STRATEGIC REVIEW OF
Future Directions for Australian Government Service Delivery

December 2009

Dr David Rosalky
Strategic Review of Future Directions for Australian Government Service Delivery

Report to the Australian Government

Dr David Rosalky

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# Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s Department</td>
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<td>AGIMO</td>
<td>Australian Government Information Management Office</td>
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<td>AGOSP</td>
<td>Australian Government On-line Service Point</td>
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<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
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<td>APO</td>
<td>Australian Passport Office</td>
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<td>APSC</td>
<td>Australian Public Service Commission</td>
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<td>ATO</td>
<td>Australian Taxation Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDM</td>
<td>Births, Deaths and Marriages</td>
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<td>BPTC</td>
<td>Business Process Transformation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVS</td>
<td>Certificate Validation System</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHA</td>
<td>Department of Health and Ageing</td>
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<td>DHS</td>
<td>Department of Human Services</td>
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<td>DIAC</td>
<td>Department of Immigration and Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>DITRDLG</td>
<td>Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government</td>
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<td>DVA</td>
<td>Department of Veterans’ Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVS</td>
<td>Document Verification System</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAHCSIA</td>
<td>Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<td>FMA Act</td>
<td>Financial Management and Accountability Act (Commonwealth) 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>Interactive Phone Call</td>
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<td>IVR</td>
<td>Interactive Voice Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOG</td>
<td>Machinery of Government (Administrative Arrangement Orders)</td>
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<td>NBN</td>
<td>National Broadband Network</td>
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<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Death Index</td>
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<td>NEVDIS</td>
<td>National Exchange of Vehicles and Driver Information System</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government Organisation</td>
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<td>NMD</td>
<td>National Mortality Database</td>
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<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>OCI</td>
<td>On-line citizen interface</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMC</td>
<td>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>POI</td>
<td>Proof of Identity</td>
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<td>RTC</td>
<td>Rural Transaction Centre</td>
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<td>SIGB</td>
<td>Secretaries’ ICT Governance Board</td>
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<td>SPBC</td>
<td>Strategic Priorities and Budget Committee of Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSQ</td>
<td>Smart Service Queensland, previously known as Access Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFN</td>
<td>Tax File Number</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Service delivery and service delivery reform encompass a broad sweep of activity. Within the Commonwealth Government, several studies are looking at aspects of how the delivery of services to individual citizens can be refocused onto the experience and outcome for the citizen. This Report has adopted a more bounded position in order to derive conclusions that are realistic, immediate and yet challenging and far-reaching for the existing service delivery platform of the Commonwealth.

The Report focuses on two objectives:

- To make service delivery citizen friendly and effective, and
- To make service delivery more cost-effective.

These two objectives prove to be fully compatible thanks to a fortunate symbiosis. A service delivery system adapted to citizens’ convenience and needs through the use of emerging ICT is much cheaper than existing process-focused service delivery.

The traditional approach to the administration of service delivery, which largely continues today, has seen service delivery activity siloed into program-driven processing. This has incurred expensive duplication in each portfolio with a service delivery function of what are essentially common systems, and expensive human intervention through manual processing of the several, often unnecessary, activities involved in delivering a service. The latter approach is essentially a process of control and is contrary to the citizen’s perspective – the program is “done” to the citizen. There have been important advances of the traditional approach through reforms introduced by the ATO and Centrelink in recent decades, but continuing changes have not been systemic.

The traditional form of service delivery is being overtaken by the flood of technological change which does not simply offer opportunities for government to modernise systems, but has become an imperative for systemic change. The advances in ICT have been taken up by, and are changing behaviour patterns of, citizens faster than is the case for government. Traditional forms of service delivery are incompatible with modern forms of communication and lifestyles of citizens and are not meeting expectations of citizens about convenience and immediacy. Government needs to join the tide of reform and to exploit the new technology to the maximum degree to reduce costs and to improve service to citizens.

At the centre of the reforms is putting service delivery on-line. Internet connectivity is immediate, flexible and able to be personalised. It is intrinsically holistic in that all government and related community activities can be found on-line and so, in principle, all relevant information can be located and contact made with the appropriate agencies. To develop the potential in a way that is convenient, interactive and citizen-centric will require major business process redesign and investment in automated processing for all service delivery agencies and for government centrally. The evidence from those agencies that have begun to implement or to plan these reforms is that very significant savings in staff can be achieved allowing skilled resources to be redeployed to high value-adding activities – mainly citizens with complex needs and socially excluded citizens for whom proactive servicing may be desirable.
CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

The Report argues for the establishment of an “On-line Citizen Interface” (OCI) to be constructed on existing or emerging technologies. The OCI would incorporate the following components:

- Integrated whole-of-government portal organised for citizens’ interests
- Smart search capability reaching across all government and community programs – this capability will require the establishment of a metadata overlay jointly with the States built on life-event associations
- Universal registration of verified identity which could be registered at a service delivery agency or a separate national network such as Australia Post – registration would be voluntary but strongly encouraged
- Voice-print biometric for convenient, non-intrusive security
- Secure personalised page on government portal
- Secure sign-on through the personalised page to every account citizen holds in government agencies (e.g. ATO, Centrelink) – sharing of basic personal information
- On-line business transaction through the personalised page – including smart-form applications for services
- Electronic correspondence to secure space
- On-line document verification
- Capacity to engage voice or audio-visual communication for support or for complex transactions
- Feedback systems (through Web 2.0 applications) to enable
  - Explanation of decisions made through automated channels
  - Review mechanisms to facilitate procedural fairness
  - Comment by citizen on service
  - Survey of citizens about holistic outcomes.

Shifting a wholesale system onto an electronic platform can leave many behind because some people are unable or unwilling to use such channels. The so-called digital divide is however becoming a digital speed-hump. Broadband connectivity already has widespread coverage which will become universal as the NBN rolls out. For many disconnected people the divide is due to unavailability of a computer, or unfamiliarity or discomfort with computer use. Such barriers can be largely overcome through designing the on-line interface to be simple and intuitive, and by extending the availability of kiosks into communal sites with low-level support. Friendly and functional interfaces are also likely to be more convenient than a face-to-face visit for the physically disabled or others for whom mobility is a problem. For the not insignificant sector for whom face-to-face intensive servicing is required, the system will continue to cater and with increased capacity.

As the OCI is developed, all service delivery agencies will have to prepare to become an attached component of the system. This will require significant business process reform to effect totally or largely automated processing, the establishment of a risk-based administration and interfacing databases to the OCI. For some agencies, the large majority of transactions can potentially be automated with associated major resource savings. These reforms will require many staff to be retrained and provided with new materials to assist a change of culture and relationship with citizens. Shopfronts will also undergo major reform as the transaction traffic reduces sharply. Geographic coverage will remain important and the rationalisation will need to involve co-location of services of diverse government agencies, including State agencies where possible, into genuine one-stop government shopfronts.

A legacy of the past pattern of service delivery has been the multiplication of essentially generic platforms such as call centres and payment systems. There are processes within government pursuing efficiencies for ICT platforms which will incorporate service delivery platforms. Rationalisation of call centres should be able to proceed relatively simply – Centrelink’s call centre, for example, already handles diverse and specialised phone-based operations. Other platforms,
however, may be expensive to detach from integrated processing systems and rationalisation may need to await the cycle of renewal of systems. Rationalisation will need to take account of competitive drivers of efficiency, so that either there should be internal competition or a single system should be benchmarked against market-based systems. Private sector experience with platform amalgamations, at this stage, does not provide unambiguous guidance. Some successful amalgamations were based on a greater degree of homogeneity of business processes than exists across government.

The citizen-centred culture needed within agencies implies a perspective beyond programs, with which most government officials are immediately associated, to take account of holistic outcomes for citizens. Such outcomes need to be measured and incorporated into accountability frameworks. Accountability for policy outcomes, citizen outcomes and service delivery quality becomes a shared function of policy and service delivery owners. New governance arrangements need to accommodate and drive these shared accountabilities and joined-up program management.

Governance arrangements can give force to the elusive concept of joined-up government – a concept central to effective citizen-centric service delivery. Acting in a joined-up way is not a natural state in our form of bureaucracy because it crosses lines of authority, fiscal responsibility and accountability. The proposed governance arrangements start with the premise that the government aims to establish service delivery as a central component of strategic policy in its engagement with citizens. The Report proposes a Service Delivery portfolio with responsibilities for service-wide policies and objectives for effective service delivery. To ensure a service-wide perspective, the portfolio and minister would be advised by a board consisting of central agencies, and representatives of key policy agencies and service delivery agencies. The Service Delivery portfolio would have responsibility to manage the OCI.

The practice of service delivery would remain situated throughout government including, where there is an established case, in policy departments or specialist agencies. Examples of where this happens presently are visa processing in DIAC or tax assessments in ATO. All such activities would be subject to service delivery policy as overseen by the service delivery minister.

Joining-up needs to involve effective linkages between cognate policy areas (ideally including State departments) and effective linkages between policy formulation and service delivery. The proposed governance structure envisages a matrix of policy departments in one dimension with cross-cutting involvement of central agencies and the service delivery portfolio. With a policy approved by Cabinet, program design, approval and funding would need to involve the policy and service delivery agencies jointly before approval is gained. Performance frameworks and accountability also need to reflect the respective and joint roles of policy and service delivery. Performance needs to measure and monitor:

- Program or policy effectiveness (paramount)
- Program integrity
- Service delivery objectives
- Holistic citizen outcome.

The reform agenda is challenging and needs to be driven by Cabinet authority and an active cross-agency authority. Such authority already exists in the form of the Secretaries’ ICT Governance Board and the Business Process Transformation Committee. Ministerial oversight should involve the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, because of the centrality of funding and performance frameworks, and the Service Delivery minister.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author received valuable support and assistance from officers of the Department of Finance and Deregulation and from several officers from the agencies and departments consulted. External consultants were also generous with their time and, most importantly, their creative ideas on the subject matter of the Report.

I wish to express keen appreciation and gratitude to the team that supported me. They were resourceful, ready to offer ideas and to challenge my ideas throughout the development of the Report. The team comprised Stephanie Matters, Jean Lynch and Susan Rackstraw from the Department of Finance and Deregulation, and Peter Soros seconded from the Department of Human Services. I wish to thank the Department of Human Services for agreeing to Peter’s secondment, and to Centrelink for making available the services of a senior officer who provided extensive information and advice.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In July 2009, the Department of Finance and Deregulation commissioned, with the authority of SPBC, a strategic study of the future directions that service delivery in the Commonwealth Government should, and feasibly could, take to be properly citizen-centric and cost efficient. The terms of reference (reproduced at Appendix A) seek an analysis of existing service delivery in the Commonwealth in terms of efficiency and consistency with citizen centricity, and lessons that can be learnt from reform of service delivery in other settings – in other countries, other jurisdictions and in the private sector. In compiling this Report, consultations were held with several government agencies and private entities. A list is provided at Appendix B.

1.1 What is citizen-centric service delivery?

The focus on service delivery has been sharpened in recent times because of a perception that the long-standing processes of government have given unbalanced attention to policies and the design of programs to implement those policies, but insufficient attention to the delivery of programs to citizens. To remedy this deficiency, attention needs to be given to the effective interface between government and citizens that ensures that government’s objectives and good outcomes for citizens are both achieved. Programs are the building blocks of government activity. They are the practical expression of a policy and link the policy to the administrative and managerial activities of public administrators. They form the components of business operations of agencies; they are (generally) funded within single agencies; responsibilities and accountabilities of officials and performance indicators for the agency and managerial elements within it are tied to program structures.

The prominence of program-focused administration can lead to a perception, and a reality, that programs “are done to people”, or that people are fitted to programs rather than programs meeting the needs of the people.

This is at the heart of citizen centricity – to assess the effectiveness of government activities in terms of effectiveness of the outcome for the citizen. This goes beyond merely assessing the effectiveness of programs in isolation. It goes to the totality of the engagement of the citizen with government. This
encompasses the transparency and simplicity for the citizen of accessing and understanding the many
services offered, and obligations imposed, by government. Access should not be an unnecessary
burden on a citizen in terms of inconvenience and cost, and should be able to be focused on the
citizen’s needs in the most effective way.

1.2 Alternative perspectives on service delivery

In this Report, the perspective adopted in investigating citizen-centric service delivery focuses primarily
on the service delivery platform. To some observers and interested parties, service delivery and citizen
centricity invoke quite different perspectives, and those perspectives are subject to separate and
current reviews being conducted on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

The most far-reaching review\(^1\) relates to the nature of the role that government can play in the citizen-
government engagement. It is likely to canvass such issues as:

- the role of programs in the structure of government business
- the ability to offer holistic services to address citizens’ issues
- how to engage the citizens’ own perceptions of their needs
- the degree of flexibility given to front-line service providers inside or outside government.

This agenda challenges the nature of the implicit citizen-government compact. It questions the role of
government and of public officials as managers of government programs, and the appropriate balance
between citizens’ rights and the government’s rights in pursuing policy objectives.

Another perspective on citizen-centric service delivery embraces the notion of citizen participation in
policy development and program implementation. Government has initiated a review\(^2\) of this aspect
through an exploration of the future role and exploitation of Web 2.0 technologies.

This Report is not looking at these matters explicitly but there are references to aspects common to the
subject matter of the present Report and those other reviews where they relate to reform of the service
delivery platform.

1.3 The march of technology

The other important driver of change is technology. Emerging Internet technology, both hardware, in
terms of capacity, speed and geographical reach, and software, in terms of interpretive data
manipulation and communication, is rapidly changing modes of communication and expectations about
information, immediacy and functionality. These developments are congruent in that exploitation of
the technology permits the embracing of a new platform that offers many elements of citizen-centric
service delivery.

Improving the service for citizens requires skilled resources to be deployed to where they add most
value. Equivalently, through technology, resources need to be redeployed from tasks that do not add
significant value. Stream-lined, effective and efficient servicing can be achieved through restructuring
business processes in service delivery and exploiting ICT developments.

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\(^1\) Reform of Australian Government Administration: Building the world’s best public service, announced by
Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd in his John Paterson Oration to the Australia New Zealand School of Government Annual
govt_admin.pdf

\(^2\) The Hon Lindsay Tanner, MP, Minister for Finance and Deregulation, and Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Cabinet Secretary
and Special Minister of State, jointly announced the Government 2.0 Taskforce on 22 June 2009. The independent
taskforce conducting the review is chaired by Dr Nicholas Gruen, CEO Lateral Economics.
1.4 Terminology

In this Report, we are discussing “services” to “citizens”. Both terms require clarification. “Services” here refers to all forms of engagement with government. So, they may involve the receipt by the citizen of a direct benefit from government, or they may involve a process of assistance with fulfilling an obligation such as paying taxation or a fine or penalty. They may involve regulatory control such as a licence to perform some action. There are also likely to be numerous actions involved in a “service”, such as application, receipt of benefits, obligatory provision and updating of information, exchange of correspondence, reviews of decisions, recovery of debts etc. Engagements between government and citizens would, in a holistic sense, include business engagements, but the focus of this Report is on citizens as individuals in managing their private lives.

Within a broad definition, much of what government does can be interpreted as providing a generalised service to citizens, such as defence, justice or environmental quality. The citizen may also receive an anonymous service when a program that provides a personalised service carries external effects. An example would be a health program chosen by a citizen in a private transaction, such as inoculations for transmittable diseases, may reduce public health hazards and so benefit all citizens. The citizen is also, generally, a taxpayer and a member of society. As such, he has an interest in the cost and effectiveness of public programs and in the cohesion and fairness of the society that those programs may influence.

The term “citizens” is used in a non-legal sense and means any person needing or choosing to engage the government and so includes, for example, people outside Australia who may be seeking to enter, or legal non-citizens receiving services or seeking citizenship. The notion is intended to embrace the explicit or implicit conditions of a relationship that an individual is involved in with governments through much of his life and family activities.

Finally, the term “government” in the Report generally implies the Commonwealth Government, but many of the arguments have a legitimate application to all governments, especially as a premise of “citizen-centric service delivery” is that citizens do not need to know whence services originate.

1.5 Background to review of service delivery

Service delivery refers to the collection of activities through which the government and its agencies apply the many government programs to their intended recipients, or make those programs available to people who want to use them. Service delivery is the essential link between the design of a program established to pursue a government policy and the impact of the program on the recipient. Its function has equal importance, often, to the policy or program design in ensuring effective results from the policy.

Traditionally, service delivery has been designed as part of overall program design and has been focused on the processes needed to apply the program. The perspective is from the program looking out to its intended recipients.

As an integral component of administration, service delivery has been subject to processes of continuous improvement and efficiency gains and changes to increase program effectiveness are commonly reported and probably achieved. There have also been systemic developments which have improved service delivery. The New Public Management (NPM) reforms to reshape the government to operate like the corporate world, *inter alia*, advocated customer-focused delivery with concepts like customer loyalty. This was always a faulty model because users of government services rarely display the characteristics of “customers”. Value to the organisation is not derived from customer loyalty and patronage but from the effect of government programs on the client’s circumstances.

The establishment of a specialised Commonwealth Service Delivery Agency, known as Centrelink, in 1997 gave sharp focus to improving the service experience for clients (mainly of human services) and to innovation in the methods of service delivery. There were significant but limited improvements. Improvements included user-friendly communications between Centrelink and clients, more efficient and more amenable shop-front settings, IVR technology to handle the huge numbers of calls, especially...
during periods of intensive need for services. But there were also missed opportunities. In particular, Centrelink’s structure and business model are built on program-specific processes and its performance is assessed on parameters relating to each of the programs that it delivers, usually as determined by the “program owner” – the policy department. This dependency, which exaggerated the programmatic focus, was institutionalised by Centrelink’s business relations with program owners set in pseudo-contractual purchaser-provider agreements. This approach was compatible with NPM, but has recently been replaced. The financial dependence of Centrelink on program owners has been removed leaving Centrelink freer to modify its engagement with citizens.

Importantly, opportunities were also missed because their time had not come – but perhaps it has now.
CHAPTER 2:
CURRENT EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 Experience in other jurisdictions - International

Appendix C describes service delivery reforms in a selection of international jurisdictions. Generally, international governments have adopted a strong position regarding citizen-centric service delivery and especially through the mechanism of e-government channels. A report by Accenture from 2007, however, is quite critical that what had been delivered did not meet the jurisdictions’ rhetoric or the expectations that they raised. A quote from the Foreword of the Report captures this conclusion.

> “Governments have unintentionally widened the gap between service provision and citizen value. Technology advances in recent years have led governments to focus primarily on the front end of service, fostering expectations of an entirely new customer experience. Governments succeeded in representing existing services across multiple channels. However, their success was just the first step of true citizen-centricity. What governments still have not done is make the infrastructural and cultural changes necessary to fully realize their vision. Citizens used these newly available channels expecting consistent levels of service quality. Instead, the back-end infrastructure was inadequate, resulting in a poor customer experience and lower satisfaction.”


In looking at the experiences of other countries, it is important to recognise the differences in context with the Australian government environment. The federal nature of the Australian system, in parallel to that of Canada, means that the central government cannot press the sub-national governments to join the reform processes and it is in the services that sub-national governments provide that most value can be derived from adopting on-line delivery. This is the area where most international experience has made progress. The services are more involved with day-to-day issues of citizens; risks to government are much less because the services do not generally relate to high cost transfers to citizens; communities of interest, such as local geographic communities, can exploit social networking technology (Web 2.0).

Another, more subtle but important, difference between countries derives from the culture of the public citizen: the implied citizen-government compact and the degree of trust between those parties that characterises each polity. Of particular relevance is that western European and Nordic countries

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have closer relationships with government and expect a greater role of government in their lives than do the Anglo-origin countries. This raises the barrier for the latter countries to introduce mandatory participation of citizens in new forms of engagement. That aspect, combined with the barriers raised by the federal distinctions, makes most international comparisons of notional or selective interest only.

**Single portals:** The most widespread reform takes the form of an integrated point of contact between the citizen and government. The objective in these cases has been to obviate the need for citizens to navigate multiple agencies based on an assumed, but usually inadequate, knowledge of the structure of government and its programs. A single point of entry offers the citizen a mode of navigation that has a clear starting point and makes use of the citizen’s characteristics and circumstances, rather than administrative structures, to find the point or points of information that serve the citizen’s interests. The “life-event” typology employed in the interfaces has a surprising degree of commonality across governments, reflecting the common functions that most Western governments offer to their citizens.

The interfaces offered are not only via the Internet. A single phone number contact seems to have become a preferred mode of contact in several jurisdictions. This form of interface seems to play the role of a super phone exchange operator, directing the inquirer quickly, and in one step, to the relevant point in government where the inquiry can be serviced.

Quite different models are used in the various jurisdictions for the common citizen interface. In Canada, for example, the portal is thin in the sense that it is penetrated quickly by a query and the inquirer is directed by hyperlinks to relevant sites in a particular agency. In other words, the portal merely saves the inquirer the (difficult) task of knowing where to look. But it remains disjoint and requires the inquirer to back-track or to start again to refresh the inquiry. By way of contrast, the portal utilised by the UK government is somewhat more substantial. The inquirer can penetrate within the portal website several layers below the surface and expand the information she receives before she is directed to an agency. This depth of information held within the portal seems capable of satisfying information needs for many citizens without their having to be directed to an agency. This capability in the UK system, which is quite an attractive option in its own right, has characteristics which give their model greater integrity. One is that participation in the common portal by service delivery agencies is compulsory whereas it appears to voluntary, if encouraged, in other jurisdictions. A second characteristic of the UK system is that there appears to be little or no capability to transact business on-line so that information gathering seems to be the limit of what can be achieved and on-line contact with service delivery agencies unnecessary for inquirers. Again, in some other jurisdictions looked at in Appendix C, in particular in Canada, there is some capacity to perform transactions and transfer to the relevant agency is required. Another characteristic is the inclusion of local government authorities where major parts of citizen services are delivered.

