AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ
14 SEPTEMBER 2018

The inaugural meeting of the Australian Digital Council took place in Sydney today.

The Australian Digital Council consists of Ministers from across Australia with responsibility for public data and digital transformation. The Council will drive collaboration to enable smarter service delivery, improve policy outcomes, and provide a more seamless experience for people and businesses in their engagement with government.

The Council was convened and chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation, the Hon Michael Keenan MP.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, formally opened the first meeting of the Council.

Major items discussed by Ministers today included:

Key data and digital priorities

Each Minister shared an update on the key data and digital priorities underway in their jurisdictions:

- Minister Keenan outlined the Commonwealth's efforts to introduce data sharing and release legislation to provide a simpler, more efficient framework to govern data, removing red tape that inhibits research and growth while increasing data security and privacy. Minister Keenan also discussed the progress on GovPass, a secure digital identity service that will allow citizens to establish their identity once, and then use it multiple times to access different government services.

- Minister Dominello presented NSW Government's work on the Digital NSW Accelerator, which assists in rapid development of innovative digital government service solutions, and the NSW Customer Experience Pipeline, which supports the use of common, reusable components to improve customer experiences with NSW government services.

- Mr Ryan Batchelor, on behalf of Minister Jennings, provided an update on Victoria's data sharing legislation, new initiatives to improve digital and analytics capability within government, investments in data linkage to inform cross portfolio social policy, Victoria's API gateway and the delivery of identity verification services through Service Victoria, its online channel for government transactions.

- Minister De Brenni outlined Queensland's commitment to more responsive digital services by removing agency boundaries and empowering Queenslanders, including through adopting emergent data technologies.

- Minister Kelly gave an overview of the digital reform agenda in Western Australia including the progression of Data Sharing and Privacy legislation, and examples of data sharing in the social policy portfolio.

- Minister Pisoni outlined South Australia's data integration initiatives aimed at improving the circumstances of vulnerable children and their families and spoke about South Australia's progress towards an integrated service platform to streamline services for businesses and citizens.

- Minister Ferguson outlined Tasmania's vision to transform Government services and build capability, by enhancing cyber security and better leveraging data, harnessing new technologies and providing a single digital account that enables easy access to government services.

- Minister Gentleman presented the Australian Capital Territory's digital transformation agenda and its drive to make better use of data, to inform policy and deliver better services for the community, with family safety being a key priority.

- Minister Moss outlined the Northern Territory's digital and data priorities including the pending launch of the Northern Territory's Digital Territory Strategy, its digital transformational program including the release of the Digital Service Standard and its open data and data sharing initiatives.

These discussions provided an opportunity for Ministers to share their insights and experiences, and identify best practices across jurisdictions and the benefits of pursuing cross-jurisdictional projects. Ministers also discussed the need to address the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital transformation.

Cross-jurisdictional collaboration projects

In recognition of the number of cross-jurisdictional data and digital projects already underway, Ministers agreed that the following were high priority initiatives:

- Improving inter-jurisdictional data sharing on children in out-of-home care to better understand the welfare outcomes of children in this environment. Ministers discussed the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's project to integrate Commonwealth welfare data with State and Territory data. Ministers noted the opportunities this project presents.

- Significant opportunities for improved experiences for people and businesses through digital identity and for jurisdictions to collaborate in delivering digital identity. Ministers agreed to prioritise further work on this matter.

Ministers noted there are significant opportunities for further collaboration between jurisdictions in both data sharing and digital service delivery transformation.

Ministers agreed there is urgent need to improve collaboration between jurisdictions and agreed to establish a senior officials group to drive this work. Ministers tasked the senior officials group to:

- An analysis of all the projects being progressed in each jurisdiction, including timeframes for those projects to support opportunities to collaborate

- Scoping a project to improve data sharing on people with disability and report back to Ministers at the next meeting

- Coordination between jurisdictions on the delivery of digital identity opportunities

- Examine how a national data system can be realised, including identifying the current barriers to data sharing between jurisdictions, and opportunities to opt in to the Commonwealth's data sharing legislation

- Examine opportunities for the development of secure building management systems and building record management systems

- Examine collaboration to drive business simplification between governments

- Collaborate to transform services for people and business focussed around life events, including registering births and deaths.

Ministers noted the importance of community trust as we move to more digital environments and agreed to embed community engagement in to these processes.

Other business

Ministers agreed to the Terms of Reference (attached) for the Ministerial Council and agreed the Australian Digital Council will meet again within three months.