progressed by COAG councils with responsibility for skills and training.

- Ministers also agreed to consider e-invoicing and e-planning at the next Council meeting.

- Ministers agreed to consider opportunities to collaborate further on policy matters relating to emerging technologies where national approaches are required, particularly where friction points exist.

Ministers agreed the date for the next Australian Digital Council will be decided after the 2019 Federal Election.

Australian Digital Council projects	
Project Title	**Project Description**
Transforming services around life events	
Life Events – Birth of a Child	The *'birth of a child'* pilot is aimed at streamlining and digitalising the process for new parents to register the birth of a child.
Life Events – End of Life	The *'end of life'* pilot is aimed at streamlining the process to notify governments about a death.
Life Events – Looking for work	The *'looking for work'* pilot is aimed at streamlining engagement with government when looking for employment.
National data approach	
National data asset on people with a disability	This project is building a longitudinal and cross-jurisdictional data asset on people with a disability which can be used by governments to improve services for people with disability.
Data sharing on birth defects	This project aims to integrate Western Australian and Commonwealth data to explore the pharmaceuticals taken by mothers while pregnant and potential adverse effects on babies.
Making government easy to deal with	
Simplifying businesses' interaction with government	This project aims to share approaches and best practice between jurisdictions to streamline and simplify businesses' interaction with governments.
Digital identity and access management	This project aims to identify and resolve issues of online identity verification cross jurisdictions including how to participate in the Commonwealth's digital identity program, GovPass.
Building trust and community engagement	
State of the data and digital nation publication	This project aims to publish a document highlighting key data and digital transformation initiatives underway across jurisdictions.
Digital inclusion	This project aims to share insights on practical actions that jurisdictions can implement to enable the benefits of digital transformation to be realised by all Australians.
Building and maintaining community trust	This project aims to encourage a unified strategy across jurisdictions on building trust with the public when developing new data sharing projects and/or digital reforms.
Security and resilience	
Secure building management systems	This project relates to developing a strategy to protect and increase the resilience of jurisdictions' critical infrastructure assets, as building management systems become more automated and digitised.
New projects	
Ministers discussed a number of new projects at the 5 April 2019 meeting, for consideration at the next Council meeting.	- National API design guidelines - Facilitating the skilling of Australians to participate effectively in the workforce, particularly STEM fields - Collaboration on e-invoicing and e-planning - Collaboration on policy matters relating to emerging technologies.