**Integrated service:** Having entered through a common portal, citizens may expect that they can be offered integrated servicing of their needs and a service offer that may, if necessary, bridge multiple agencies and programs. In the countries looked at, this is not a common model. The main area of integrated servicing seems to be in the combining of employment assistance with income support – the original rationale and orientation of Centrelink. The UK and New Zealand have provided such integration within single portfolios. New Zealand has taken the approach furthest in forming a dedicated integrated network focused on case management of the more difficult and demanding cases. There is not, however, much connection made with cognate supportive community programs. The UK model, on the other hand, has retained the two aspects within a single portfolio but with distinct Executive Agencies for employment and pension services. So governance has been integrated more so than has service.

Beyond those examples, service delivery appears to operate within separate portfolios or agencies with distinct administration and governance. An integrated and specialised service delivery agency like Centrelink, covering multifarious programs and policies, is not a common model.

**Integrated/rationalised processing:** Another area of reform focused on efficient back-room processing, rather than service delivery as the citizen sees it, is conducting common processes on common ICT platforms. Of the countries described and the sources accessed for the Appendix, no such rationalisations were uncovered. However, internal structures are not readily available through public
Internet sources and it is likely that some smaller and unitary governments have integrated ICT platforms.

### 2.2 Experience in other jurisdictions – States and Territories

Appendix D describes practice in the Australian States and Territories (referred to for brevity as "the States"). The following observations are germane to the discussion in this Report.

- It is commonplace to have a single government portal for on-line access. The information is generally organised in life-event tree format which leads the inquirer to specific links relevant to her inquiry within the administering agency.
- Transactional capability from within the portal is available in the ACT, Queensland and South Australia. It is mainly used for effecting administrative or commercial payments to the government, or obtaining administrative instruments like licences.
- The entity that administers the common portal is a unit within a regular portfolio and is funded through a mixture of appropriation and fees from participating agencies. As participation is not mandatory and the entity needs to seek business, this model has the capacity to generate cost efficiencies and responsive servicing to meet the requirements of the agencies – as opposed to the citizens.
- Tasmania has an integrated service delivery network based on face-to-face contact centres with comparatively little on-line or telephone use. It is thus an expensive approach and its establishment was funded principally through a generous grant from the Commonwealth. It is not a model for the future. The model uses three lead agencies to deliver the components of the network’s services and is overseen by a board representing central and participating agencies. Participation is mandatory.
- Service delivery in the States is delivered through portfolios responsible for the various policy areas. A form of integration has been effected in a number of States (Victoria is a leading example) through the mechanism of forming large integrated portfolios responsible for whole sectors of policies – in particular in the welfare/community services field.

State governments in Australia have moved to improve access to services for their citizens and to consolidate related programs for citizens with particular needs. Finding information on government programs has followed the formula used in a number of overseas governments, by building a common portal that brings together the information or, at least, assists in navigating to the information. Making payments, transacting simple administrative tasks and purchasing State products has generally been offered as an on-line facility.

State government web pages commonly point to Commonwealth programs associated with the State programs being offered, but, except in specialised fields such as health, there is little or no service integration. States also hold critical information, such as births, deaths, marriages or name changes, that is not routinely made available to other jurisdictions even though it may be of critical importance to the administration of services in those jurisdictions and of greater importance to other jurisdictions than to the jurisdiction where it is recorded.

Local government administrations are a mixed bag, but many have adopted a position not unlike what prevails in the States. In aggregate, service delivery across Australia’s governments is fragmented and largely disconnected.

### 2.3 Current Practice in the Commonwealth

Individuals engage government in many ways and for many purposes. The engagements may be to receive services or assistance, or may be to fulfil obligations. They may be initiated by the individual (seeking a pension or a passport), or by the government (payment of tax), or they may be a mass service only incidentally engaging an individual (customs and quarantine inspections at an airport). Several
departments and agencies deliver services to citizens\(^4\). Usually the service activity is intrinsically of a public nature (e.g. income support, visas, taxation), but sometimes it is of a commercial nature and potentially or actually in competition with a market-based service (e.g. rehabilitation and hearing services delivered through agencies or the department within the Human Services portfolio).

The major Commonwealth agencies that deliver services to individual citizens are listed in the following table together with a brief description of the services they provide to individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>NATURE OF AGENCY</th>
<th>SERVICE TO INDIVIDUALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink</td>
<td>Statutory agency in Human Services portfolio</td>
<td>Income support and associated management. Access to personal services (e.g. employment assistance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare Australia</td>
<td>Statutory agency in Human Services portfolio</td>
<td>Payment of universal medical subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support Agency</td>
<td>Part of Department of Human Services</td>
<td>Assessment and recovery of obligatory support payable by non-custodial parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Taxation Office</td>
<td>Statutory agency in Treasury portfolio</td>
<td>Assessment, collections, transfers &amp; payments for tax and superannuation systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
<td>Department of state</td>
<td>Income support, health and associated services to veterans and their dependants. Concession card administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration &amp; Citizenship</td>
<td>Department of state</td>
<td>Assessment and provision of entry visas. Assessment and grant of citizenship or residency. Settlement services to new residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
<td>Department of state</td>
<td>Issuance of passports. Consular services. Document authentication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The framework of the Commonwealth Government used to deliver the various services is extensive geographically and in terms of the processes, resources and skills that it encompasses. The total number of staff involved in service delivery in the Commonwealth has been estimated at around 75,000 full-time equivalent staff\(^5\). The physical framework, in various forms, includes the following components:

- Shopfronts for face-to-face contact with service officers.
- Call centres for receiving, directing and processing phone contacts. These can be for general inquiries or specialised services with dedicated phone numbers.
- Databases for recording client information and personal accounts.
- Processing hardware and software carrying rules for program delivery.
- Data centres to accommodate the physical systems holding data and processing software.
- Processing centres where trained staff make assessments of applicant eligibility, obligation etc.
- Payment and correspondence systems.
- Systems for collecting and storing data for reporting and performance monitoring.
- Distributed human resources for outreach services.
- Contracts for third party delivery of services and management systems for contracts.

The last three elements form part of the service delivery chain, but are not of themselves components of the physical framework.

The diverse nature of services and their means of delivery make it difficult to list components of the service delivery network in a consistent manner. The table at Appendix E presents an attempt to do so across the larger service delivery agencies and with pertinent qualitative description. Where meaningful, quantitative information is included to provide an approximate picture of dimensions and magnitudes. Precision is not claimed. Some important observations can be made from the table:

- There are large and widespread shopfront (over 600) and call centre (over 50) networks across the country and some internationally.

\(^4\) Both terms “service” and “citizen” are being used generically to encompass the various engagements discussed here.

Processing is commonly scattered across the agencies’ physical presence, both in shopfronts and in state or regional offices. A guiding factor appears to be the availability and flexible employment of agency staff.

State and Territory offices have adopted a multi-servicing role while, in some cases, the original rationale for a State or Territory office has diminished.

Data centres are commonly contracted to the private sector. Generally there are two centres for reasons of ensuring business continuity, but some agencies have three or in one case five centres. Multiple centres have sometimes arisen because of changed administrative arrangements amalgamating disparate services in one portfolio (e.g. DEEWR).

Generally, apart from the coverage and function of Centrelink, service delivery across the Commonwealth government is fragmented and linked to individual programs. There is little evidence of an integrated service delivery platform or culture.

### 2.4 Practice in the private sector

Electronic forms of commercial transactions have existed for a decade or more and, like the public sector, have responded to the opportunities that ICT developments offer in terms of improved customer service and cost efficiencies. Three prominent sectors where e-commerce interfaces customers directly are the banking, retail and travel industries.

The mechanisms which the latter two sectors exploit are the capacity to search diverse sources for information pertinent to one’s query, and the capacity to respond to the information and to effect a transaction. These developments have enabled a universal reach to customers both geographically and temporally, and a by-passing of a layer of retailing agencies such as travel agents or booksellers. The convenience to purchaser and vendor is obvious where the transactions are not complex, but where some complexity exists and assistance is required, intervention can be initiated through (electronic) correspondence and/or a session with a retailer. There are apparent parallels with public sector service engagements in the notions described here. But there are important differences which need to be accommodated in models of automated service delivery for the public sector. One difference is the comparative ease in codifying homogeneous products, such as books or travel options, compared with diverse government programs and services. Another difference is the greater risk and exposure for government in initiating access to a program than in a single commercial transaction underpinned with a guaranteed electronic payment.

Retail banking carries, possibly, closer parallels to government servicing. The interaction with customers can involve multiple but linked services with separate accounts and processing, such as savings and investment accounts, card services, loans, wealth management, investment brokering etc. They are also exposed to risk of fraud and identity theft, requiring a high degree of identity proof and authentication at the point of transactions. They have high-volume transaction processing and accounts linked by common identity of the account holder. There have been various reforms to their business methods exploiting ICT developments:

- Issuing customers with secure pseudonymous identification for electronic access
- Linkage of various and diverse accounts, at the customer’s initiative, with the pseudonym
- On-line transaction capacity to transact with the accounts, to manage personal information or to receive electronic advices and alerts
- Electronic third-party financial transactions (e.g. bill paying) via networks that have developed to exploit electronic banking opportunities (e.g. BPAY or PostPay or PayPal)
- Capacity for electronic correspondence including bank statements and tax advices
- Optional multi-layered security for sensitive transactions to improve bank and customer security (e.g. mobile phone coding to authenticate transactions)
- Smart credit and debit cards for secure transactions across the general retail sector
- Automated 24/7 cash dispensing through card-based authentication

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6 The common short-hand form “24/7” meaning 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, is used throughout this Report.
Centralised and multi-function processing centres situated remotely from shopfronts or corporate headquarters

Reduction of the scope of shop-fronts and the services provided therein. Some banks are, however, reopening retail shop-fronts or freezing their reduction programs because of the residual customer demand for face-to-face servicing. This seems to demonstrate the learning process that citizens are undergoing while they build comfort and trust with transacting business remotely.

Electronic banking is widespread and familiar to most people. But there are other developments in the banking sector that are less apparent to the broad public and which have relevance to options for government service delivery. Two such developments are described here. The first relates to rationalised processing platforms. A particular non-bank financial enterprise has in recent years merged three distinct companies delivering comparable business in different States or regions of Australia. The merged enterprise has aligned its products and information systems and merged them all onto one ICT platform in one state. All parts of the new entity across the country operate through the central processing complex remotely and have no local ICT capacity beyond the network interfacing. The savings were considerable and were the major factor in the merged entity’s capacity to gain a competitive edge in a pressured industry. A key factor in facilitating this reform was the homogeneity of the businesses performed by the merged entities.

The second example is the move by two banks in Australia in recent years to offer certain accounts with totally automated management. A customer can initiate a savings or investment account on-line and deposit and withdraw funds within those accounts. In the case of one bank, the customer needs to be an existing customer with the bank to verify his identity and personal particulars. But in another bank, this is not the case and a person can be unknown to the bank. Particulars of certain identifying documentation and obligate information such as a TFN are supplied by the applicant and checked through a degree of access to government identity systems (e.g. passports and Medicare) before the account is authorised. That bank also offers a 24/7 audio-visual help service through the Skype internet-based phone service. This exploitation of the broadband and secure remote communication system offers a totally flexible and convenient service with the capacity for assistance through on-line human intervention. It operates in the low-risk account part of the bank’s business and in transactions that do not require assessment procedures such as to approve a loan. But it covers a significant slice of the bank’s retail business and has provided sufficient savings to the bank to allow a premium interest rate to apply on the accounts so that the customer can share the financial benefits of automated business.

All of the elements described above have parallels to public-sector service delivery methods and platforms.
CHAPTER 3:
THE DRIVERS OF SERVICE DELIVERY REFORM

The time for service delivery reform has arrived, and for two principal and related reasons. The first reason is that the political cycle, across the democratic world, has turned to focus on the citizen’s experience and expectations of government. Governments have become much more involved in citizens’ lives and, through political rhetoric as well as actual capacity, have raised citizens’ expectations of what government can do for them.

The second reason is that the technology of communication and associated social practice have undergone a revolution. Instant gratification, in the form of immediate, comprehensive, relevant and ever-available information and the ability to act on the information, is available and utilised in many commonly accessed commercial sectors (e.g. banking, retail, travel), and users of this technology see no reason why access to government services should not be the same.

3.1 The Citizen Experience
Improving the citizen’s experience has two main aspects:

- facilitating and ameliorating access, and
- optimising the result that emerges from the contact.

The nature of the interface needs to take account of what the citizen wants. A summary list of what makes the interface friendly and effective for the citizen is set out in the box below. Some of the criteria, such as convenience, simplicity, availability, have been revealed in surveys but other elements are normative in that they are desirable for a good outcome.
The list set out in the box recognises that the citizen wants information readily available online and tailored to her interests and needs and that the information will lead her to an efficient and effective outcome. These seemingly obvious requirements are actually quite demanding. They require comprehensive information covering all relevant sources across agencies and jurisdictions and often non-government sources. An aged citizen, for example, will find relevant programs within Commonwealth, State and local government and through community-based services, some subsidised and some not. Government and private sources will also hold information relevant to obligations such as income, assets and tax liabilities. This is equally true for significant other groups such as youth or people starting families or with young children.
The information needs to be relevant to the individual’s circumstances and to assist in determining the relevance. In other words, the interface between the citizen and the information sources needs to be interpretive through a form of search engine that can relate keywords describing the citizen’s circumstances to the diverse information bases. There is considerable commonality across many jurisdictions in their presentation of friendly on-line interfaces. But they only go a part of the way by navigating an inquirer from her category of need or interest (e.g. aged person) to lists of programs in the various jurisdictions that are broadly relevant. The inquirer still needs to understand where in government the programs reside and what are the relations between the programs. Importantly, interfaces desirably shield the inquirer from the administrative and programmatic structures within government.

A related consideration is complexity. With rare exceptions, government programs have complex rules relating to eligibility and obligations on the service recipient. An inquirer will generally have to navigate a series of questions, to supply information and to make choices to find the answer to her query. A common response is to abandon the on-line query and to engage an option involving human interface, such as a phone call or a visit to a service centre. These forms of contact are less convenient to the citizen, being restricted in hours and involving waits and more personal time. They are also much more expensive to government. If the inquirer persists with the on-line transaction, evidence shows that complexity can drive the inquirer to make sub-optimal choices. So the design of the interface needs to remove complexity and to steer the inquirer through such elements as carefully constructed default options.

The shift in focus canvassed here constitutes a turning around of the relationship between the citizen and government because it requires the information system to interpret the citizen’s needs, in some broad sense, and to provide tailored information. Obviously this can never be perfect and always will involve some approximation to the optimum result. But it carries the advantages of ease and convenience to the citizen, much lower transaction cost to the government and the likelihood of better outcomes through the provision of multi-channel information – something usually available only through a significant degree of service intervention.

There are important implications for policy design. The process would provide a much enhanced “approximation” to an optimal result if policy and program design were kept as simple as possible and criteria across related programs aligned. There is also a need for the connections between related policies and programs across jurisdictions to be designated at the design stage. Joined-up and citizen-centric government demands that policies and programs are not generated in isolation of programs that can synergise. When such linkages and synergies are designated in program specifications, the service offer to citizens can be made comprehensive and more effective.

Citizens require interactions with government that are personalised in that the information made available and pathways into which they are led relate to their own circumstances. Extraneous material should desirably not be extracted and the citizens should have control over the nature and breadth of information supplied. Citizens would be able to create their own government page based on what they are interested in amongst the plethora of government information. This would not be restricted to the services or contacts that they engage in with government, but could be expected to include information of general interest, feeds of announcements from government or other news stories in areas of interest, general alerts or warnings such as weather reports or travel alerts, information on quality accreditation of externally provided services such as child-care centres etc.

One of the more important elements of personalised interaction is the ability to initiate action with government in those areas where the citizen has personal engagement, such as the Tax Office or an assistive program. Action would include applications for assistance, making payments, supplying required information, acquiring records of financial or other transactions, updating personal information, receiving and replying to correspondence, receiving alerts of due dates etc.

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Citizens engaging government on-line, without any human intervention, will want to be able to supply and to receive feedback that might involve querying and appealing decisions, commenting on service, or asking questions.

The picture painted in the preceding paragraphs is one of multiple forms of contact by a citizen which can be expected to add significant value to the convenience and quality of the citizen’s many engagements with government. But it would have novel features for most citizens: it uses on-line contact remote from face-to-face engagement and it involves engagement with multiple agencies, or potentially even more than one government, through a single connection. In this environment, citizens will want to receive assurance about the management of their personal information. Security of the Internet is an issue that receives frequent publicity and citizens will want to be confident that their personal details are well protected from being accessed and misused by unauthorised parties. Within the integrated and remote authorised environment, privacy of personal information will also need to be managed so as to ensure that citizens know how and where their information is being used and that they have some control over its multiple use. Restricting the use of personal information will limit the value to the citizen of the on-line engagement, sometimes significantly, and it is in the government’s interest to manage the interface in such a way that the added value exceeds the cost, perceived or real, of supplying basic personal information.

3.2 Developments in Technology

The technology governing information management and communication is accelerating at a rapid rate. It is full of rich opportunity to those nimble and flexible enough to keep up with its offerings, but problematic for government with its deliberative and disjoint processes. Developments in the Internet environment are revolutionary in that they are changing people’s behaviour and expectations in ways that cannot be met through incremental change. The large majority of people in a country like Australia is able to communicate with universal information sources and with each other at any time and in any place. Lifestyles have adapted to this environment in a way that places great emphasis on the immediacy, accuracy and timeliness of information sources and the ready availability of automated services 24/7. For example, a person travelling overseas will be able to detect on a hand-held Internet device, such as an I-phone or Blackberry, that a payment of tax or a credit card account is due, make the payment through remote banking and receive confirmation. While she is looking at her government page, she sees that Centrelink has queried her study plans and she is able to respond to Centrelink about reenrolment (possibly accessing her university records to retrieve and copy to Centrelink a validating document), and thereby ensuring continuity of student allowance. Incidentally, she sees an alert of a new scholarship scheme operated by the State government that relates to her area of study and is able to make an on-line application validated by university and Commonwealth government documents.

This colourful pen picture displays several aspects. Firstly, it reflects a degree of present capability; then it shows how that capability raises opportunities and expectations that government cannot (yet) meet, namely interconnectivity between agencies and with private organisations, and automaticity of transactions enabled by authenticated identity.

The technological challenges for government to meet the requirements of that one example include:

- linkages across agencies such as ATO, Centrelink, Education
- linkages with non-government organisations and State governments
- authentication of identity and registration of citizens for cross-government access
- personalised and automated alert and correspondence system
- automated form completion and electronic signatures or equivalent remote validation by applicants
- acceptance, verification and recording of electronic documents.

These developments might be characterised as being on the citizen’s side of the screen that divides her from the processes of government. They are visible to the citizen and affect her capacity to engage. Behind the screen, there are also technological developments which offer advantages to both the
citizen and the government. They relate principally to the architecture of the service delivery technology. The technology includes components that are intrinsic to the characteristics of individual programs (program-specific processing), such as conditions of eligibility and payment rates, and components that are common in nature to multiple agencies (common platforms), such as the handling of an incoming call or the effecting of a payment to a citizen’s bank account. The relevance of common-purpose platforms is that significant cost reductions can be achieved, where duplication in investment can be avoided. They also offer a common-look experience for the citizen across different parts of government which can contribute to simplicity, familiarity and trust.

What constitutes program-specific processing needs careful consideration. For example, family assistance and aged pension are processed on Centrelink’s integrated platform, but veterans’ benefits, which are more similar to aged pensions than is family assistance, are paid on a separate platform. Another example is the use of call centres. While the information provided through a call centre may be program-specific, a single platform can be utilised efficiently with call-centre staff trained to handle individual program needs. Present practice includes examples of common usage (Centrelink handling passport enquiries for DFAT) and examples of distinct platforms (separate DVA and DIAC call centres), the latter generally costing significantly more because of set-up costs and the diseconomies of small scale.

3.3 Issues with new technology

There is a common view that multiple channels of contact need to be retained and that the channels need to be equivalent from the perspective of the service provided to citizens using the channel of their choice. In particular, this view assumes that “modern” channels of contact, such as on-line contact, are unavailable to significant groups, especially groups with the greatest need for effective delivery of supportive service. The argument goes further in highlighting that many people prefer to talk to a person, face-to-face or on the phone, rather than the impersonal service on-line. This Report takes the position that some form of on-line connectivity can be assumed to be universal within a few years (except for especially disadvantaged groups who will need special treatment anyway), that it can be made simple and intuitive, and that on-line connectivity offers such added value to government and to citizens that it should be actively supported and encouraged.

Broadband connectivity will be available nationally in the near future – probably before the NBN is fully rolled out, e.g. through wireless-based extensions to particularly remote areas. It already reaches over 60% of people in each of metropolitan, regional and rural/remote areas of Australia. Usage is likely to be limited more by personal behaviours than by lack of geographical reach, and that can be so in the middle of Sydney, not just in remote mining towns. People who do not use the Internet themselves commonly gain usage through a family member or friend, or they use mobile phones and communicate with text messages. In small remote communities, some people who have Internet connectivity share that capacity with other community members. The coverage, through direct or indirect use, can be expected to expand considerably in the coming few years. For example, when Internet TV is introduced, the home television will become a multi-channel communication device, including, if desired, a government home-page for household members.

One strong incentive is the ready availability (and sometimes the only usable availability) of basic utilitarian information like bus timetables and weather forecasts. Much commercial traffic is becoming hard to transact other than on on-line or is significantly cheaper on-line (e.g. banking, purchasing tickets, travel plans etc).

It is neither feasible nor desirable to force citizens to utilise electronic channels. So, it is necessary to attract citizens and to provide incentives to engage government on-line in order to ensure an appropriate return on the government’s investment. A number of factors can be identified that can offer strong incentives for citizens to use the on-line channel. The most obvious one is to make the on-line experience simple to use and full of value. That means that government agencies have to adapt
their processes to allow most, if not all, business transactions to be conducted on-line where they can be conducted without delay or the need for repeated contacts. Another factor is physical availability of a computer and a helping hand. On-line access facilities can be made available in community facilities such as libraries, post offices, trading stores in remote communities or any other communal centre including RTCs [see Appendix F]. The form might be a small bank of kiosks with a local staff member able to help a user to get connected. A third factor is the availability of forms of assistance built into the on-line systems, from on-line HELP screens to graduated forms of contact with staff, which, in a broadband world, will be done via audio-visual communication on the computer or kiosk.

Physical remoteness or discomfort with computerised channels of business are not significant barriers to on-line service delivery. To the extent that there are some barriers, they can be overcome. The digital divide is rapidly becoming a digital speed-hump for most people. The excluded groups are generally people who exclude themselves from contacts with community or government for social or cultural reasons or because of extreme personal disadvantage. There will also be individuals who have insurmountable barriers to on-line usage (such as mental impairment) and they will require alternative channels. Lastly, many people who commence engagement on-line will need to progress to other channels to finalise their servicing because of complexity. Service delivery channels and processes need to address all these groups.

The UK Cabinet Office\(^9\) has observed that, for some time during the uptake of on-line government contact, people can be expected to continue to use phones. They argue that it is important that the responses to the calls do not simply provide an alternative to a face-to-face engagement but rather offer a guide to engage on-line. Such a process actively redirects people onto the on-line channel and accelerates the migration that will enable maximum exploitation of on-line service delivery.

The value equation for the extensive use of on-line service delivery seems undeniable: virtually universal access to on-line communication in the near future, coupled with multiple interconnected service capability on-line, will deliver significant benefits to citizens in being able to manage personal relationships with government in a most convenient mode, and to government in cost-savings.

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CHAPTER 4:
SERVICE DELIVERY PARADIGM

4.1 What is the desired nature of service delivery?

“Service” in the context of this report has a generic meaning encompassing multiple forms of engagement between the citizen and government. The citizen has multiple interactions with government of an incidental (e.g. obtaining a passport or paying a fine), routine (annual tax returns) or continuing (income support) nature. The interaction may also be transitory during a temporary status; e.g. applicants for temporary entrance, residency or citizenship, or crisis relief.

The purpose of the interactions can be voluntary in the sense that the citizen chooses to initiate the interaction and can terminate it. This can include the receipt of income support because citizens may choose not to receive a payment for which they are eligible, but having taken advantage of the payment, forms of obligatory contact arise. Citizens will frequently access government for information from travel advisories to the history of their tax payments to the timetable for the Bondi bus. Government provides assistance in multi-faceted forms such as subsidies or advice or how to navigate eligibility for services. Government contact is often obligatory in nature, from tax returns, to payment of fines, to proof of compliance to validate income assistance payments. Obligatory engagements with government may be distinguished from “service” in common parlance, but they involve an accepted component of the citizen relationship and contain a strong service element, through the provision of relevant information and facilitation in fulfilling one’s obligation.

In the traditional form of bureaucratic organisation, service delivery has been the end component of a production chain that gives effect to a policy. Policies are statements of government purpose and intent; they are translated into programs of action where commonly a relationship with citizens is formulated and designed; and finally, a set of processes and physical actions put on the ground, which connect the citizens with the program deliverables. The service delivery, or more realistically “program” delivery, activities would be purpose-built to give effect to the program and would be delivered by the department responsible for the policy. This form of vertically integrated structure became a source of criticism of government process because it was siloed and was usually characterised by rigid walls between programs within a department and, even more so, between departments. Of course, there were always exceptions, but the model was widespread and taken as a starting assumption when policies and programs were being designed and approved.

Against the criticism, there were clear advantages. The line of accountability for all parts of the production chain was clear and delivery was linked directly, through that chain, to the purpose of the policy. Importantly, policy formulation and program delivery could more readily be integrated through a common management and performance framework. In practice, however, performance measures
rarely incorporated service delivery criteria, but focused on the performance indicators for the policy intent. Service delivery was assessed against how the policy or program, in isolation, was performing in terms of its stated purpose.

The establishment of Centrelink in 1997 challenged the traditional model by giving service delivery a separate focus through the management perspective of a specialist agency. The original model situated Centrelink in the portfolio of the minister with responsibility for the policies and programs that dominated Centrelink’s business. Moreover, Centrelink was connected to the departments, whose policies it was tasked to deliver, via principal-agent relationships expressed through prescriptive service delivery agreements and associated funding. Centrelink’s sheer size and public/political standing gave it momentum to drive an agenda of reform in the form of engagement with its “customers”\(^{10}\), but it remained heavily under the influence of the policy department “clients”, and while a service delivery perspective developed distinctly from the policy perspective, it was a source of tension more than one of creative collaboration. The later establishment of a portfolio of Human Services, in which Centrelink and other service delivery agencies within the broad coverage of “human services” were situated, and, more recently, a move to direct funding, as opposed to funding through policy departments, have given further momentum towards an autonomous service delivery function in the Commonwealth government, but it has also added to tensions as policy departments have found their influence diminished and the balance between policy and service delivery upset. Despite the clear intention of the Centrelink management over the years, and the progress that was achieved, Centrelink has never been able to become a truly citizen-centric service deliverer because it has operated in an environment shaped by the dominant authority of policies and programs. The citizen is the target of a program and success is measured in terms of program success. The same can be said of other service delivery agencies and activities.

The emerging environment requires that service delivery stands in partnership with policy and has its own imperative. This requires a new paradigm characterised by adopting the perspective of the citizen and how the citizen can optimise her engagement with government, whatever its nature. Two dimensions of a good citizen-centric engagement are access and effectiveness. The two dimensions are interrelated because, as well as convenience and minimisation of barriers, access implies a dynamic process of gaining information on related services, then being able to determine an optimal combination of services and to transact with relevant services.

**Linking policies and programs** is a critical driver of citizen-centric service delivery. Programs rarely operate in isolation. As a generality, programs\(^ {11}\) are designed in order to achieve a particular outcome for a category of citizens. If program designers took the individual’s perspective, they would recognise the circumstances of the individual that give rise to a need for the targeted assistance and so would be able to see how the program would be most effective if other programs were being effectively utilised. An example may be a program to assist farmers, in temporary financial distress, with income support. If the farmer is using tax averaging provisions and/or agricultural extension services to help him to cope with drought conditions (probably a State service), his cash-flow circumstances could be improved and his need for income support reduced – or even if not, his total circumstance would be taken into account: is he receiving counselling for depression etc.

Programs generally relate to “generic citizens” – people experiencing common lifestyle or life-event circumstances to which multiple programs of government can apply. Some obvious examples of groups defined through life-events are families with pre-school children, aged people and retirees, students, people travelling overseas. Diverse programs that affect a group of people are intrinsically linked but usually implicitly only. Citizen-centric service delivery should make the linkages explicit. For example, the government child-care subsidy program was designed to support women with young children in rejoining or retaining their position in the workforce and, in the traditional service delivery model, that is likely to be the end of the interest of the program deliverers. But a woman applying for child-care

\(^{10}\) The terms “customer” and “client” were adopted by Centrelink with the meanings depicted in this sentence as a deliberate strategy to acculturate the organisation and the public to the service delivery approach. In reality, the nature of the relationships should see those terms used in the reverse mode – policy departments as “customers” as they purchased Centrelink’s services and service users as “clients”.

\(^{11}\) We are talking here about programs that affect individuals directly as opposed to general services such as defence.
assistance for an infant is likely to have a need or an interest in a wide range of services, such as registering the birth, natal and neo-natal care, baby bonus, special assistance in case of twins, inoculations, self-help groups for special needs, tax implications of child numbers and/or subsidies received, family assistance benefits plus extra for single-income families, single parent benefit (if applicable), infant care clinics etc. She will also want to acquire information that may fall outside the government purview, e.g. the locations, costs, waiting times and quality of child-care services or clinics. She will also want to update her information for those program administrations with which she is already involved (i.e. inform other programs that she has another child, where relevant).

From the government’s viewpoint, each program has a purpose (against which the program is evaluated), rules of eligibility and modes of delivery. Governments have numerous and diverse purposes for these programs such as increasing the birth rate, preventative health, family support, increasing female workforce participation, increasing skilled migration etc. That other programs may be relevant to the citizen’s circumstances is incidental – at best, current service delivery models may direct the citizen to a relevant information source. A citizen-centric service delivery mode, whether automated or through an assisting official, needs to help the citizen to navigate the services offered, to make an optimal set of choices and to engage those services.

But it means more than that. The navigation is made more difficult, and the likely outcome for the citizen is diminished, by the way programs are developed and implemented in isolation from related programs, especially if those programs belong to different portfolios or different governments. The citizen-centric service delivery paradigm requires that the service function be insensitive to administrative and programmatic structures. This is the essence of joined-up government. When a policy objective is identified (e.g. increasing workforce participation amongst women with small children – an objective that is motivated by economic more than social objectives), the policy needs to be formulated in the knowledge of the circumstances likely to be experienced by the target population and of the variety of extant programs that impinge on those circumstances. The policy then needs to be shaped so as to maximise the multiple goals of government, some of which are potentially in conflict, and to give rise to programs that point explicitly to linked programs. Policy and program administrators in diverse parts of government would have to collaborate in terms of shared information and adapting their programs to form a coherent whole. Citizen-centric service delivery then becomes a more natural process of government than an artificial bolt-on with all its intrinsic tensions and inefficiencies.

What is being described here is not a response to a discrete incident or government-wide issue that might be addressed by forming a purposive cross-government task force (e.g. a response to a crisis), but a fundamental change of culture and process wherein success is measured in terms of outcomes for citizens and not for individual programs or agencies. Further discussion of the governance implications of this model occurs in next chapter.

The citizen-centric service delivery model raises a philosophical question about the role of government in support of citizens. Does an integrated service-offer approach induce more servicing, where the degree of servicing may be measured as the dollar amount spent on the recipient? This may or may not be the case, but even where it is, the increased servicing may be in the direct interest of government. It may involve extra cost in the shorter term to reduce later costs so that a whole-of-life cost is reduced; it may result in better servicing where the intended outcomes are achieved better; it may result in benefits external to the recipient’s interests.

But it may also simply make the recipient’s life more pleasant. Is it the responsibility of government to maximise a recipient’s use of available assistance? Or should the government merely make programs available and accessible, in pursuit of their intended purpose, and let individuals satisfy their own perceived needs? The question is more tractable by turning it around. Usage of government programs should not be limited by the barriers of ignorance, inconvenience or complexity. The citizen should be led to optimal use of available programs and if that is perceived to lead to excessive servicing, in the sense that it exceeds what is required to meet the government’s multiple objectives, then the problem should be solved through tighter targeting. There is an equity argument invoked here as well as issues of efficiency and effectiveness. Where citizens are left to navigate the barriers mentioned above, the
best resourced (financially, intellectually and socially) will be able to exploit the system more fully than
the less well resourced. Targeting may thereby be misdirected to the less needy.

Government has an interest and an obligation in equity in ensuring that citizens are able to access all
relevant programs. The service delivery platform needs to enable that result.

4.2 Citizen or government responsibility?

The existing system for the delivery of government services places the responsibility for engaging
government and fulfilling the sometimes onerous obligations on the citizen. For various reasons,
citizens’ expectations are changing and there is an increasing onus on government to provide more
effective and efficient services and to make them more readily available. As these changes occur, it is
important that an appropriate balance is maintained in terms of responsibilities and obligations
between citizens and government.

Some countries place value on service charters that specify standards to which the government
commits\(^\text{12}\). The purpose, besides political advantage, is to ensure that minimum standards in service
delivery are met, and in some cases enforced by a commitment to compensation. Such charters apply
generally to what, in Australia, are State or municipal services such as public transport. The result has
been, in some cases, the payment of significant compensation to citizens when standards were not met.
Australian agencies are obliged, as a matter of policy, to have service charters, but they do not have real
teeth other than embarrassing exposure such as a criticism by the Ombudsman. A move towards more
legally enforceable charters is not recommended as a way of ensuring standards. Judicial enforcement
of citizens’ rights as a path to good service delivery is considered to involve too great a shift of
obligation and responsibility and could see standards relaxed to minimise the risk of compensation.

Another move that can effect significant changes in relative responsibilities is the operation
of automatically triggered services. That would happen where a citizen’s circumstances trigger a service or
payment without the citizen’s having to authorise or to seek that service. An example might be the
automatic payment of a baby bonus on the occasion of the birth of a child. This Report does not favour
that process even though it represents an enhancement to convenience for citizens. The reason is that
the citizen has a diminished sense of responsibility and a heightened expectation of government taking
care of the citizen’s rights.

In this context, it is important to point out that “automation” referred to throughout the Report refers
to zero-touch processing, not to automatic triggering of services.

Pre-population of forms (e.g. tax returns) is another trend in electronic service delivery. While that is a
desirable development and used in some other countries, it also raises the risk of diminished
responsibilities in checking information. Provision of information by government can be seen as
authoritative and so reduce the citizen’s care in providing correct information. This is potentially a
serious development and, as pre-population rolls out, the effect on the accuracy of information needs
to be formally tested.

4.3 The Citizen Experience in a Citizen-Centric Service Delivery World

This Section describes what would likely be the elements of the service delivery experience of a citizen
in the paradigm described above. It does so in terms of current or emerging technology; but new
technological opportunities will change the possibilities in the coming years and enhance the prospects
foreshadowed here.

\(^{12}\) For example Finland has created a right to child care, and Sweden a right to access health care in a timely manner.
Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (UK), and HM Treasury, Power in People’s Hands: Learning from the World’s Best Public
It needs also to be emphasised that the body of citizens who engage government are characterised by a full spectrum of capabilities in pursuing their own interests. The majority of citizens, and the majority of engagements that all citizens wish to make, or have to make, with government, can be catered for through on-line channels and, in many cases, to the conclusion of the transaction. But many citizens require some intervention because of their own skills or because of the complexity of their needs, from low-level intervention to personalised assistance and case management. The service delivery system needs to cater for all these circumstances without disadvantaging those who cannot easily use the most cost-effective on-line channel. The system will always need to maintain multiple access channels – on-line, phone, personal engagement, third-party interfacing – and the choice of channel should be neutral with respect to the information and services available.

The on-line system sits at the core of the service delivery framework because it adds significant value to the user in terms of access and effectiveness, and it permits low-cost transactions in the majority of interactions permitting resources to be redeployed to the high-intervention, high-cost cases.

A description of the desirable citizen experience was presented in Chapter 3. The key elements of service that the citizen requires are summarised here and their implications drawn out.

- Ability to create secure personalised page encompassing a range of interests in and associations with government
- Comprehensive information of relevance to his circumstances
- Ability to navigate to the services of greatest value to meet his needs
- Opportunity to engage the chosen programs by making an application and fulfilling obligations
- Avoidance of repeating basic personal information
- Capacity to engage in two-way feedback including on-line assistance to finalise transactions, receiving confirming information and explanations for decisions, querying outcomes, providing comment.

Personalising an entry page into the range of government sites permits a person to do two things: (i) to describe his personal circumstances at a high level allowing the system to extract relevant information; and (ii) to enter program accounts in his name across all agencies with which he has business. Both functions need the person to identify himself, but there is an important difference. The former function does not involve transacting any business, so that the requirement is merely to store one’s characteristics for easy subsequent retrieval. That can be done with anonymous and unverified identification.

To transact business in a program account (which includes applying for or initiating a payment to the person, making a payment to government, extracting records, fulfilling information obligations, accessing personalised messages etc), requires authentication that the person is who he claims to be. This is a critical protection to both the citizen and the government, and the greater the risk to either party, or the greater the value of the transaction, the greater degree of certainty required in authentication. The key elements of a system that permits a citizen to have authenticated access to government are: proof of identity at an accredited site, registration of the citizen’s proven identity, allocation of a pseudonymous identifier and linkage of the pseudonym to each relevant program account. A description of methods for identity registration and authentication is presented in Appendix G.

Government programs generally have capacity to permit a citizen with an account to access the program in a secure manner (e.g. e-Tax) and so business can be transacted without a general registration. However, the benefits of registering are significant:

- The citizen needs to prove his identity only once and that authorised identity is available to all agencies through the single pseudonym
- Changes to personal details such as name, address, marriage status etc can be shared so that all relevant program records are updated together and immediate consistency of information ensured. This capacity is more than a convenience because a citizen is obliged to provide correct information for all programs with which he has active business, and
program managers, under the Privacy Principles, are similarly obliged to maintain accurate information. So, there is a presumption for immediate updating of such information.

- Registration permits a personalised page which gives greater control to the citizen of his personal business with government
- Government saves significant administrative overhead through not having to duplicate proof of identity activities or recording and updating of personal information for each program. Error rates in recording information and consequential reworking are avoided.

Accessing comprehensive information of relevance to the citizen’s circumstances offers great value to the citizen, but also raises significant challenges. Being able to navigate program offerings in order to discover what programs are available to meet a citizen’s situation is arguably the aspect of engagement with government that adds the greatest value. It is critical to his ability to achieve an effective result through self service.

For most citizens, to do this without the involvement of a trained service officer, currently requires a good understanding of the structures of government, the time to explore the disparate areas of government that operate the services, and the research to evaluate relationships between the programs so as to focus on what composite benefit the citizen can extract. Friendly interfaces like Australia.gov or Service Canada have made the process easier by performing the high level mapping and permitting the citizen to enter the most fruitful area by way of life-event navigation, but it is only one step.

The challenges are considerable. Firstly, the coverage needs to transcend jurisdictional boundaries. This is because much of the value of citizen-government engagement, particularly in human services, comes from State and local services, and because many Commonwealth Government programs interface, intrinsically if not explicitly, with State-based programs. Another challenge arises because program descriptions rarely indicate the linkages to other programs, nor are they designed to be cognate with related programs. There is a need for policy and program design to take account of related programs and to strive for smooth connectivity or articulation, and for those links to be stipulated in descriptive material. Thirdly, an intelligent search interface, through emerging technologies such as the so-called “Semantic Web”, is required to interpret the citizen’s circumstances vis-a-vis available government programs and to construct a service offer for the citizen’s consideration. These developments are full of promise but still some way off.

Having obtained information and program offerings able to meet the citizen’s needs, he is likely to want to give effect to his decisions about the programs as conveniently as possible. For many programs and for most citizens, this can be done on-line with little or no intervention of a program administrator (i.e. “low-touch” or “no-touch”). To do so involves identity authentication and an automatic smart-forms interface. Such an interface, readily available at the time of writing this Report, offers a partially pre-populated form to the applicant and permits him to add relevant information in a dynamic and responsive mode, to submit the application – the ID authentication, possibly augmented with secondary confirmation, substitutes for a signature and personal submission – and to receive confirmation of eligibility, payment rates etc, by automatic determination. The personalised space or government page allows communication of confirmation of receipt, decisions, notifications, payment details etc to be made available on-line. No paper correspondence or administrator involvement is needed for many such transactions. It is possible to escalate administrator involvement via on-line communication, e.g. by requesting further information, indicating a processing deferment, or possibly arranging a time for an interview which could be on-line via audio-visual communication on a broadband channel.

The high degree of automation makes it essential that a citizen applying remotely can engage in feedback concerning decisions made and processes involved. A decision needs to be explained, not simply communicated, so that the user can understand what characteristics gave rise to the outcome and to challenge the result if appropriate, possibly triggering a review process. The citizen should also be able to provide feedback about her experience as input into an ongoing review of procedures and communication. On-line communication is a rich source of citizen participation in the design of policies and delivery processes through tools available in the Web 2.0 modes.
CHAPTER 5:
GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE

5.1 Implications for the structure of government and the role of agencies

To make the processes of government citizen-centric and to give service delivery the standing expected by government and citizens, there are implications for the structure of government, for governance arrangements and for the roles of agencies responsible for policies, programs and their delivery.

The association of policy formulation and delivery of the programs that give effect to those policies has been a topic of debate and development for the past three decades or so. The debate, sometimes accompanied by changes in practice, has been between the desirability of keeping policy and delivery joined in a single agency on the one hand, and separating and specialising service delivery on the other. The linking theme has been the need to have a close interfacing between policy and delivery because policy needs to be able to be delivered in a practical and effective manner, and equally delivery needs to be designed with the policy intent foremost in mind. Both elements should be influenced by the experience and focus of the other and engage in continuous dialogue and adjustment to maximise synergy – a badly formulated program may not be able to be effectively delivered, and poor delivery may undermine the policy's objectives.

At first consideration, it would seem that the way to ensure close interfacing of policy and delivery is to situate both within the one agency. However, that has not been validated by experience for a number of reasons.

- The principal political focus within integrated departments of state is with policy.
- Delivery mechanisms and processes find themselves at the end of a production chain competing with activities of greater political interest for financial and intellectual resources (e.g. the best people being steered towards policy).
- Service delivery processes in the integrated model tend to be program-specific and not designed to cater for diverse programs, thereby splintering resources, office networks and the citizen experience.

Generic characteristics of service delivery, common across all or most programs, have come to the political fore and this has led to the establishment of specialist service delivery agencies distinct from policy agencies. In Australia, the model, as characterised by the creation of Centrelink, has developed in stages: first a separate statutory agency reaching across portfolios but under the dominance of the principal policy department; then the dominance was split up as policy responsibility was spread; and, at the same time, the service delivery agencies were situated in a specialised portfolio where the
CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

minister assumed responsibility for the goals of service delivery in the Human Services area of government and not for the various programs using the services of the agencies.

Under the present government, the Minister for Human Services has responsibility for service delivery across government, while the Minister for Finance and Deregulation has responsibility for “government on-line delivery”\(^\text{13}\).

As a consequence, the counterpart challenge has arisen: how to ensure that distinct agencies under one minister establish the communication and process of mutual refinement necessary for effective delivery of policies which fall under the responsibility of other ministers. This challenge has implications for the governance arrangements for service delivery. Before suggesting governance arrangements, a further significant and pertinent issue needs to be raised.

On the citizen’s side of the citizen-government notional screen, citizen-focused service delivery requires the view to be insensitive to jurisdictional, administrative and program boundaries. On the other side of the screen, the requirement is for the government process to be “joined-up”. This commonly connotes a modus operandi wherein agencies with overlapping or cognate responsibilities consult, with a view to coordinating their separate responsibilities and activities. This behaviour is seen to be inculcated through training and acculturation. But citizen-centricty requires a more penetrating form of joined-up administration. The administrative silo perspective needs to become a government-wide perspective (or even a government-third party-wide perspective), and program effectiveness needs to be broadened to embrace a notion of citizen-outcome effectiveness. The programs of government, coupled with programs of other governments and community organisations, need to be designed and delivered conjointly, and so as to achieve optimal results for the citizens they are intended to target.

These requirements depend on more than a consultative attitude. They require joined-up authority and accountability to drive business processes that, under normal circumstances, come under agency-specific responsibility and control. Governance in public sector resource management can be characterised as encompassing authority, responsibility, control and accountability. This framework is used in the Report.

5.2 Governance implications of a split model

The “split” model is based on a separation between policy and program delivery within distinct entities – i.e. not as separate units within a single administrative entity. The distinct agencies may be within a single ministerial portfolio (e.g. tax administration) or in different portfolios (e.g. welfare programs delivered by Centrelink).

Four components of policy administration can be identified, each potentially with its own governance arrangements:

1. Formulating and authorising a policy designed to achieve a government objective.
2. Devising a program and rules of application to give effect to the policy.
3. Putting in place operational systems and processes to implement the program.
4. Authorising, pursuing and monitoring policies designed to achieve cross-government service delivery objectives.

The location of the various components characterises the model options.

Policy: Ministerial portfolios are generally specified around a strategic area of policy and it is core business for the department of state within the portfolio to carry out the policy role. In many instances, that may be done in collaboration with other portfolios, where there are desirable or necessary linkages to other policies, or with external interests or research organisations. But the department and minister are expected to take responsibility for the policy function.

Programs and the rules that apply to their implementation are devised to give practical expression to a policy and so can be seen as being a cognate element to the design of policy. As such, the policy department should be the major player in program design. But program design needs also to be actively informed about practical aspects of program implementation – client behaviours, system capabilities, training and skill requirements, fraud and non-compliance risks, establishment and implementation costs and many other factors. Except for the most straightforward and simple programs, this is an argument that program design requires close collaboration and agreement between policy owners and implementers, and may require trade-offs between policy and implementation objectives. For example, cost and fraud-prevention may require adjustments to program rules about client targeting that, in their own right, may reduce program effectiveness.

Implementation: The siting of program implementation is the most arguable of the elements identified. Factors that influence the decision are: legacy arrangements; technical specialisation; generic components; economies of scale in staffing, training and common processing; accountability and control; political sensitivity. Generic components and common processing weigh the argument in favour of a separate and specialised service delivery agency; but technical specialisation argues for the specialist components being sited in close association with the policy agency. Generic components may be opportunistic (e.g. exploiting the advantages of a common payments platform or call centre) or obligatory (e.g. a cross-government common portal). Both modes can be simultaneously accommodated by segmenting the implementation chain and placing distinct elements in their most appropriate site. This is no different, in principle, to contracting out defined components of an activity such as debt recovery.

Service delivery: It is a premise of this Report, consistent with its terms of reference, that service delivery across government should adopt characteristics that ensure a citizen-focused approach, adaptation to and exploitation of developments in ICT, and an efficient delivery platform. These requirements constitute the elements of a service delivery policy which needs to be devised, authorised, pursued and monitored. To give focus and authority, there is a strong case for a designated service delivery minister with a cross-government purview. A service delivery minister might be a minister of a coordinating portfolio, overseeing a “central” agency, or a minister in a specialised service delivery portfolio distinct from subject-matter policy agencies. The creation of the Human Services portfolio in 2004 moved in the latter direction but did not adopt the full role of a “service delivery minister”. That portfolio also took on responsibility for (then) six service delivery agencies, but the siting of service delivery agencies is distinct from the service delivery policy role. Even with a service delivery portfolio, the location of service delivery agencies can and should be given separate consideration. There can be arguments for parts or all of service delivery being situated in a policy agency, but service delivery policy would need to be complied with and monitored by a service delivery minister.

There is equally no basis for presuming that a discrete program should be implemented within the initiating policy agency. Service delivery skills, networks and facilities should be recognised as a specialised asset of government and exploited where applicable. An example is the recently implemented program of home insulation subsidies where policy input was provided by the department responsible for the environment but program design and implementation made use of Centrelink’s and Medicare Australia’s skills and facilities.

It is important to recognise that not all service delivery is connected to specific policies or programs. An important and valuable product of the service delivery capacity developed in Centrelink has been that agency’s agility in responding to unpredictable situations such as natural disasters. There is an analogy with the standing capability of the defence force, and it comes from scale, expertise and diversity of skills. This provides a strong argument for the continued support for a specialist service delivery agency with the skills and capacity to respond to crisis situations.

Accountability for performance: The administrative separation of policy and implementation responsibilities can facilitate the achievement of common service delivery objectives, but it can lead to uncertainties and ambiguities in accountability for performance. There is a common perception, and often a reality, that most measures carried out during program implementation can affect the efficacy
of programs for which policy or program managers are accountable. In practice, the separation model requires that responsibility and accountability in the realm of policy and the realm of implementation are demarcated. For example, an increase in the expenditure forecast for a program may be the result of demographic and economic factors (extraneous factors), program design (policy/program manager’s accountability) and/or implementation design and practice (implementation manager’s accountability). Firm and unambiguous program rules imposed on implementers can sharpen the demarcation lines. In many instances, including the income support programs implemented by Centrelink, decision-makers in Centrelink hold authority delegated from the Secretary of the relevant policy department. The Secretary can employ that authority to constrain the scope of discretion of the decision-maker. Most programs, however, are complex and their client populations heterogeneous, and a degree of discretion is common and desirable in interpreting rules. This blurs lines of demarcation and accountability. In reality, a trade-off emerges between rigorous adherence to program rules and sensitivity to client circumstances leading to joint accountability for outcomes.

The process of implementation can influence the integrity of a program – the degree to which the program, in practice, is operating as intended. Are the decisions made in real and often complex cases accurate in terms of the right payment to the right person? Are rules applied to claimants for a benefit meeting the policy requirements? To the extent that discretion is being applied by the service deliverer, the program owner and service deliverer need to define and to agree on the appropriate success factors and the limits to operational discretion. It may seem appropriate that the program owner should define those aspects, but considerations of practicality and service delivery policy objectives may need to be accommodated and the success factors and limits to discretion negotiated.

Collection of data pertinent to the program’s success factors, and the monitoring of program responses, are important tools that can allow appropriate adjustments to program design or implementation to be adopted. Close collaboration between program managers and implementation managers in design and monitoring of the program is essential.

As service delivery adopts a status as a strategic policy dimension of government operations affecting individual citizens, it will be driven by performance criteria specific to service delivery, which will need to be met simultaneously with program-specific criteria. Inevitably, there will be situations where the sets of criteria will conflict. For example, program managers may require face-to-face interviews or extra correspondence with certain clients to improve program integrity and client outcomes, but that practice is likely to be more costly and less convenient for the citizen and so discouraged by service delivery policy.

Program and implementation managers will need to resolve conflicts on the basis, like most issues, of relative costs and benefits. So, for a high-value and sensitive program, program considerations may apply but for more routine, low-risk programs, a trade-off may give emphasis to service delivery considerations. In a model where there are different ministers responsible for service delivery and policy, conflicts may need to be resolved between ministers.

The following table presents an illustrative typology of performance measures and a notional assignment of accountabilities between agencies responsible for the policy and program on the one hand, and agencies responsible for implementation and service delivery on the other. It is notable that accountability for most performance measures is shared and the table suggests the degree of sharing and the drivers of each party’s accountability.
TABLE 1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES IN SPLIT SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</th>
<th>POLICY AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY</th>
<th>DELIVERY AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy/program effectiveness</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>In terms of defining and ensuring the purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None (distinguish from integrity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Input into design of program can influence effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program integrity</td>
<td>Part.</td>
<td>Rule setting. Policy may limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major. Exercise of rules. Monitoring and control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of delivery</td>
<td>Shared.</td>
<td>Element intrinsic to program design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared. Element intrinsic to delivery administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen effectiveness (holistic outcome)</td>
<td>Part.</td>
<td>Program design includes linkages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major. Effectiveness of individualised service. Advice and brokering. Program choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of engagement</td>
<td>Minor.</td>
<td>Quality of program information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major. Relevance and completeness of information. Capacity for staged engagement (e.g. application). Support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Total. Efficient business processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this typology, the first two categories (effectiveness and integrity) relate to program effectiveness, in the sense that they are achieved if the program is doing what was intended and achieving the intended results. The other six categories are mainly about service delivery accountability. But the table also shows how program design affects service delivery and implementation processes can affect program integrity. Both agencies share accountability for program outcomes and service delivery outcomes.

Sound governance requires that all aspects of performance and accountability are properly accommodated. In cases where service delivery is separated from policy, there is a risk that aspects of accountability can be neglected. Appropriations can be an indicator of where accountability lies as FMA Act obligations fall on managers. In many instances, program expenditures are appropriated to the policy agency while the cost of implementation is appropriated to the service delivery agency. In such circumstances, it is common to see the KPIs of the policy agency address program effectiveness and delivery criteria – the latter potentially overlapping with KPIs of the service delivery agency and requiring joint accountabilities.

Some examples from current budget documentation are presented in Appendix H. They show a range of models and quality of performance measures. It is difficult to find an example where policy and service delivery indicators are both represented and shared appropriately between the relevant agencies. Following the recent decision to fund Centrelink directly, Centrelink, DHS and FAHCSIA have entered a Bilateral Management Agreement to formalise respective roles and to focus, inter alia, on performance responsibilities. At this stage, however, there are no clear measures of service delivery outcomes specified in the arrangements.

There are cases, for example with tax expenditures, where a policy objective is implemented through the tax system and there is no appropriation to the responsible policy agency. The ATO appropriately monitors delivery, but without the formalised obligations of the FMA Act, accountability for the effectiveness of the program can be neglected. There are examples of tax expenditure programs with no public statements of policy performance.
The order of the categories of performance listed in Table 1 above is deliberate. Program effectiveness is paramount – it justifies the existence of the program. All other categories are important but secondary to program effectiveness. For programs not to have any agency publicly accountable for program effectiveness represents a risk of split arrangements for policy and service delivery which needs to be explicitly avoided. Governance processes should start with clear statements of purpose and accountability arrangements, instead of their being considered as an afterthought.

5.3 A proposed governance model

The following sets out a possible governance arrangement, based on the existing administrative structures, to give effect to the requirement for joined-up authority, program design and accountability. The portfolios in the Commonwealth Government framework can be classified as

- Strategic: these are essentially the so-called central agencies, concerned with integrating policies and oversight of policy and resource strategies (PM&C, Treasury, Finance & Deregulation, APSC)
- Policy: including DEEWR, DIAC, DHA etc
- Service delivery: DHS.

The proposed governance arrangement envisages a matrix wherein vertically arranged policy portfolios are linked horizontally by strategic portfolios at one level and, where relevant, by the service delivery portfolio (not all portfolios have a service delivery requirement in the sense addressed in this Report).

Effective joining up will depend on the strategic agencies which will need to play a coordinating role, from the point of policy formulation, to program design, to resourcing, to performance monitoring. Some existing practices and structures would need to be changed to achieve properly integrated policies and programs. Some elements of an integrated system might be:

- Objectives that encompass related or cognate programs
- Policy prescriptions that are developed between agencies owning cognate responsibilities and which may involve policy elements from more than one of the agencies – even if the policy initiative emanates from a single portfolio (an example might be that a new policy affecting residential aged care fees involves proposed adjustments to related tax provisions and income support conditions)
- As the policy crystallises into one or more programs, the relevant service delivery agencies are fully involved in design and costing and an optimal solution is developed taking fully into account policy objectives, implementation considerations and service delivery policy (such as information requirements, complexity, convenience of access etc) – program and funding approval being contingent on a satisfactory joint design being negotiated and agreed
- Performance indicators incorporate a composite outcome for the citizens (from the above example, the KPIs should be about the effect on the aged person’s health, financial and general well-being as affected by the collective government programs)
- Accountability for the outcomes should be held jointly by the policy and delivery agencies.

This notional model assumes that there is a service delivery portfolio and service delivery agencies, but the agencies will not all be located within the service delivery portfolio. Some service delivery, or elements thereof, may best be located close to, or within, the relevant policy departments. The notion behind this arrangement is that service delivery is considered as a distinct activity of government with its own objectives and success criteria, and is represented by a prominent voice in Cabinet. The purview of the service delivery minister would reach across service delivery activities that take place in other portfolios as far as those activities should be required to meet the government’s service delivery objectives. The objectives include systemic efficiency and so would impose an obligation on all service delivery entities to utilise government-wide platforms and infrastructure to the maximum reasonable
extent. Service delivery activity may still take place in specialised, or policy-related, agencies where the activity can be demonstrated to involve program-specific administration of a distinct character to other program activities.
CHAPTER 6:
SERVICE DELIVERY TECHNOLOGY

6.1 Technological developments

The rapid development and extended reach of technology and its reformative potential for citizen and government behaviour form a key driver of the service delivery reforms being discussed in this Report. At the heart of these developments is the ubiquity and functionality of on-line connectivity for the purposes of communication and transaction.

Three drivers come together that lead to the conclusions from this chapter:

1. The technological momentum is rapid, inexorable and pointed in a common direction. The Internet is becoming the common form of communication, with phone connections, television and other forms of commonplace communication being progressively distributed through the Web. This is not only technical. It also means that everyday communications are becoming integrated, so that, in the foreseeable future, one can envisage the family TV being a multi-channel communication facility. Miniaturisation is placing these technologies in the pocket and Wi-Fi has made it highly mobile (e.g. Blackberry, I-phones and laptop computers).

Web-based communications are also becoming interactive (Web 2.0) and enabling a high level of two-way communication including between citizen and government. To build on this, information-interpretive software (e.g. XML) is adding a layer of dynamic comprehension to the interaction. Voice interpretation is making the Web experience friendly and “de-tched”, in that a person is able to make a phone call but is, in reality, transacting on the Web. Broadband Internet channels enable routine audio-visual communication. With broadband developing nation-wide, AV facility is already being built into computers and TVs, so that face-to-face communications will routinely be conducted from home, or even, via a hand-held device, in the bus. These technologies are here and now. The landscape in five to ten years will inevitably accelerate these trends and introduce more innovative forms of high-level communication.

2. A large majority of citizen transactions can readily be carried out on line with appropriate investments and adjustments. The march of technology and the capacity to perform transactions on-line is exposing the archaic logic underlying established practices which require personal presence, signed forms, and face-to-face transactions. There does not appear to be sound intrinsic reason for such practices except in certain special circumstances or for clients

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14 The common wireless broadband protocol permits broadband connectivity wherever mobile phone networks operate.
15 An unofficial comment from a service delivery practitioner in the Commonwealth Government estimated that 75 per cent of transactions could be automated.
with certain characteristics. A change of philosophy should be adopted which makes on-line transacting the norm through a risk-managed approach, and which caters for exceptions through off-line channels. This lies in contrast to an approach which regards personal transactions as the norm and offers partial on-line interaction as an optional convenience.

3. The advantages to citizens and government from exploiting the on-line opportunities are significant. For the government, the benefits derive from the large resource savings when transactions move on-line and away from phone calls (ten times the cost of on-line) and face-to-face contact (twenty times\textsuperscript{16}). The savings in staff costs permit overall cost reduction to the government and the capacity to redeploy resources to activities which add high value.

For the citizen, the immediate value gain comes from the saving in time and effort from being able to acquire, process and act on information tailored to their needs, and to do so with little or no delay, whenever and wherever is convenient to them. The benefits are already experienced by the large number of people who use on-line banking and electronic invoicing to manage their financial affairs.

For most citizens, an improved service outcome is likely because of better access to appropriate information. For those citizens who cannot reasonably use on-line facilities, or those requiring complex servicing, greater resources are able to be made available to service these cases through the redeployment mentioned above.

Even with the strong attraction of advancing technology, the advantages may not occur at all, or not to the extent that they could, without action being taken by government. The areas for change involve business process reform and a user-friendly interface.

6.2 Business process reform

Business process reform is fundamental because it enables the citizen to take a degree of control through “self-service”; it thereby opens the option of using automating technology; it frees up significant staff resources who presently perform routine processing adding little value; it refocuses administrative effort onto the citizen’s use of programs and away from program rules; it permits the government’s interest to be protected through risk-based selective intervention; it builds two-way trust between citizen and government. Importantly, without reworking business processes, technologically enhanced interfacing is a sterile investment. Gains can be made from business-process reform without the interface, but not vice versa.

Business process reform has application across most areas of government service delivery with common principles across diverse programs. The approach has a long and successful history in the ATO and is emerging in planned reforms elsewhere in government, including in Centrelink and visa processing in DIAC. The principles are not developed here, because they need the expertise of the skilled administrators in each field. But, at a high level, the approach involves decomposing the service delivery process into its components, mapping the relations and dependencies, and assessing the value added and risk exposed in each step. Administrative effort and associated resources are allocated depending on the assessed criticality of each step. The effort can be expressed in a triage framework as “heavy touch” involving significant intervention, “light touch” which can involve a high degree of automation with low-level intervention in the processing chain, and “zero touch” which involves full automation.

This is not a purely technical process. It involves a shift of some risk from the citizen to the government and a shift of trust from the government to the citizen. A change to a risk-based approach would require government endorsement but is not new and would appear to offer much greater benefit (including, fundamentally, enabling a citizen-centric approach to service delivery) than cost – although this balance needs to be carefully and dynamically assessed by testing the risk factors on the basis of

\textsuperscript{16} These multipliers are rounded and approximate but close to the actual cost ratios measured within the CanberraConnect facility.
emerging experience. The risks are likely to change over time as both government and citizens learn to use the system – both constructively and destructively – and adjustments may be needed by applying a lighter or heavier hand in relevant areas.

Business process reform is not a cheap activity. Besides the assessment and mapping of new processes and business flow, supporting software and hardware need to be developed and deployed and staff retrained. But the views of those agencies that have embarked on the reform path, or who are planning to (ATO, Centrelink and DIAC), see returns significantly in excess of the costs.

6.3 The front-end or citizen on-line interface

We have discussed the attraction of emerging technology. The other area of government activity required to exploit the technological developments is to open opportunities for on-line use and making that use attractive and simple. The attractiveness and ease of use were discussed in an earlier chapter about the citizen experience on line. Simplicity of use is important to overcome barriers to use through reluctance and unease about remote engagement and thereby to extend the reach of the facility and increase benefits to both government and citizens. Simplicity of use may be, in part, friendly design but also through exploiting technology such as voice recognition and interpretation to initiate action to a query, as currently used in some banks and rapidly improving in functionality and accuracy.

The government needs to invest in front-end architecture. These reforms offer significant value to the citizen, through convenience, flexibility, information quality, automation and ease of process and control over personal matters, and to the government through reduced transaction costs and more reliable and accurate transactions. Various forms of interface software need to be installed between the citizen and the government’s program infrastructure to replace the static and one-dimensional web-based information trees that characterise most current entry points. The elements of the interface have been discussed earlier in the Report but are elaborated here in the context of the technological solution. Appendix I provides a full discussion of technical options.

- A common government entry point or portal. A key objective of a common entry point is to insulate the citizen’s view of government from jurisdictional, administrative and programmatic boundaries. Of course, this is difficult to do completely as ultimately a particular agency will administer the program that the citizen signs up to. But the citizen should not have to navigate government structures to find relevant availability and eligibility information, or optimal program choices and the resulting transaction process should have a common feel: Use of the common portal should be mandated for all agencies responsible for policy or delivery of individual services.

Administrative arrangements and program structures change frequently, and MOG-sensitive Web-page entry points are reconstructed. While separate Web-pages continue to exist (and they probably always will) they should desirably be detached from MOG arrangements and structured with associated agencies on a thematic basis, such as life events. So, for example, what is currently the Web page for DHA may simply become an administrative resource with links to an “Aging and retiring” Web page and a “Health” Web page, both of which would be joint with relevant other agencies, the States and community resources.

A common entry point will need to be managed by a cross-program agency such as a service delivery department, or a lead agency working to the service delivery minister, but ownership should be collective with all relevant service delivery agencies involved in its design and content, since their policy and service delivery interests will be affected.

- Secure personalised space allows a citizen to personalise her engagement with government according to her circumstances. It also enables her to access personal accounts for those programs with which she is involved, and to receive correspondence, alerts, news and other communications. The facility would be housed on a common server with appropriate levels of security and ID authentication. It would be managed by the entity that owns and manages the whole interface infrastructure.

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

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**Voice recognition** for identification and keyword interpretation facilitates engagement, especially for citizens who are uncomfortable with computer protocols. This technology is used in some banks and potentially enables a citizen to make a phone call that connects her directly online. She then only has to respond to simple questions to establish her identity, to inquire about her circumstances (e.g. eligibility) and to transact routine business. She could then potentially escalate to direct voice or audio-visual communication if needed.

**Smart search capability** based on a citizen’s supplied circumstances is a process that makes usable sense of diverse government program information or solves problems by having a dynamic interrogation capacity. Such a capability situates between the common entry point and all of the separate information bases that hold program information. It is a form of middleware that should not require rebuilding information databases. There is a case though for information databases to be constructed within metadata protocols to enable more efficient, effective and speedy searches. Whether the retro-working of databases is desirable, and the extent of it, depends on the efficiency of the smart search capability and results emanating therefrom. This is potentially quite expensive and it is not clear what benefits would be derived until search technology advances further.

**Identity registration and authenticated entry** permits transactions to be carried out remotely without the need for a visit or signed forms to be mailed. The ultimate aim here is to permit and to encourage citizens to register their identity, once it is verified through a first contact to a service delivery agency or a certified external agency such as Australia Post. Once registered, a unique pseudonym can be provided which the citizen can choose to link to some or all of the programs with which she is connected. The pseudonym and password, possibly augmented by further verification sources such as personal information or a biometric like a voice print, provide remote authentication capable of protecting high-level transactions. A database holding the identification information and pseudonyms and passwords has to be built and managed as does the verification mechanism required to match identifying information when a person logs on.

Significant extra benefit, including greater security to the citizen and government, would be derived from universal registration. But, until comfort and trust are built, voluntary, but strongly encouraged, registration is likely to be the most acceptable path. Appendix G discusses these considerations in more detail.

**Automated application/query mechanism** is an extant technology, which interfaces a citizen’s personal descriptors and account and assessment databases. That is, it replaces forms and applications for administrative information like payment records, delivering very significant benefits to the citizen and government. The technology is capable of being fitted onto existing administrative and data systems and offers a dynamic query mechanism that optimises the citizen’s responses to her circumstances and personal details – a smart-form capability. It would be highly desirable to make such systems uniform across government in order to give those transactions a common look and feel and make the citizen’s experience simpler.

**Feedback and two-way dialogue facility.** Remoteness of transactions raises the need for the citizen to be able to engage in a dialogue. One need is for procedural fairness, wherein the citizen receives explanation for the (automatic or remotely determined) decision and has the opportunity to review that her circumstances were properly provided and understood, and/or to register a request for review. Consistently with the emergence of participatory government and collaborative program design enabled through Web 2.0 platforms, the citizen engaging government programs remotely can easily and usefully be provided with a dynamic capability to comment on the experience and to suggest modifications, to register satisfaction or complaints.

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17 No survey of databases has been carried out for this Report. Evidence supplied during consultations suggested that some legacy databases would not easily lend themselves to this facility.
Provision of a feedback or dialogue facility would also be able to play an important role in obtaining performance information based on the citizen’s complete experience. A form of structured on-line survey could be used to collect views on how a particular program affected the citizens holistically. An example: the baby bonus may have been assessed through its measured effect on birth rates, but a citizen-focused view might reveal whether such an increase in birth rates was well supported by Commonwealth, State and community programs and whether it resulted in financial or other stress. Web 2.0 platforms, therefore, may become a critical mechanism for measuring citizen outcomes as opposed to program outcomes.

The on-line citizen interface envisaged in the model proposed here involves a common interface for a citizen to connect to all agencies or programs with which she has an account or an interest. It represents a distinct piece of infrastructure with the following elements:

- A database of pseudonymous identification, associated secure information such as a password and key personal information such as name, address, date of birth, marital status etc. This “thin layer” of information needs to be sufficient, at minimum, to identify the individual in the separate program databases. Extended information that lies below a threshold of sensitivity (e.g. financial information – but only to the extent that programs require equivalent financial details) would add value to the citizen in terms of sharing base-level information between agencies and avoiding multiple advising (both ATO and Centrelink may need to know about a change in income).
- A web-page portal that allows personalised pages to be built and electronic communications received.
- Smart-search software that can link the citizen to relevant program information across all parts of government.
- On-line help capacity for the common portal.
- Capacity to implement higher levels of authentication such as using a document verification service (DVS) or private (banking) ID information.
- Voice recognition technology.
- Storage and authentication of voice prints – and potentially, capture of voice prints.
- Interfacing to all government programs with common authentication interfaces using the pseudonymous ID and with smart-forms capability.

The diagram below depicts the elements and connectivity that may be involved in an on-line common interface.

This infrastructure is distinct from the several program systems and needs to be managed discretely. It could be located as a discrete entity within a service delivery portfolio, or reside in one of the service delivery agencies, such as Centrelink or ATO, and lever off their existing infrastructure to the maximum extent. The advantage of its residing in a service delivery agency is the immediate contact with citizen service delivery needs, but, at the same time, its perspective needs to be service-wide and not to be captured by the form of engagements and culture of the agency where it is housed. There should be a cross-agency governance mechanism that can take account of the diverse interests and needs of the participating agencies.

Currently, the AGIMO18 is developing the AGOSP19, which represents a step towards a common portal. But what is being proposed here is more holistic and aims to provide the opportunity for any citizen who wishes to utilise the services of an integrated single sign-on and personalised page. The location of the infrastructure within AGIMO has advantages in respect of government-wide information and ICT policies. This Report, however, argues that a citizen service approach should drive the initiative, within the framework of information management and ICT policies, and hence recommends its location within the service delivery family of agencies.

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18 AGIMO: Australian Government Information Management Office, situated within the Department of Finance and Deregulation.
19 AGOSP: Australian Government On-line Service Point.
6.4 Processing technology

We have been discussing technology that resides in front of the screen – on the citizen’s side – or which penetrates the screen and connects the citizen to the government systems in a MOG-proofed form. Behind the screen lie diverse processing factories, most of which have been generated on a program-specific or agency-specific basis. Administrative amalgamations, such as the establishment of Centrelink, have resulted in some condensing across programs of processing functions. Generally speaking though, there is a considerable degree of locally generated processing infrastructure that is generic in its nature.

The term “processing technology” is being used in a broad sense and encompasses: databases, rules-based assessment software, payment systems, receipting systems, forms and letter generation, debt recovery, call centres, counter services, mobile services and others. From a whole of government perspective, there is scope for amalgamation of some of these components and between different ranges of agencies and program types. A number of observations can be made:

- While the components are often integrated through software builds, they are conceptually separable and each program process can be decomposed in concept if not always easily in practice. For example processing and payments.
- Deconstruction may be expensive and opportunities to reconstruct systems may, in some instances, need to await the renewing or refreshing of systems.
- Amalgamating processes on a common platform is consistent with the direction and intent of reforms of government ICT recommended by Gershon.\(^{20}\)
- Some processes are clearly program-specific, such as tax assessment, and may need to stay within specialist agencies, but a business case needs to be established.

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\(^{20}\) Gershon P., Review of the Australian Government’s Use of Information and Communication Technology, Department of Finance and Deregulation, August 2008.
Some program-specific processing and databases are sufficiently comparable to related programs that amalgamation is possible and desirable, e.g. processing of general income-support programs by Centrelink and those of veterans by DVA.

Some processes are essentially generic and little argument can be mounted against amalgamation, within a government-owned lead agency or potentially in the private sector ICT environment (cloud computing). Examples are:

- Payment systems that simply transfer a payment into a citizen’s bank account and transmit an advice of payment electronically or by mail to the recipient.
- Security and encryption systems.
- Acceptance, registration and receipting of incoming payments.
- Issuing invoices or requests for payment.
- Production and transmission of letters.
- Call centres.
- Administrative support.  

Some infrastructure can be, and frequently is, shared, especially in remote areas. This may include shopfront space or mobile services.

Progressive adoption of automated and on-line processing will reduce the need for physical infrastructure (accommodation) and augment the efficiencies gained from sharing of infrastructure.

### 6.5 Information management and service delivery

The technological developments being pursued in this Report are aimed at making it simple and valuable for the citizens to use the Internet to engage government programs. The value a citizen is able to glean depends firstly on the content of the information sources, and secondly on their ability to locate relevant information. There have been considerable improvements in the structure of Web-pages provided by organisations, including all government agencies. Developments have embraced a complete rethink away from the prose form of program information that was the norm in earlier on-line documents. The structure of information has changed and the use of hyperlinks has made the information more dynamic as browsers choose navigational pathways that most closely match their interests.

Despite the much improved ability to find information, the actual content is still focused on program descriptions. As administrative arrangements change, programs are commonly reassigned to a different agency, and so the information about the program migrates to a new Web-page in a different format with a “look and feel” that has been adopted by the agency’s Web designers. Periodically, an agency will choose to redesign its Web-sites and the program entry will change again and the links to it will look different.

Program Web-sites generally contain broad descriptive information that explains the purpose of the program and its application. It will describe what benefits the citizen may obtain and/or the obligations applying to the citizen and eligibility rules. There may be cross-references to related programs, including in State jurisdictions or from private providers. Generally, though, related programs are presented as a catalogue of services, not a description of how they link together to provide a synergistic outcome.

The prevailing design of Web-based program information has limitations in offering a citizen-centric perspective. Almost universally, the form of information is agency-dependent, incomplete (in terms of all relevant services or programs), not functionally linked, and dependent on the citizen’s navigating the multiple information sources. There are valuable developments intended to overcome these difficulties:

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21 This is the subject of a separate report on Shared Services. Vanderheide, M., Strategic Review of Future Directions for Shared Services, confidential report prepared for the Department of Finance and Deregulation, October 2009.
Common portals simplify the search task by providing a common start point and navigation based on life-events to which a citizen can relate (the UK government portal described in Section 2.1 is a good example).

Common protocols to make Web-pages look similar and so to reduce the transaction cost to the citizen of having to familiarise himself with each page’s style – existing protocols need to be strengthened and enforced.

Specialised web-sites that are more comprehensive than agency sites in describing programs and services across jurisdictions and sectors and in providing information aimed at helping their target group to plan their personal responses to life circumstances. A good example is the social site aimed at older Australians (http://www.agedcare.com.au/).

The information base on government services is an important public asset, the purpose of which is to permit citizens to extract collective value. Its value, however, is compromised by the disjoint structure of government. There are significant challenges, which were discussed earlier, reaching back to the way programs are generated. They go to the structure of programs needing to be citizen-focused and holistic; the complexity and incongruence of programs (The Henry Tax review\textsuperscript{22} is looking at this aspect with respect to payment and tax programs. But there is a need elsewhere as well); and bridging the inter-jurisdictional divide to include State programs.

There is another category of information that is of important value to effective service delivery, and that is personal information provided by citizens either at the time of key events in their lives or when engaging government, such as registering for tax or applying for a benefit. The information may be basic descriptive information (name, address, sex, date of birth, date of arrival in Australia, marital status etc) or it may be information that relates to the person’s circumstances in their life (health status, income, assets, law-enforcement status). Both categories of information may be important for effective service delivery. The former category, though, is of a general nature that can reasonably be considered of common value to any active engagement with government, while the latter can have sensitive implications about the person’s life and program relevance limited to particular streams of activity.

The basic descriptive information is of a nature that it should be considered generally available in an integrated service delivery environment that is envisaged here. The environment needs to be absolutely protective of the security of the information from unauthorised and/or malign usage. There is an obligation on a citizen in his engagements with government, and on government in holding personal information to ensure that the basic descriptive information is kept accurate and up-to-date. There is evidence also that citizens have reasonable expectations that information is being shared across related programs, particularly within a single agency, and that government has an obligation to ensure that information provided is used across those programs\textsuperscript{23}. With further integration, it is quite feasible that that expectation and obligation will apply across government.

It is argued here that impediments to the sharing of basic descriptive information should be actively removed. This includes, prominently, the establishment of trust by citizens of the government’s operations and intentions. To share the information bestows benefits on both citizens and governments.

Apart from providing information at the time of engaging government, a citizen’s basic information, and changes to that information, will often be recorded in an official register. For example, every birth, death and marriage (BDM) occurring in Australia is registered compulsorily by the State or Territory in which the event occurred. Divorces are registered with the court which decrees the divorce. In many cases, this will be in a jurisdiction different from that which registered the marriage, now dissolved, without any process of linkage of those related events. Changes of name and changes of sex do not need to be registered but the person is encouraged to do so to facilitate establishment and proof of identity. Attainment of permanent residency or of citizenship is recorded with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (See Appendix J for details)

\textsuperscript{22} The Henry Tax Review is the colloquial name of the review into the Future of Australia’s Tax System. This review is being led by Dr Ken Henry, and is expected to report to Government by the end of 2009.

\textsuperscript{23} Administrative Appeals Tribunal of Australia, Walsh and Anor; Secretary, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Anor and [2008], AATA75 (29 January 2008).
The information collected compulsorily or voluntarily by the States and Territories is used little by those jurisdictions but is of considerable importance to Commonwealth Government programs for the majority of citizens. Changes of name and marital status, and birth and death events need to be known, with prompt timeliness, by the administrators of most government programs which affect citizens directly. And yet that information is collected and held by States and Territories, in inconsistent formats and bases, and made available to Commonwealth administrators through diverse agreements, often only at intervals not related to the Commonwealth’s timeliness. State-based privacy law is commonly invoked as a rationale to prevent free flow of the information. The situation is an historical anomaly, predating federation, and a logical nonsense.

To resolve it, it seems that the statuses of the key players must change. The Commonwealth is the primary user of the information and the people concerned will generally have a greater engagement throughout their lives with the Commonwealth than with the States. It is quite possible and probably common that a person’s birth will be registered in the jurisdiction where the birth occurred but the person will have little or no further residency in, or involvement with, that State. This information clearly should be national vital information and, at best, the States and Territories should be agents of the Commonwealth in collecting and holding the information, and the information should be stored in common format and made available in real time to all jurisdictions. If this takes a financial settlement with the States and Territories, it would be well justified. Similar conclusions can be made about other basic personal information not recorded in BDM registers, like divorce, name change, sex change, same-sex relationships etc which affect program eligibility. Address changes are also critical, but because no formal recording is made, the obligation must fall on the citizen to inform, but to inform all relevant programs administrators. This highlights the value of sharing change-of-circumstance information provided to one program with all other relevant programs.
CHAPTER 7:
BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

The thrust of this Report is that service delivery will ride the technological wave and automate transactions wherever operationally feasible and justified. Coupled with interactive search capacity and on-line authenticated applications and access to personal accounts, most citizens will be able to conduct their business remotely and at their convenience. But not all citizens will be able to, not all transactions can or should be automated and not all those transactors who could use remote servicing will choose to.

7.1 Boundaries to on-line servicing

The reach of automated service delivery has boundaries. The boundaries can be stretched by making the on-line channels user-friendly and offering them in public places like libraries or other communal centres. The user-friendly character is a matter of clever design, ensuring relevant information is available and receiving and responding to user feedback.

Various strategies are opened up by extending on-line connectivity out of the home and into communal facilities. The immediate objective is to place on-line facilities such as kiosks in communal centres. The centres would be places where people who have a greater need for communal contact and support are likely to congregate. These might be libraries, health centres, banks, seniors’ centres or purpose-provided facilities like rural transaction centres (RTCs). Kiosks would need a minimal support service to help people who are uncomfortable with using a kiosk or terminal to connect with the service. The presence of kiosks would enhance the services available at communal centres. Sometimes these centres now have dedicated telephone contacts to services like Centrelink. This represents an upgrading of that facility. Communal facilities also offer the opportunity of comprehensive services in remote areas. Kiosks with audio-visual capability connected to a broadband network can, in principle, deliver the services that an expensive mobile unit could provide.

Face-to-face or phone contact will continue to be required by many people and for many types of transaction – in particular complex ones and ones requiring submission of documents not easily transmitted electronically. The categories of people who will need these contact modes include people quite uncomfortable with on-line methods – particularly, but certainly not only, the elderly – and people with physical, intellectual or mental limitations. There will also be a significant proportion of people – hopefully over time a shrinking one – who has a psychological preference to conduct business with direct human contact.
The retail banking sector was one of the first and most advanced in utilising technology to automate banking transactions. Banks offer multiple services for their retail and business clients, optional degrees of security and incentives to use on-line banking. ATMs provide the facility of managing cash remotely and at convenient locations and times. Despite this degree of automation, retail banks have found it difficult to shut branch offices and some, mainly banks with a regional presence, are reopening branches. The message is that technology has human limitations that have surpassed the technical ones and evolving public attitudes and acceptance of technological change are setting the speed limit on and boundaries to technologically advanced service delivery. The public sector has a long way to go to come up against these limits, but the limits must be recognised and negotiated.

7.2 One-stop shops

To meet this need, service centres will have to be distributed conveniently for the less mobile. But because of the automation of most routine business, the transaction load will be greatly reduced and the cost-effectiveness of the service centres will be challenged. The model for the service centres will need to adapt to this development. A feasible model would be a multi-service centre embracing cross-government services, including State and Territory and local services, with all processing centralised in cost-efficient centralised facilities belonging to the separate jurisdictions. This model clearly offers efficiency savings in co-locating multiple services, and improved service facilities for citizens who generally utilise State and local services as much as, or more than, they need to transact with Commonwealth agencies. This model represents a more genuine one-stop shop than is anywhere available at present. It may need to involve re-badgeing of the centres to a generic brand.

The argument that processing should be removed from shopfronts is primarily about ensuring that shopfronts can be flexible operations, able to move in response to demographic or commercial demands. Some processing may be compatible with better utilisation of shopfront staff but dedicated processing units and associated ICT hardware should be located in configurations that maximise efficiency.

7.3 Service delivery and social inclusion

The Commonwealth Government has set social inclusion as a strategic goal of its administration. That policy aims to use government services to address the multiple disadvantages that the socially excluded face, or to ensure that groups in society who normally do not have access to necessary or assistive services gain that access. Clearly the nature and disposition of service delivery is a critical tool in addressing social exclusion.

Possibly the most influential element in addressing social exclusion is the form of the programs themselves. Programs designed to offer flexibility to the service deliverer and to engage the citizen in finding solutions or paths to alleviation of his circumstances are argued by many to be necessary in order to solve the complex problems involved. While this approach is often classified as being a service delivery issue, it is considered here to be mainly about program design and policy relating to adaptive rather than prescriptive programs. As such, it is not addressed in this Report. That fits in a larger debate about the role of government vis-a-vis the citizen and third-party brokers in servicing the highly disadvantaged.

The problem of not having access at all is an issue for the subject matter of this Report. Lack of access may be because of personal characteristics such as extreme disability, or remoteness from service networks, or social or cultural exclusion. Use of technology in extending the network of user-friendly services should aim to alleviate the problem for the former two groups. There is no reason in principle why, with universal access to broadband, user-friendly services cannot be provided in the most remote locations through kiosks and some base level of training as to how to use the facility. Assistance can be provided remotely. The challenge is significant, especially in small communities, because of the possible lack of necessary skills.
For citizens with extreme disability or immobility, computer-based access can be available and would be a clear advantage over having to travel to a service centre. There are several technologies available and Australian Standards disseminated to provide special access to computer-based systems for people with certain disabilities. For other people, carers will be their conduit and the carers also may find that computerised access is the most convenient channel. These citizens will typically have a case manager who will play a critical role in their servicing and who, in consultation with other service providers, will be instrumental in solving the problems of the citizen. Interactive contact with the case manager can be made via audio-visual link in a format that would usually be more convenient than having to travel to a service centre.

Computerised access to services is not incompatible with the need for complex personalised services but may enhance such servicing in cases of restricted mobility or geographical remoteness.

7.4 Proactive service delivery

The category of socially and culturally excluded people raises a different sort of problem and challenges the principle of universal access to government services. The category will include individuals who lead a "hermit" existence and isolate themselves from society in general and government in particular. That of course is personal choice and prima facie the government has no role. However, some use of services may be, and often is, desirable to reduce the person’s risk of health or other problems that are intrinsically undesirable and costly to government. In other words, being proactive to locate and to service these people may constitute a cost-effective investment.

Another group may be sub-communities, such as closed ethnic communities, who choose not to contact government for cultural reasons. Again there may be high social costs from this behaviour such as problems with the education of youth and resultant anomie, or health and lifestyle problems. The challenge for service delivery in these circumstances is to engage the community in a culturally appropriate way and to find solutions and forms of service delivery in consultation with members of the community.

These two examples anticipate a form of proactive service delivery where social workers may need to be engaged to locate, to communicate with and to negotiate solutions for the isolated groups. This is seen in the context of this Report as a form of service delivery itself rather than of program design and needs to be included within the service delivery framework in order to ensure completeness and to avoid excluding groups through a pursuit of technological solutions to service delivery. Resources freed up from automation can be used to meet the extra cost.
CHAPTER 8:
THIRD PARTY PLATFORMS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Many citizens engage government through a third party, usually an agent, for example a tax agent or an immigration agent. Or they may first receive support from a community-based service such as the various church-based welfare agencies. The quality and facility of the engagement with government services would be enhanced through a capacity to conduct transactions through the third party. Government has an interest in ensuring that the third party service delivery agent is able to gain access to, or to enable the client to access, necessary information and transaction facilities. The objective would be to avoid the client’s having to make a separate contact with the government agency if the transaction does not require face-to-face contact.

8.1 The nature of third parties
Parties outside government are often involved in delivering services on behalf of government, or interfacing between citizens and government in the realm of service delivery. These parties are of distinct types and have distinct relations with government and citizens. Five categories are identified here.

i. Non-government or community-based organisations are often on the front line in terms of contact with citizens needing assistance. The services such organisations provide encompass their own funded programs as well as government-provided or subsidised programs. As deliverers of government services, the community organisations will often be contracted (see ii. below) or in a less formal arrangement with government. (Example: religious organisations assisting homeless people.)

ii. Private or community organisations often enter formal competitive contracts with government and receive fees to deliver programs within the prescription specified by government as the contractee. (Example: employment services under Job Services Australia.)

iii. Private organisations operating in a competitive market and providing services purchased by citizens with a subsidy from the government. Relevant cases would usually involve a subsidy that is significant or necessary for the service to be afforded and the service is essential to a government policy. (Example: child care or primary medical and pharmaceutical services.)

iv. Specialised brokers or agents can interpose between the government and the citizen to assist in the engagement between the parties. The agent will generally be paid a fee by the citizen who engages the service and so will focus on gaining the maximum result for the citizen, but the agent’s role can also assist government in navigating complexity and maximising compliance. (Examples: tax agents or immigration agents.)
People or organisations operating in their private and everyday capacities are often engaged in delivery of government programs (usually under law or regulations). (Example: employers collecting PAYG tax and paying superannuation contributions.)

The above categorisation views the various providers from the perspective of their relationship with government – including cases where there is no formal relationship but the third party’s business is constructed around a government program. The common link is that the citizen has a relationship with the third party in respect of a government program with which he is engaged. In that sense the third party represents an extension of the service delivery platform.

The different arrangements involve quite different mechanisms through which the interests of the citizen and the government are pursued. For example, a citizen pays a fee to an agent to assist him to navigate a government program and to achieve the desired objective, such as paying tax or obtaining a visa. The agent is bound to the program specifications by the commercial need to provide an appropriate service and has a direct obligation to the citizen who pays a fee. A contractor, on the other hand, is paid explicitly to fulfil the terms of a contract which generally sets out the binding requirements and thereby protects the government’s requirements and interests. Those contractual requirements will often relate to providing a service for a citizen, but the obligation is to meet the government’s requirements. Market forces do not, per se, lead to optimal service delivery because the citizen is not a purchaser and customer loyalty is not a driving force. Meeting contract specifications and renewing a contract are commercial drivers and they will accommodate service delivery outcomes to the extent that the Government requires those outcomes through the contract.

A third party (usually an employer) delivering services within “natural” business processes (category v.) does so under the duress of law and the service is a cost overhead, but, generally, one suffered by competitors in the market. The provision of good and efficient services to the citizens (usually employees) affected derives primarily from the infrastructure and systems provided by the regulating government agency – mainly tax and superannuation administrative mechanisms.

A third party delivering services that are commercial but subsidised to the user holds no obligation to government other than to meet conditions of accreditation (e.g. safety). Their obligation to citizens is one of attracting and holding citizens as customers. Citizens rely on a competitive market to obtain the best and most convenient service. The government has no direct accountability for the service itself, but, to the extent that the service is, or is perceived by the citizen to be, essential, a political obligation exists to ensure a viable and competitive market.

### 8.2 Alliance arrangements with community-based organisations

Many community-based organisations provide services to citizens from their own resources and in pursuit of their own social missions. Church groups are principal examples but there are also secular organisations (like the Smith Family). They receive resourcing from umbrella organisations (such as church administrations) or from public donations or from partnerships with businesses. From government, they may receive untied grants to carry on their regular business which is of value to government in addressing social need and building social capital. But they are also frequently recipients of contracts, acquired through competitive tendering, for the delivery of a government program. In this mode, they belong to the second group in the above list and they adopt a different set of obligations.

Such organisations are often at the forefront of contact with citizens in need of support and, in that role, extend the reach of government in meeting social need whether they are contracted to deliver a particular program or not. The congruence of the servicing performed by these organisations with the objectives of government in their common area of interest raises questions about the most effective mode of engagement between government and the organisations. There are circumstances where contractual relationships are optimal because the government’s aim is to implement a specific activity which fits within a structured administrative chain. Employment services are an example. The discretion needed to fit a solution to an unemployed person is performed at an earlier stage by Centrelink. In many situations, a degree of discretion is necessary to fit a programmatic response to an...
individual’s circumstances. That can be achieved by permitting the community-based organisation that comes into primary contact with the citizen to make an assessment of the best response and be able to invoke the desired programs.

Many citizens, when first engaging services, present at an NGO rather than government. This may include homeless, drug addicts, women in shelters, families in financial stress etc. For such citizens and many programs, third party servicing is an obvious choice for delivery and likely to be a desirable one especially for the citizen. Government has often been reluctant to engage in such discretionary application of programs because of loss of financial control and unclear accountabilities. Contracts are a mode intended, in part, to address these concerns. The cost often is a diminution in the ability to deliver a solution sensitive to the citizen’s needs. An approach to leverage community-based organisations and their intrinsic capabilities is to engage the organisation in an alliance arrangement. That entails a flexible partnership where the interests and expertise of both parties are brought together for discussion, negotiation and response to emerging circumstances as warranted. The alliance can agree on measures of success in servicing the citizens so as to accommodate flexibility while pursuing a form of structured accountability.

Such an arrangement creates a genuine extension of a government-based service delivery platform which exploits the skills, experience and instinctive orientation of a community organisation to take a citizen-centric approach. The community-based organisation would have the flexibility, within the constraints of the alliance agreement, to broker services for the citizen from wherever an appropriate service is available. For government, this strengthens the community sector and builds social capital. For certain citizens, it offers a truly citizen-centric mode of delivery. Essentially, it represents a form of joined-up administration between government and NGOs.

**8.3 Connectivity to government systems**

Part of making the service delivery platform more citizen-focused is to ensure that third party organisations have access to government systems sufficient not only to perform their function but also to assist their clients to transact relevant business while in contact with the third party and thereby to avoid unnecessary and possibly undesirable extra visits to a government office. Where such connectivity would enter a citizen’s personal account, the citizen would need to give his permission by entering his own identity and authentication information. Without explicit delegation, a third party would not be able to conclude a transaction under its own authority. There are limits to the depth that a third party can reasonably penetrate in pursuing transactions because of a lack of technical expertise that government employees are provided with, and because of the need to retain a degree of control over risky transactions.

A degree of this connectivity already exists. For example, an immigration agent can check on the status of a client’s visa or visa application. But this Report argues that for third parties to perform as effective extensions to service delivery, they should expect to be able to offer this facility as part of a complete service to their client.
CHAPTER 9: 
PROPOSED MODEL AND HOW TO GET THERE

This chapter brings together arguments set out in earlier chapters to summarise conclusions focused on the practical steps that should be implemented, in both the short term and the medium term.

9.1 Sources of benefits and costs

The arguments and conclusions of this Report are rationalised on two sources of major value creation:

- On-line engagement for most citizens that delivers convenience and more effective outcomes
- Substantial improvement in the cost-efficiency of service delivery processes.

At the centre of the system for both the citizen and government is the On-line Citizen Interface (OCI) which has several distinct components:

- Single integrated government portal
- Registration of verified identities that can be used to access all parts of government (limited by level of security obtained in POI process)
- Cross-government structured and searchable information
- Secure personal space that citizen can personalise according to interests and nature of government business
- On-line transactions and control of personal accounts with government
- Capacity to provide and to receive feedback on transactions, service quality and outcomes.

Implementation of the OCI in the form described requires concomitant business process redesign by service delivery agencies to establish on-line connectivity and automation of processes. The following table summarises the key benefits and costs.
TABLE 2: SUMMARY COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ON-LINE CITIZEN INTERFACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITIZEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>ON-LINE CITIZEN INTERFACE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convenience in conducting government business</td>
<td>• Risk of insecurity of personal information</td>
<td>• Staff savings from high proportion of automated processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Single “image” across government</td>
<td>• Associated uncertainty</td>
<td>• Increased accuracy of supplied information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of personal business</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduced fraud and non-compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On-line correspondence</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Redeployment of staff to high-value servicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immediacy of transactions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Better outcomes for all citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pertinent, helpful &amp; holistic information</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Supported third-party servicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feedback contributing to better programs and better service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Installation of new systems or development of existing systems (OCI hardware and software)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extension of supported service to community sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Registration system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Business process reform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connecting third parties to systems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maintenance of existing systems in parallel with new systems to accommodate those citizens unable or unwilling to use on-line engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RATIONALISATION OF PROCESSING PLATFORMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uniform advices and correspondence</td>
<td>• None</td>
<td>• Cost savings from economies of scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More integrated access for off-line servicing</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consolidated fixed costs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Separation and migration of common processes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Expansion of capacity on common systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A strategy of making service delivery citizen-centric, places benefits to citizens centre-stage, but they are very difficult to quantify or to compare with the more tangible costs. Up-front investment is essential and embraces all service delivery agencies. It is feasible to phase the reforms in different ways, but major components of the benefits would be reduced more than proportionately until the reformed configuration is complete. One phasing strategy would be to defer aspects of the OCI (say the identity registration system, or the metadata structure over programs) until much of the automation has been put in place. Automation saves considerable (staff) costs and the savings can be used to fund subsequent reforms. This would take a whole of government approach: e.g. savings from large agencies like Centrelink and the ATO may be needed to build a whole of government facility such as the identity registration system (although it is noted that both agencies see their reforms as providing savings they need to meet resource pressures). Another phasing strategy may be to focus on the agencies that have most clients and/or have more linkages with other agencies.

The citizen’s experience would be diminished considerably in a partial system. Lack of identity registration, for example, means that linking of accounts cannot happen; omitting some agencies means that, for many citizens, they would be able to link some accounts and not others, so their connectivity is split and they need to understand how it is split – in some ways a worse situation than when there was no connectivity because it amplifies the differences between agencies and programs.

Some aspects of systemic costs, such as Internet security, are critical to whole of government business and will involve considerable investment but this cost is not attributable to the reforms canvassed here. Rather, they are vicarious beneficiaries of such developments.
9.2 Strategic goals and strategies to achieve the goals

In formulating an implementation plan, it is necessary to specify what goals are being pursued and what strategies are adopted to pursue them. Based on the discussion earlier in this Chapter, the following strategic goals are identified:

1. To establish a mode and platform for delivery of services to individuals that is focused on the circumstances, lifestyles and needs of citizens.
2. To obtain outcomes from the delivery of programs that are optimal for the citizen, from the perspective of the citizen and of the government.
3. To deliver government services meeting the above criteria in the most cost-effective manner.

The strategies are identified as follows:

1. Establish and support service delivery as a high-profile government strategy in its own right.
2. The principal – and over time, the dominant – channel for communication between citizens and government will be the Internet and communication needs to be actively shifted to that channel.
3. Redesign service delivery processing and administrative activity in service delivery agencies to operate with the lightest reasonable touch consistent with program delivery and citizen needs. In the majority of transactions this will be zero touch. Redesigning business processes to achieve maximum automation needs to be supported with technology and with a risk-based administration.
4. Put in place governance processes to ensure the joining up of policy and service delivery agencies in the design, approval and funding of programs.
5. Design a performance framework to accommodate the service delivery and citizen-centricity objectives of government, as well as policy objectives, and to hold the relevant policy and service delivery agencies accountable.
6. Establish connections with State and Territory programs, delivery platforms and information sources.
7. Embrace and engage the non-government sector to expand the government’s service delivery platform, to bring it closer to the citizens and to build social capital.

9.3 Required actions

1. The first action is to establish a service delivery portfolio that is able to obtain authorisation for and to enforce cross-government service delivery objectives and principles which are binding on all service delivery agencies. That portfolio should be establishing a whole-of-government policy to drive activity across the diverse parts of government. A leading principle should be that policy effectiveness has primacy, in the sense that the achievement of service delivery objectives should not compromise the ability of a program to fulfil its policy objectives, as they embody the very purpose of the program. Another principle should ensure the continuous pursuit of efficiencies across all service delivery platforms.

To ensure that the service delivery portfolio has an active whole-of-government engagement, a form of cross-government governance is highly desirable. It is suggested that a Board, comprising senior representatives of the central agencies, major policy departments and major service delivery agencies, be established to give advice to the minister and secretary of the service delivery portfolio.

Operational service delivery agencies do not need to be located in the specialist portfolio but often that will be useful, e.g. such cross-government service delivery agencies as Centrelink. While the service delivery portfolio department concentrates on establishing and monitoring service delivery policy, the operational agencies within the portfolio would best be given managerial independence that derives from statutory agency status. This would also ensure that the agency could be mobile if siting in a different portfolio becomes desirable as functions change. Similarly, common platforms operated within a service delivery agency can reside in a lead agency in any portfolio but be subject to policies administered by the service delivery portfolio.
2. Every service delivery agency should reform its business processes aiming:

- To automate its processes to a maximum extent based on a risk-based delivery model
- To remove staff interventions wherever, following critical assessment, intervention is considered of little value, thus permitting a redeployment of some staff to high value-adding activity
- To link processes to a user-friendly and secure on-line engagement. An important element of the linkage is a smart-query or smart-form facility which enables applications to be made on-line with real-time storage of entered data and (non-complex) processing through a rules-based database. There may be advantages in such technologies being implemented consistently across government. That would need to be decided by AGIMO in consultation with service delivery agencies
- To align business processes, where feasible, to facilitate subsequent integration.

There are examples of significant business process reform in the pipeline, for example reforms anticipated in the Human Services portfolio as a response to the recent report by Boston Consulting Group, continuing reforms in the ATO and the planned reforms in DIAC. There are other possibilities that would involve exploiting Internet communications more effectively. An example is the area of consular services in DFAT.

Beyond generating significant savings, business-process reform is an essential precursor to shifting service delivery on-line, a reform that lies at the heart of a citizen-centric focus to service delivery.

3. The Government needs to build, in stages, an on-line citizen interface (OCI). There are many components to the interface, some of which exist in embryonic form and can be built on; some of which need early investment to ensure that benefits can be reaped quickly; and some of which can, or should, await new technologies and a mature platform. The interface requires a discrete management entity to own it, to develop it and to ensure its effective operation and compliance with whole-of-government policy. It seems logical that the entity reside within the service delivery portfolio where the central focus is on effective engagement between citizens and government.

There presently exists a common portal for the Commonwealth Government (www.australia.gov.au) which provides a form of user-friendly front end, allowing users to navigate to program information based on their life circumstances. There are also the very beginnings of a common log-on facility intended to facilitate a user to make contact through the portal with agencies with which she has an account. These two initiatives are operated by AGIMO. There is a similar common log-on facility offered by DHS for the agencies within that portfolio. It is recommended here that the common portal be mandated as an entry point for all relevant agencies and that the portal’s reach be deep and substitute for the principal program information on agency web-pages. The UK portal, www.direct.gov.uk, is a good model.

This Report envisages those activities being located in the proposed OCI within a more elaborate and integrated model. That model includes a common government-wide POI network operating at the point of contact with service delivery agencies and in an external network such as Australia Post. The network will need to meet national POI security standards. So, for example, an agency that does not expect to be able to meet such standards, could not be part of the network to establish POI but would need to rely on such POI established in an accredited centre.

The OCI would manage and ensure the integrity of the POI network. It would accept registration of a person whose identity has been established, issue an identity code and password to the registrant and store registration and personal details and POI documents. Desirably, the POI process would register a biometric identifier, such as a voiceprint, and the OCI would record the voiceprint of the registrant.

The OCI would need to interface with the various service delivery agencies to ensure that a citizen can access all relevant account information and facilities through her common identification code. With the

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citizen’s knowledge, her personal information would be passed to the agencies with which she has contact.

The common portal would need to offer a secure personal page for the citizen to establish a base for information of interest and value to her and in which she would receive communications from her various service delivery agencies. When the citizen enters one of her accounts, the owning agency would need to be able to access the OCI information which authenticates her identity.

Another function of the OCI is to deploy kiosks throughout a network of community locations to extend the access to many people unable or unwilling to use on-line facilities at home or without assistance.

All of these facilities are immediate priorities to enable proper exploitation of on-line contact and zero-touch processing.

4. As business processes are reformed and automation becomes widespread, shop-front facilities will undergo a significant change in usage with large numbers of routine transactions removed from the shop-front to on-line mode. At the same time, it is difficult to see that reducing geographical cover of the shop-front network is feasible because of the continuing need for a significant number of citizens to receive personal servicing. The most likely pathway would be to make the shop-fronts multi-purpose and to co-locate services from multiple agencies and even State agencies – making the shop-fronts true “one-stop shops”. This rationalisation should be pursued as part of the move to more cost-efficient and citizen-friendly service delivery.

Some existing shop-fronts have processing activities co-located. This is unlikely to be an efficient disposition and would restrict flexibility to form multi-purpose shop-fronts. There seems to be a good case for removing processing centres from shop-fronts as part of the business-process reform and to concentrate processing into cost-effective locations linked by remote communication with service centres and data centres as appropriate. This needs to be investigated perhaps as part of the post-Gershon reforms.

5. Aspects of reformed governance should be implemented as an immediate priority in order to give authority and focus to the emphasis on service delivery. A minister should be given policy responsibility for service delivery policy and principles. That minister should be advised, as well as by his or her department, by the Board referred to above.

Policy approval and funding arrangements could be adapted to accommodate the matrix responsibilities referred to in Section 5.3 in order to give practical effect to a joined-up policy process. This should be accompanied by a review of performance frameworks for agencies which own or deliver services to citizens to ensure that program effectiveness, integrity and service delivery criteria are adequately monitored.

Performance frameworks across policy and service delivery agencies should be examined and adjusted, under the overview of central and service delivery portfolios, to allocate appropriately accountability for policy, program integrity and service delivery outcomes.

6. Business cases should be developed to examine how and when generic elements of the various service delivery platforms should be migrated to common platforms.

9.4 Deferred reforms

There are other reforms that will need to await the right time. The business cases mentioned above would inform this timetable.

An important one is the migration of common processing activities to government-wide common platforms, or even externally provided facilities situated in “the cloud”. To detach such processes as payments, or correspondence generation, may be difficult and costly for existing integrated platforms and reform may need to await the cycles of renewal of systems and/or contract arrangements in service delivery agencies.
But there are some activities which would appear to be able to be moved with little need for delay. These would include, as examples, migration of all government call centre operations onto one or two existing large facilities such as the ATO’s or Centrelink’s network. Another example would be the shift of the whole Veterans Affairs system (database, processing, payments, correspondence etc) onto the Centrelink system. There is more commonality between DVA’s operation and some pensions than there is between certain existing Centrelink payments. Such a move does not necessarily include the common location of Veterans’ Affairs shopfronts with Centrelink if that is seen as difficult politically, so the service from the veterans’ point of view need not look any different.

The development of smart searching cannot easily proceed at this time because the technologies (such as the so-called “Semantic Web”) are not yet sufficiently mature. However, in preparation, there is much that can usefully be done in developing a metadata overlay for many programs in conjunction with State administrations. This is likely to be an expensive effort and needs to be started modestly. But it will deliver benefits to citizens even with existing search technologies, especially if combined with State programs.

9.5 Oversight of reform process

The reform program set out above needs to be mandated by government to ensure momentum, and to be centrally oversighted. There are powerful extant committees, such as Secretaries’ ICT Governance Board and Business Process Transformation Committee, which, with a refocus onto government-wide service delivery, would be well placed to drive the reforms and should be tasked by government to do so. The Minister and Department of Finance and Deregulation need to play a key role in the development of funding and performance frameworks in the proposed governance reforms. The suggested Minister for Service Delivery should assume ministerial oversight for the service delivery policies and strategies and establishment of the OCI.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY REFORM

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The arguments in this Report aim to pursue the following strategic goals:

1. To establish a mode and platform for delivery of services to individuals that are focused on the circumstances, lifestyles and needs of citizens.
2. To obtain outcomes from the delivery of programs that are optimal for the citizen, from the perspective of the citizen and of the government.
3. To deliver government services that meet the above criteria in the most cost-effective manner.

CITIZEN-CENTRIC SERVICE DELIVERY

1. The delivery of government services to individual citizens needs to address new challenges in meeting standards of outcome and access for citizens.
   a. Processes and accountabilities need to encompass the impact of government services on citizens as well as objectives of programs.
   b. Service delivery needs to modernise to reduce the growing gap between the citizens’ modes of communication and the modes of government engagement.
   c. Citizens expect and wish to engage government with the ease and convenience with which they are able to engage their private business.

2. Service delivery needs to adopt a perspective of the citizen engaging government, rather than the government simply implementing programs. The perspective needs to encompass:
   a. Simplicity and convenience of access
   b. Information about, options for, and access to programs across government relevant to the citizen’s situation
   c. Clarity and simplicity in fulfilling citizens’ obligations within the requirements of sound program management
   d. Two-way trust and confidence between citizen and government.

3. Reform of policies and programs to increase simplicity, alignment and connectedness should be pursued in parallel to reform in service delivery because they are potentially the most critical drivers of a citizen-centric approach.
ACCESS

4. While channel choice needs to be maintained in order to avoid excluding groups in society, on-line engagement adds significant value to citizens and government and is compatible with modes of communication that most citizens utilise now or will do so over the next few years.

5. Citizens cannot be forced to use on-line channels but must be attracted to use them by the value the citizen gains in improved service. As usage increases, greater savings can be reaped and services further expanded. Channel options need to embrace developments in Internet technology with strong incentives for citizens to use the most efficient channels.

6. Access should be through a single friendly portal covering all areas of citizen services. The portal should have a depth that returns useful value to the citizen within a single environment and not act as a directory to agencies and programs.

7. To expand the scope of on-line communication and to include citizens without personal access to computers, automated access channels should be made available as kiosks in supported environments in community settings such as libraries, or private sector entities. They should meet access standards for people with disabilities.

8. The citizen needs to locate information relevant to the citizen’s circumstances and not simply through program eligibility. All relevant program information should be readily available to a citizen through the portal, in understandable form. This will require specification of metadata descriptors relevant to citizens’ circumstances and an interpretive search engine, preferably applied across all jurisdictions.

9. To increase convenience and to save government’s and citizens’ time and resources, citizens should be able to prove their identity once and to have their identity and personal information registered for use with all government programs with which they engage. This step also contributes to greater accuracy and integrity of program information.

10. Feedback from citizens at all stages of the engagement is essential to maintain responsiveness to citizens’ needs and experiences. Automated transactions need to build in feedback mechanisms to provide:
   a. Information such as reasons for determined outcome, and procedural fairness (ability to query and/or to appeal result)
   b. Capacity to comment on service quality and outcomes.

EFFICIENCY

11. Modern ICT offers significant savings through automation of processing while enhancing the citizen experience. Efficiencies are also available by avoiding splintered service delivery platforms.
   a. Business processes need to be automated to the maximum extent in a form that connects government services to on-line communication; on-line automated servicing
is estimated to be at least ten times cheaper than phone-based or counter-based servicing.

b. Business processes need to amalgamate and to exploit the latent value captured in existing technological investments.

12. Various components of the service delivery architecture are intrinsically modular with the capacity to be exploited as government-wide assets. Transition to shared platforms can be adopted over time as systems are refreshed.

13. Common process platforms will normally be managed and accommodated by a lead agency but the platform should be considered, in terms of its resourcing and management as a government-wide asset.

14. Service delivery agencies should be required to use government-wide platforms unless a robust case can be established for a customised application.

EFFECTIVENESS

15. Citizen-centric service delivery brings new challenges to the pursuit of effective government activity. Performance frameworks need to encompass service delivery outcomes and holistic outcomes for citizens as well as outcomes for programs.

16. Achievement of the objectives of government policies must be the central determining factor in the design of service delivery. Policy objectives provide the rationale for the associated programs and service delivery must support those objectives.

17. Service delivery needs to be able to take account of interactions between relevant programs across all levels of government and community organisations in order to optimise service offers to citizens.

18. Irrespective of the form of delivery platforms, there remain excluded groups for whom service delivery requires a proactive approach. The framework of government service delivery needs to be able to locate citizens who are economically, socially and culturally isolated, to assess whether available services could assist their situation and reduce likely future dependency and to ensure effective delivery of those services.

GOVERNANCE

19. Effective citizen-centric service delivery requires effective joined-up government which is not a natural state for the bureaucratic structure of government. It requires considerations of governance arrangements that can give effect to the interactions of program effectiveness and citizen-focused effectiveness.

20. Service delivery should be given a status that reflects the government’s emphasis and should be represented by a senior minister and a portfolio responsible for service delivery policy, strategy and outcomes.

21. Performance frameworks for government activities should encompass:
a. Effectiveness of policies
b. Program integrity
c. Service delivery outcomes and
d. Effective citizen outcomes.

22. Performance frameworks and reporting should involve both policy department(s) and service
delivery agency(ies).

23. Policies and policy elements of programs should be owned by policy departments. Policy
owners should be accountable for policy effectiveness.

24. Service delivery may reside in specialist agencies or within policy departments. Program-
specific elements of service delivery will at times reside in policy departments based on
efficiency and effectiveness grounds.

25. Central agencies should hold responsibility for the integrated strategies and resourcing across
the policy departments.

26. Specialist service delivery agencies like Centrelink should operate within the service delivery
portfolio with a degree of governance and resourcing autonomy that enables them to be
responsible and accountable for effective service delivery.

27. Delivery agencies and those parts of policy departments responsible for delivery should be
responsible and accountable for program integrity and service delivery outcomes.

28. Before service delivery strategies are approved and funded, policy and service delivery
objectives should be taken fully into account and performance criteria for policy and service
delivery agreed.

BEYOND THE COMMONWEALTH

29. The citizen’s experience depends on servicing from State/Territory and community-based
programs. Citizen-centric service delivery needs to take a broader view than Commonwealth
programs and to encompass, to engage and to exploit services beyond the Commonwealth.

30. Programs offered by State and Territory governments contribute to citizen outcomes in
conjunction with Commonwealth programs. State and Territory programs need to be included
in the information available to citizens, and in service offers accessible through self-service or
assisted service.

31. Vital information collected and held by States is often essential to effective service delivery in
the Commonwealth sphere but is not universally accessible. Information collected by any
jurisdiction that is essential to programs of other jurisdictions should be categorised as national
vital information and made available in real time, or through automated interconnectivity, and
on a consistent basis.

32. Community-based organisations are engaged with Commonwealth programs in various ways.
Citizen-centric service delivery can be enhanced by engaging those organisations in a more
integrated and flexible way. Community-based organisations should be supported to
contribute to customised service delivery to citizens through principal-agent arrangements such as contracts, or through an alliance arrangement. This may include:

a. Interconnectivity to information and application resources through the citizen interface, with the permission of the citizen, or to assist with obligation fulfilment

b. A degree of discretion provided to community-based organisation to connect the citizen with relevant assistance programs within financial parameters (policy consideration)

c. Inclusion of the community-based organisation in appropriate accountability frameworks.
RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. A senior minister assume responsibility for service delivery policy and whole-of-government service delivery standards and efficiency.

2. The Service Delivery minister operate with the advice of a cross-government board made up of senior officials from central, policy and service delivery agencies.

3. A comprehensive whole-of-government On-line Citizen Interface (OCI) be developed as a channel for citizen engagement that is in tune with current and emerging technologies; and that the OCI is constructed to provide citizens with the capability:
   a. to access all accounts with a single sign-on,
   b. to establish a secure personalised space, and
   c. to transact business.

4. As a first component of the OCI, a whole-of-government portal be built with access points for the citizen constructed so as to mask, as much as possible, the administrative and programmatic structure of government and to enable the citizen to locate information and programs that meets the citizen’s needs, and to manage the citizen’s services from, and obligations to, government.

5. Participation in the portal by all agencies delivering individual services to citizens be mandated as the primary channel of Web-based communication with citizens.

6. Within an appropriately managed privacy environment, citizens’ basic identifying information be made available to all relevant government sites at a single entry to minimise information handling by citizens and government agencies.

7. Service delivery to citizens be moved to the maximum reasonable extent to electronic on-line servicing; face-to-face access channels be used only where special servicing is required and then rationalised to the maximum extent through use of common facilities and networks.

8. All service delivery agencies should undergo, as a matter of priority, reform of their business processes with an aim to automate all transactions not requiring intervention for operational reasons.
   a. Automation should permit a citizen to initiate and complete a process on-line without human intervention
   b. Transactions should not occur without the citizen’s initiation so as to ensure that the citizen retains responsibility for the transaction
   c. Automation should be designed on a risk-based model of operational need.

9. Agencies should align and standardise business processes, wherever feasible, to make the citizen experience more consistent and to facilitate subsequent integration.
10. As transaction flows in shopfronts reduce with the roll-out of automation, shopfronts across service delivery agencies be rationalised by retaining a broad geographical coverage but combining disparate services across Commonwealth and State agencies in integrated shopfronts.

11. Performance frameworks covering service delivery and policy agencies should be scrutinised and upgraded to reflect policy and service delivery objectives and assigned to the appropriate agencies.

12. Opportunities for rationalising platforms be considered on the basis of business cases and transition plans. Examples include:
   a. DVA’s databases, general processing of veterans’ income support and concessional assistance incorporated onto Centrelink’s systems
   b. Call centre operations in DIAC, DFAT, DVA, DEEWR, Medicare placed on one of the larger call centre infrastructures (Centrelink or ATO).

13. The changes relating to the common portal, process automation and shared platform use be pursued by a high-level committee, such as SIGB, including representatives of the major service delivery and policy agencies. The committee agree service-wide service delivery protocols and processes and a business plan that ensures maximum value is extracted from existing infrastructure.

14. Essential information, such as births deaths and marriages, be viewed as national vital data available to all jurisdictions, and sharing of those data negotiated through COAG as a matter of priority.

15. Work commence on a high-level metadata structure across Commonwealth and State programs in the areas of individual service delivery to enable contextual searches for information related to life-events of citizens.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
Terms of Reference
Outline

The purpose of the Future Directions for Australian Government Service Delivery Strategic Review is to provide a strategic perspective on developments in the delivery of Australian Government services to the various categories of client groups, taking account of principles of government-citizen relations and technological development.

Specifically, the Review will develop fundamental principles for Australian Government service delivery and identify key areas for change and improvement which could be developed further in detail, with the underlying objective of optimising service levels, increasing cost effectiveness and delivering savings.

The Review will commence with preliminary work in July and take into account the outcomes of the Department of Human Services Service Delivery Reform Agenda (DHS review), without duplicating work conducted in that review. The Review will provide a final report to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation (copied to the Prime Minister, Treasurer and relevant Portfolio Ministers) in early 2010.

The Review will be undertaken under the Strategic Review framework and will be led by an experienced former senior public servant with relevant experience. The review leader will be supported by a Finance team, supplemented by a small number of secondees from central and/or relevant agencies and consultations with relevant experts as appropriate. A Consultative Group, chaired by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance), comprising senior officials from central and relevant agencies will provide advice, guidance and assistance to the reviewers.

The Review will consider alternative models for delivering services based on client-group perspectives. The Review will examine existing service delivery arrangements, including service delivery models and initiatives from outside government and from other jurisdictions; and assess the type and extent of inefficiencies, such as duplication, in service delivery networks and the alternatives to current arrangements in both shopfronts and back offices.

The Review will draw on:

(a) previous reviews, reports and audits, whether internal, external, public or unpublished;
(b) consultations with public sector agencies involved in service delivery;
(c) relevant expertise in the public and private sectors;
(d) developments in ICT, particularly the public sector; and
(e) best practice service delivery models employed by other government and private sector organisations (both Australian and international).

Coordination and monitoring of the Review’s progress will be undertaken by the Budget Review Division of Finance.

Terms of Reference

1. The Review will develop a set of principles to ensure service delivery has a citizen-centric focus, making engagement with the government easier for clients and better suited to their needs, while optimising administrative costs. It will provide the groundwork for delivering wide ranging reform in service delivery by identifying feasible options for further development as longer term efficiencies in service delivery arise from advancing technology and changed service models.
2. A particular focus of the Review will be an assessment of current service delivery arrangements. The Review will:

(a) assess the consistency of current service delivery arrangements with the Government’s objectives and current policy framework for a citizen-centric focus of Government service delivery;

(b) examine service delivery models and initiatives from outside government and from other jurisdictions, including those which focus on the entire interaction with the individual, regardless of agency boundaries;

(c) examine how well existing service delivery arrangements, including in shopfronts and back offices, are serving the Government and the public, including in terms of the accuracy of payments and the cost-effectiveness of service delivery;

(d) assess the adequacy of the existing performance framework, including indicators and measures for service levels;

(e) examine whether resourcing has been used efficiently to deliver services across Government;

(f) assess the extent of duplication in service delivery networks within the Government, and with State/territory governments, and what could be done to remove it; and

(g) assess alternatives to current arrangements in order to optimise service levels and administrative costs.

3. While addressing fundamental issues, the Review will examine current shopfront and processing arrangements against the principles and criteria set out in Section 2 above. Relevant shopfronts include: the Veterans’ Affairs Network, and others including Immigration, Tax and Passports. The Review will build on the DHS Service Delivery Agenda in this and other respects.

4. The review is being undertaken concurrently with several related, but separate, review processes. The review team will liaise with other agencies conducting these reviews to minimise the potential for overlap with other review processes.
APPENDIX B
Consultation

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Released under FOI Act
Consultation

The review team included Dr David Rosalky, three officials from the Department of Finance and Deregulation and a seconded official from the Department of Human Services.

The following organisations were consulted during this review. The contributions of these organisations are acknowledged and were appreciated:

- Australian Government Information Management Office
- Australian Taxation Office
- Attorney-General’s Department
- Boston Consulting Group
- Canberra Connect, ACT Government
- Centrelink
- CEO of a non-bank financial institution
- CSIRO - Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Finance and Deregulation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs
- Information Integrity Solutions
- Intelledox
- Salmat VeCommerce
- Smartnet
APPENDIX C
International experience in service delivery
International approaches to service delivery appendix

Terms of reference point (e) requires that the review examine “best practice service delivery models employed by other government and private sector organisations (both Australian and international)”\(^\text{25}\).

The review team examined a number of countries including those with comparable models of government, including Canada and Belgium. English speaking countries with strong societal and cultural synergies with Australia were also examined, including New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Aspects of other countries which were depicted in literature or suggested in consultations as being leading edge in service delivery application were also considered.

A summary of aspects of service delivery conducted in the countries listed above is provided from page 15 of this appendix.

Service delivery reform trends

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the assessment of service delivery in other countries.

**On-line**

A number of countries have created an electronic front end for clients. This can be of significant assistance to those unfamiliar with government, as it provides links to information from many government agencies, including in some cases, from different levels of government, enabling the client access without knowing the agency administering the initiative, or the name of the program most relevant to their needs.

Generally, the integrated front end is branded as a single organisation, with the secondary layer branded as the individual department or agency responsible for, or delivering the service, as is the case for Service Canada.

Information in the initial layer can be provided under standard categories, to aid familiarisation with government on-line service delivery, as is the case for Work and Income New Zealand.

Information is usually provided in multiple ways – including as part of a full list of programs or benefits (to streamline access for clients knowing this information) or through grouping complementary initiatives, like life event categories, for example the services associated with the birth of a child.

Often the integration provides basic information on the services and support that are available, however some jurisdictions are innovative in the nature of information provided to citizens – for example “StumbleSafely [an initiative of the District of Columbia, USA] brings together information on local bars and clubs, including the latest updates on nightlife, with crime data to help people plan safer routes home”\(^\text{26}\).

More advanced systems cover off the issues dealt with by other levels of Government, either by providing information or links to the relevant entity. The level of integration of the electronic front end differs between countries. Service Canada provides a single entry point for clients for many federal services, with a short summary and then referral to the administering entity. New Zealand essentially provides web links to the relevant service agency, with welfare services delivered through a number of

\(^{25}\) Department of Finance and Deregulation, Terms of Reference for the *Future Directions for Australian Government Service Delivery*, approved by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, the Hon Lindsay Tanner, MP. The Minister for Human Services, the Hon Chris Bowen, MP was consulted in the construction of these Terms of Reference.

websites and individually badged networks. The UK portal website provides a more substantial level of advice in the initial layer, for both central and local government services.

In fact, the integrated front end enables citizen-centric government to be achieved through a one-stop point of advice for clients, which can be accessed by clients at their convenience, providing they have access to the Internet, or via the telephone during call centre hours.

The greatest benefit accrues to clients if the integrated front end facilitates access to the services and support provided by all levels of government, as occurs in the British portal – as generally the client is not always aware of, and does not need to understand, which level of government provides the service.

**On-line transactions**

As well as providing information through on-line channels, governments are moving towards enabling on-line transactions.

In interacting with Government, clients are able to establish an account providing access to government services. In this environment the client is often able to customise their interface by creating links to those government agencies or programs that they are most likely to use. “An increasing number of countries (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway) are evaluating, being in the process of implementing or having implemented ‘personal Internet pages’ which present individualised information and data from different public authorities across the public sector in one place”\(^27\).

Governments, including those in Germany\(^28\) and Denmark\(^29\) also provide a secure email environment that enables the client to receive information, updates, reminders and circumstance updates from government (that may have otherwise be provided through mail). This enables the client to consider and respond to them at their convenience and has the benefit to the agency of enabling processing costs to be streamlined by directly uploading information provided by the client.

However the real potential for on-line is to enable secure transactions to occur, including to apply for benefits or advise of changes in circumstances. Currently, forms are available on the Internet and must either be filled in by hand, signed and sent, or filled in on-line and emailed, with the client required to establish proof of identity separately, usually in-person. Transactions associated with the paying out of benefits necessarily have a differing risk profile from most of the transactions that are currently available on-line (driving licence or car registration renewals, building application approvals, etc) as there are more incentives for people to claim benefits to which they are not entitled, than to pay someone else’s bills. Managing this risk results in more onerous security and proof of identity/authentication requirements before on-line welfare transactions can be enabled.

Countries like the UK are developing processes and systems to facilitate these secure transactions. Proof of identity/authentication requirements are being developed in different ways in different countries. For example, Japan has a “Basic Resident Register Network (Juki Net), a national online database of basic personal information of all residents that was put into full-scale operation last year [2004]. The government issues an electronic ID to each resident based on the data in the network, and the ID is stored in the intelligent chip on the resident’s Juki Card to ‘sign’ and ‘seal’ electronically all electronic procedures.”\(^30\).

In Singapore, “as far as possible, government electronic services have been redesigned or streamlined so as not to depend on highly secure authentication. For most of the government services, no

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\(^28\) Ibid, p82.


authentication is required. Where it is required, single-factor authentication with a user ID and password is normally sufficient, although a two-factor authentication is used on a limited basis as well. The Singapore government uses SingPass, which is an end-to-end encrypted single factor authentication to all government e-services”.

Malta has established an “e-government web portal (mygov.mt), [where] citizens can access all e-government services which are available online. This portal encompasses an electronic identity (e-ID), an electronic payment gateway and an SMS (short message service, or text messaging) gateway ... [where] the electronic identity (e-ID) offers a secure, single sign-on authentication and electronic signing”.

In Denmark “the period 2008 to 2012 will see the development and release of a second, more advanced, version of the portal which will use digital signatures to offer personalised services to citizens. There will be a ‘My Page’ functionality which will make it possible for citizens to find and put all their personal data in relation to the public sector in one personal ‘on-line drawer’”.

While the adopting of service delivery reform brings additional benefit, simplicity and convenience for clients, it also enables government to realise efficiencies. Just as the move to on-line banking enabled banks to outsource to customers processing of transactions, the government is able to realise efficiencies by having clients enter data and have it uploaded into the agency’s system, and by automating processing as much as possible. This includes enabling salary information to be provided directly from clients’ employers to government and the pre-populating of forms, including tax returns, currently occurring in several OECD countries. The greater the efficiencies, the more resources that can be channelled to intensive service provision to those most in need and/or to reduce the administrative burden and therefore cost to taxpayers.

_Digital Divide_

While there is a recognition by governments that not all clients have access to the Internet, and that disabled people have specific needs, few examples of government initiatives to address these issues, specifically were found.

While governments like Britain and New Zealand adhere to international disability protocols for on-line services, and some governments provide access to terminals in their shopfronts, the general default is that clients can utilise other service channels, for example face to face or telephone. However, in certain restricted circumstances, outreach services may be provided, for example Service Canada indicates that “Mobile outreach services take Service Canada staff into communities in times of special need (e.g., when a local plant closes or there is a natural disaster)”.

In Denmark, “libraries will help introduce and promote Borger.dk [the government portal] to the public”. Denmark also has a call centre to assist citizens with problems they encounter using the government portal.

Italy utilises existing service delivery channels in the public and private sectors (such as post offices, tobacco shops, banks, pharmacies, police stations, train stations) to give the public easier access to public services. The Italian government considers that this will “ensure maximum access to services to

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33 ibid, p62.
34 ibid, p19.
35 http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/access.shtml
the whole population, and to reduce the necessity of going to public offices ... [and that by doing so] it will be possible to introduce competition for public service delivery\(^\text{38}\).

In Mexico, facing significant and widespread disparity between those clients with access to the Internet and those without access, the Mexican government is “creating additional ‘digital community centres’ across the country, particularly in remote and rural areas. These digital community centres are targeted to people, who do not have access to ICT, and they provide assisted access to the Internet as well as information on education, health, economy and government at all levels. The fact that these centres are facilitated is important, as they allow people to use the Internet regardless of their education level or local language. The e-Mexico initiative provides a large number of digital community centres: 3 200 in 2003, 7 200 in 2004 and more than 9 200 in 2007\(^\text{39}\). Hungary which also faces low levels of Internet in homes, is utilising the prevalence of Internet cafes and high mobile phone penetration to develop its reform strategies\(^\text{40}\).

Singapore provides shopfronts, self-help kiosks, Internet, mobile phone and intermediaries. The Singapore government is “introducing self-service terminals at all government agencies so that customers can transact online themselves of with initial help from the agencies’ staff. To date, there are about 1,000 self service terminals at 36 agency sites, which have resulted in a gradual reduction in the number of service counters. For specific seasonal events, such as tax filing, the agencies in charge typically arrange for special roadshows and events equipped with volunteers to help people use the online services. ... The younger generation is also introduced to government e-services as part of the school syllabus”\(^\text{41}\).

Shopfronts (delivery of face to face services)

With the aim to encourage the client to utilise cheaper channels of interaction with government comes the opportunity to reap efficiencies in the face to face delivery network. Generally this can be achieved by either co-location, or integration of shopfront networks, or combining corporate functions (known as shared services).

Britain has generally retained a number of its individually badged service centres (eg Jobcentre Plus, passports offices) and is pursuing a shared services approach. While countries, like Canada have branded the on-line, shopfront and call centres with the same brand, Service Canada, which provides services or referrals to the relevant agencies as required.

Louisville Kentucky USA, has created “Neighbourhood Place a partnership of public sector agencies that have come together to create a network of 10 community-based one-stop service centres, usually near a school, providing health, social care, welfare and education services. Providers all work together in the 10 sites to deliver immunisation and substance abuse services, childcare assistance, child protection, nutrition advice and social services. The services are provided to some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded families in the city”\(^\text{42}\).

Malaysia offers a third party acting as a service access point for cross-government service delivery, through the Malaysia Postal Service. It “functions as a one-stop citizen service centre for the public to perform various government related activities, such as renewing a driver’s license, registering to vote, paying utility bills, repaying student loans, making social security contributions and paying a variety of taxes, as well as a range of other nongovernmental services, from booking flights and hotel reservations


\(^{39}\) Ibid, p81.

\(^{40}\) Ibid, p80.


to shopping for home products and digital appliances. Recent enhancements include the development of drive-in counters at certain locations and extended night time operating hours.43

Private sector entities are also developing alternative mechanisms to liaise with clients. For example Rabobank in the Netherlands allows contact with its advisors (real people) who provide video advice for private banking. As well as maintaining a presence through local banks, Rabobank has developed other contact mechanisms, including kiosks in aged care homes.44

It was not possible to assess whether the four countries examined in detail had rationalised the number of staff and shopfront services provided, for a variety of reasons including: a lack of directly comparable provided between years, AAO changes, a move to outcomes (rather than inputs) focused reporting, and for Belgium, a lack of information presented in English.45

Contact centres

Contact centres assist citizens with queries arising from telephone, facsimile or email, with the bulk of enquiries received by telephone.

There has been a move towards a single phone number for government service delivery, in order to aid client convenience by removing the need for the client to know which agency to contact in the first instance.

“While not a national service, New York City’s 311 service (dialling 311 within the city to 1-212 outside New York) is a fine example of both cross government and citizen centred service delivery. 311 is an all purpose call centre that provides callers with the information they need about any city government service, day or night. With 311, New York City has consolidated 40 separate centres, and 14 pages of contact telephone numbers into one location and phone number. 311 now handles approximately 40,000 calls per day (as at November 2004) and provides a uniform customer service experience.46

France has a similar service known as Allo Service Public.47

Canada’s eContact is a “collaborative multi-jurisdictional project designed to improve access to government services across the whole country... [however] eContact uses a Natural Language Processor and search engine to interpret the citizen’s query and then locate a similar question from a database of questions and contact data provided by jurisdictions across Canada ... over time eContact will look at

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45 It was possible to ascertain that in 2006-07 Service Canada had more than 20,000 FTE staff. Forecasts for 2009-10 indicate that this number is planned to reduce to 18,000. It is difficult to be definitive for the cause of the change as the only information available is not comparative - in 2005-06 there were 76 access centres, whereas 2009-10 proposes 110 processing sites, 15 call centres and 600 points of service in-person.
46 New Zealand’s Annual Report is focused on outcomes, which meant it was difficult to find any useful comparison figures even on staff and number of shopfronts over time.
47 In Britain it was possible to ascertain from DWP Annual Reports that total staff levels had fallen significantly – from 131,409 in 2002-03 to 102,374 in 2008-09. However there is insufficient information to establish in which areas less staff were required, except to note that staff associated with the unemployment function had fallen, but were expected to increase in 2009-10 (this may at least be in-part to economic circumstances rather than service delivery reforms). Staff associated with child functions, have reduced from 13,180 to 100 staff in 2009-10. Pension staff had also declined (from 13,330 to 10,738, in a period where the number of pensioners would have increased). Limited information was available in English to assess the reforms in Belgium.
multi-channel access beginning with the telephone, where an agent provides the link between the citizen and the required information or services, and evolving to direct Web access\(^48\).

**Personalisation of services (and intensive assistance)**

Personalisation of services can involve not only redesigning government to present itself in a citizen-centric manner (rather than in the traditional siloed approach that is convenience for government) as is occurring in Nova Scotia, Canada, where federal and provincial services have joined forces to enable parents “to register the birth of their child, apply for a birth certificate, a Social Insurance number and child tax benefits all in one easy application in the hospital where their child is born”\(^49\). It can also involve being able to address the whole needs of the client in the most appropriate manner. “By dealing more effectively with routine transactions and by reducing the complexity of having to deal with different parts of government in different ways, service providers will be able to devote more time to delivering a personalised service to individuals. This may involve less time spent on carrying out routine identity and entitlement checks and more time on resolving complex problems or helping people access services where they are having difficulty”\(^50\).

There is a common belief across the countries examined that services to clients with complex situations requiring multiple forms of assistance (people who are unfamiliar with the operation of government or who have cultural, language or reading difficulties) are best addressed through services providers at the local level “small, agile providers of services, such as the best of the third sector, have a vital role in personalising services. But personalisation does require some fundamental changes in the way individual services collaborate”\(^51\).

New Zealand is adopting an approach characterised by taking a wider view of people and families in need, where clients only need to tell their story once and can get help for a range of needs by a variety of co-located agencies and social services (including NGOs)\(^52\). Flexibility is provided to these shopfronts, known as Community Link Offices, to provide the services most helpful to the given community. However only five Community Link Offices currently exist.

Italy has developed an IT system for its welfare services for public servants in local municipalities. Services are organised around the citizen and “users of the service have to submit only one request, regardless of the agencies who must be involved to fulfil it”\(^53\).

Such an approach is being extended beyond the welfare sector in some countries. For example, “Wraparound Milwaukee, in the USA, provides a single system of tailored care for children with serious emotional disturbance, with a lead professional responsible for each child”\(^54\). The Singapore government has also encouraged government agencies to “collaborate with the private sector in delivering end to end services for the convenience of government’s customers... some of the cross-agency collaborations that have been identified include a one-stop application for public works (water, sewerage, electricity and gas work) involving seven agencies”\(^55\).

\(^52\) http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/our-structure.html#CommunityLink6
Community interaction

In addition, service delivery reforms are generally accompanied by increased community interaction. This interaction can occur in a variety of ways. “In Cologne, for example, participatory budgeting uses new technology to give citizens a stronger voice over how public money is spent”\(^{56}\). “The platform empowers citizens to participate in planning the budget by submitting proposals, comments and assessments and submitting votes for or against specific proposals”\(^{57}\).

Service Canada seeks feedback from its non-government organisation providers, and its own staff on ways to enhance services and better meet client needs “frontline staff [are] empowered to take an active role in shaping and delivering service excellence”\(^{58}\).

Also, “countries are shifting spending for service delivery towards the local level. In some countries this is coupled with decentralisation of competences to sub-national governments, such as Spain, Italy and to a certain extent France. Others are opening local branches of central government offices. Countries like Greece and Portugal has for some years had physical “one-stop-shops” where citizens in one place can access a range of selected services”\(^{59}\).

“A consultative and participative approach is also a way to increase user interest in the public sector and its provision of e-government services. Integrating on-line consultation and participation tools in service delivery portals is a way to boost traffic and drive usage of a government portal. In the cases of Denmark and Hungary, both countries have implemented on-line functions for public consultation and debate”\(^{60}\). Britain and New Zealand are actively seeking feedback on services and in policy development and design from both its third sector providers and clients.

It was not possible to gain an understanding of the operation of third party arrangements from the information available on the websites of the countries examined or the country comparison analyses reviewed.

Emerging European approach

Based on the theory that “Entitlements and redress for citizens enable professionals and services to look out to their local people rather than up to central government”\(^{61}\) and “that by establishing a base of fair access and standards, entitlements allow for local innovation and flexibility in services”\(^{62}\), many Nordic countries are moving towards a rights or entitlements based service delivery. This involves setting minimum standards that citizens are entitled to receive and providers are accountable for delivering. Where these minimums are not met, the client is entitled to redress.

For example, “In 2005, the [Swedish] Government issued care guarantees for all procedures, which stipulates instant contact with the health system, seeing a general practitioner within 7 days, consulting a specialist within 90 days and a maximum 90-day wait for treatment. This guarantee stipulates that if the entitlement to be treated with three months cannot be


\(^{57}\) Ibid, p34.


\(^{59}\) http://www.oecd.org/document/26/03343.en_2649_34487_41527450_1_1_1_1,00.html


met, patients may choose to be treated at another hospital in the district, within another council’s area or by a private provider, with their own local council paying for the care and any travel costs. Patients also have the right to seek treatment in another EU country for planned care if they cannot get the care in Sweden within the normal waiting times. Within 7 months the number of patients waiting longer than three months for treatment fell by half. Similar results (a halving of waiting lists) occurred in Finland within four months after a right to childcare was established. However it is not clear if such an approach would be feasible in a western, English speaking cultures.

OECD approaches

The OECD in its paper Rethinking e-Government Services: User Centred Approaches provides the following table summarising the different approaches of OECD countries to increase user take up of electronic government services:

Table A1: Summary of approaches to increase user take-up by OECD countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of approach</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational and administrative simplification</td>
<td>This approach is characterised by a focus on making the organisation of e-government services simple and transparent. The focus is to give the user a ‘one-door-entry’ to the public sector, and to ensure that services are functioning under a simple legal framework. Examples include portals and reduction of administrative burdens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation-bound</td>
<td>A situation-bound approach is characterised by a focus on addressing typical life event situations of users, thus meeting users with targeted solutions in typical situations at specific points in their daily lives. Examples include addressing physically disabled persons’ needs for different types of help or student needs for study grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory and inclusive</td>
<td>A participatory and inclusive approach is characterised by a focus on motivating users to engage and influence government actions – thus making it attractive and relevant for users to use e-government services. Examples include portals for public consultations or public ICT centres in less populated areas with a difficult socioeconomic context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and channel management</td>
<td>A marketing and channel management approach is characterised by focusing on marketing e-government services and their advantages, often in close connection with channel management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Costs

This paper has examined several components of service delivery reform, including the on-line interface, email and transactions, the provision of face to face services, contact centres, personalised services, and community interaction. It is difficult to assess the costs and savings associated with these types of service delivery initiatives in other countries, not only because each country has taken a different approach, but because information on actual costs and savings is not readily available. Instead, the information that was located relating to specific reform components or aspects and was generally presented in percentage workload changes, rather than, dollar, staff or other rationalisation measures. A summary of the most useful information is presented below.

Some countries have made a broad commitment to achieve target efficiencies associated with service delivery reform: “Achieving administrative burden reductions through simplification is high on the

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political agenda across OECD countries. In the European Union, an action plan for reducing by 2012 the administrative burden by 25 per cent was adopted in 2007.\(^{65}\)

Some examples of significant efficiencies are available - Service Canada, for example, saved C$292 million in the first year of operation.\(^{66}\) “The [French] government hopes to realise significant benefits from its electronic administration program – as much as €5 to 7 billion per year, according to some estimates”\(^{67}\); and in Britain, “Jobcentre Plus has brought together employment and benefits services and given people the choice of accessing services and support in person, over the phone or on the Internet. This has delivered over £450 million in efficiency savings between 2004–05 and 2007–08.”\(^{68}\)

Information on the British government website relating to shared services indicates that “there are clear benefits that can be gained from sharing services across the UK public service, as highlighted by reports such as Gershon and Varney. Experience from the private sector shows that typically corporate shared services can deliver efficiencies of between 20 per cent and 50 per cent.”\(^{69}\)

Britain is aiming to achieve overall efficiencies of £35 billion: “savings of up to £400 million are made from a reduction in the number of government websites, use of the e-channel and use of shared Web-service infrastructure;

- contact centre performance is measured against agreed benchmarks. The cost of operating contact centres is reduced by 25 per cent. The percentage of problems dealt with at first point of contact is significantly increased;
- the cost of government estates management has reduced by at least £300 million each year through the use of shared offices and innovative use of mobile technology and mobile services has spread.”\(^{70}\)

Other Indicative estimated efficiencies include, by 2013-14:

- “compared to 2007-08 spending of around £18 billion on back office operations (such as finance and HR) across the public sector, savings of around £4 billion a year;
- compared to 2007-08 spending of around £16 billion on IT, savings of £3.2 billion a year;
- compared to 2007-08 spending of £89 billion, savings of around £6.1 billion a year from an extended programme of collaborative procurement (plus £1.6 billion of collaborative procurement savings on IT which are included in the figure above); and
- compared to 2007-08 running costs of approximately £25 billion on the public sector’s property estate, cost savings of up to £1.5 billion a year.

Some of these savings are already underway. It is estimated that nearly £6 billion per year of these savings can be delivered by 2010-11... others will take time to deliver, for example as contracts need to be changed, back office operations need to be restructured, and surplus property is sold. Proceeds from property sales (excluding council housing), totalling in the region of £20 billion, should also be achievable over an initial 10-year period.”\(^{71}\)

Wider application of a citizen centric view can also yield savings. “Evidence shows that intervening early and in a coordinated manner to support these families is cost-effective. For example, Family Intervention Projects, which coordinate the support provided to the most challenging families, have proved effective in reducing a range of risk factors for families such as antisocial behaviour, risk of homelessness, offending, poor parenting and poor school attendance, with an average costs per family are around £14,000 per year. This expenditure is nominal when compared with other costs to the...”


\(^{69}\) www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/cio/shared_services.aspx


taxpayer that can be incurred by these families – which one study estimated at being between £250,000 and £350,000 per family per year.”

Factors for success

Based on service delivery reforms in Canada, Belgium, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Australia, Roy and Langford\(^\text{73}\) indicate that in addition to active political engagement, the following strategies are common to the successful integration of service delivery reforms:

- create a collaborative network-based governance framework mechanisms (that transcend traditional jurisdictional silos);
- engage citizens and communities in design and delivery;
- create a common technology infrastructure, that emphasizes open standards and interoperable information systems across all government levels;
- agree on a common identity management framework; and
- create a formalized governance framework that emphasizes collaborative planning and shared forms of accountability\(^\text{74}\).

Other factors of success associated with service delivery reform include:

- political will: For example, in Canada, “In January 2006, a new minority Conservative government came to power. Since then, service transformation programs (including Service Canada) – which were key programs of the previous government – are still on the agenda, but they seem to have taken a lower profile in the past year\(^\text{75}\);
- the level of trust in government: “users in governments and their management of often sensitive personal information, data and digital identities: ensuring that information data and digital identities are stored and used in a trusted and secured way respecting their integrity, authenticity, and privacy is among the basic prerequisite for higher take-up”\(^\text{76}\); and
- the level of Internet penetration; client familiarity with non-government on-line transactions, like Internet banking; and marketing; and access are also important factors.

In formulating a framework for British service delivery reform, Sir David Varney surmised that “a number of critical success factors can be identified from existing projects, This starts with the importance of having clear objectives: improved citizen or business experience; better value for money; and staff satisfaction. Other specific shifts in thinking that are essential to deliver citizen and business focussed services include:

- every level involved must be behind the change – top-down leadership, overall governance, a team with shared vision and bottom-up staff input must all be aligned;
- service delivery must be organised around the citizen or business – not he needs of the organisation;
- delivery chains must be viewed as end-to-end processes, not as a series of silo processes;
- efficiency and effectiveness should decide function and design; and
- for ongoing success and sustainability it is essential to design in flexibility and adapt services in light of practical experience, changing customer insight and regular benchmarking”\(^\text{77}\).


Summary

The OECD, in its 2009 report *Rethinking e-Government Services: User Centred Approaches* has characterised service delivery reforms under the following headings, which also provides a relevant summary of the to the countries which have been examined in this appendix:

- “Simple organisation: A single government website acting as a one-stop shop for e-government services makes it easier for users to find and access those services. Creating a simple organisational hub for e-government services, bundling them in a few (rather than many) portals, has simplified users’ overview of and access to, services. Such an approach underscores the importance of having a fully integrated back-office where connectivity and inter-operability are secured for cross-organisational service solutions.

- Same ‘look and feel’: Ensuring that common navigation and search architectures are used across all content and services heightens recognisability and improves usability.

- Recognisability and marketing: A strong brand for e-government services which is used proactively in targeted marketing efforts has proven to be an important prerequisite for user take-up. One of the recurrent challenges seen in a number of different national surveys is that users are often not aware of available services.

- ‘Killer applications’: A focus on high-volume, high-frequency transactional services – use of high-impact and high-demand applications to drive take-up and usage – is a necessity to capture as many e-government users as possible. Some OECD countries combine this with targeted channel management, including making some e-government services mandatory.

- Relevance: Ensuring that targeted user context and topics are used at all levels of navigation, around which government services are packaged to meet specific user demand, will improve the perception of relevance of the services to users. This is particularly important when governments use a ‘life-event’ approach to service organisation.

- Inclusive service design: Inviting users to participate in and contribute to service design will ensure (on- or offline) a focus for services on usability around user needs and demands”.

While noting the types of reforms that countries had undertaken, Accenture assesses the success of government reforms in its 2007 report *Delivering on the Promise*, noting that “Governments have unintentionally widened the gap between service provision and citizen value. Technology advances in recent years have led governments to focus primarily on the front end of service, fostering expectations of an entirely new customer experience. Governments succeeded in representing existing services across multiple channels. However, their success was just the first step of true citizen-centricity. What governments still have not done is make the infrastructural and cultural changes necessary to fully realize their vision. Citizens used these newly available channels expecting consistent levels of service quality. Instead, the back-end infrastructure was inadequate, resulting in a poor customer experience and lower satisfaction”.

“Today there are excellent examples in the public sector of entities cooperating to give citizens and businesses a better service, these need support and encouragement and we need to grow and emulate their achievements across the whole of the public service sector. The existence of these programmes is encouraging, but a much more fundamental and widespread change is necessary if the public service economy is to match the performance of the best service providers”. It is the creation of such a public service which the body of this report addresses.

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Country analysis: Comparable models of government

Two countries with federated systems of government were examined – Canada and Belgium.

Canada

Canada, like Australia, is a federal parliamentary democracy, with government powers shared between federal and provincial governments. It has a population exceeding 30 million persons and like Australia has its population spread over a large geographic land mass.

Key federal responsibilities include defence, foreign affairs, trade, regional development and setting national policy standards. The majority of public services are provided through provincial or municipal governments (health, education, social assistance, transportation, natural resources and police).

Service Delivery

Service Canada was created in 2005 to offer single-window access to a wide range of Government of Canada programs and services for citizens through more than 600 points of service located across the country, call centres (through a single number 1-800-O-CANADA) and the Internet.

In 2006-07, 77 services were provided on behalf of 13 federal agencies: Agriculture and Agri-food Canada; Canadian Heritage; Canadian Revenue Agency; Citizen and Immigration Canada; Correctional Service of Canada; Human Resources and Social Development Canada; Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada; Department of National Defence; Passport Canada; Public Works and Government Services Canada; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Transport Canada; and Veteran’s Affairs Canada.

Integrated front end

Service Canada provides a one-stop-shop integrating an array of federal government services, including welfare, taxation and immigration. Links to a few services delivered at other levels of government (for example registering a birth which occurs at the provincial/State government) are also provided. However this appears primarily to involve services linked to key life events.

Generally only a short narrative regarding the service is provided, before the user is electronically re-directed to the delivering agency or the responsible department.

Service Canada is also working with state government agencies to improve service. For example, it is working with the Ontario provincial government on ways to achieve collaborative one-stop service delivery.

An examination of Service Ontario showed that the list of services provided is limited to those services that it administers, with exceptions for passports, income tax and the government employment website.

Service Canada also works with community groups that provide services at the community level in order to develop new services and improve services to better meet client needs.

On-line transactions

81 http://www.studycanada.ca/english/government.htm
83 ibid, p7.
84 www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/index.shtml
86 www.servicecanada.gc.ca
88 ibid, p28.
The Canadian secure channel used to establish an on-line Service Canada account is known as ‘epass’. Creating an account and customising a personal interface on the Service Canada site does not require any proof of identification. As a consequence, the transactions that can occur on-line are largely limited to simple requests. For example, a client is unable even to advise federal or government agencies of their change of address by on-line means. However some transactions, relying on additional information (for security purposes) are facilitated by ‘epass’.

The Canadian Government accepts electronic passport applications. However while they are able to largely be completed on-line, passport applications (even renewals) must be mailed in with a signature and be accompanied by photographs.

A couple of benefits can be applied for on-line, including disability benefits for veterans, and employment insurance benefits. In addition to establishing an epass account: activation of an on-line account for Veteran’s disability benefits requires the user to enter their Veteran’s file number; application for Employment Insurance benefits requires the client to submit the social insurance number unique identifier, date of birth and mother’s maiden name – information which is authenticated against the Social Insurance Register.

In Canada the individual identifier (a social insurance number) can be applied for from birth, if an original birth certificate, or Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, or Permanent Resident Card, or work or study permit is provided. While Social Insurance Numbers are provided at the federal level, registration of births, deaths, marriages etc occurs at the provincial (state) government level.

Access to community

Service Canada has 325 Service Canada Shopfronts. Service Canada also provides outreach representatives who travel into communities to provide assistance either on a regularly scheduled basis or when there is a specific need, such as in the event of a natural disaster or when a company closes.

Service Canada partners with Non Government Organisations to delivery services. It also seeks feedback from these organisations and their own staff on ways to enhance services and better meet client needs.

Governance

Service delivery transformation is facilitated by two cross portfolio inter governmental co-ordinating councils (to conduct joint research and evaluate and pursue opportunities to adopt common practices and collaborate on service delivery) and a non-profit research organisation (the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service), as well as a training college for Service Canada employees to develop the knowledge and skills they need to provide high quality personalised service.

Service Canada is part of the Department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. This department is responsible for policy, program and service delivery in the areas of social welfare, employment and training, disabilities and pensions.

The Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development is the senior Minister responsible for the portfolio - she is not a member of Cabinet. The department also services the Minister of Labour, and the Leader of Government in the Senate and Secretary of State (Seniors), and the associated parliamentary Secretary.

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89 http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/reports/corp/help.html
92 Ibid p87. The mission of the ICCS is to promote high levels of citizen satisfaction with public-sector service delivery. The ICCS achieves its mission by undertaking research to identify citizens’ service needs and expectations and by assisting the public sector in identifying and applying innovative, best practice service solutions which support quality service across all channels and respond effectively to citizens’ service needs.
93 http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/index.shtml
Summary

Some good progress has been made in assisting individuals to interact with government, particularly through a shallow government-client interface at the federal level. Greater benefits will flow from integration with provincial (State) government services, from facilitating greater numbers of on-line transactions, and by addressing one of the largest impediments, that of "truly transform[ing] services across departments within the federal government and across other jurisdictions."\(^{95}\)

Belgium

Analysis of the Belgian government’s approach to service delivery reform was difficult to test in practice given information on the Belgian websites is generally presented in French and Dutch, and occasionally, also in German. Consequently, the following précis is based on analysis undertaken by the OECD and the EU, country comparisons, and information provided by the Crossroads Bank for Social Security that was available in English.

General

Belgium is one of the smallest and most densely populated OECD countries, with a population of 10.8 million. It is a federal constitutional monarchy, where executive and legislative powers are divided among the Federal Government, three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital) and three Communities (Dutch, French and German-speaking).

Regions are responsible for matters such as planning, conservation, housing, employment, planning, public works, and transport. While Communities are responsible for health, welfare, culture, education and training, and co-operation between the Communities and the Regions.

Each Region and Community has its own legislative and executive powers and its own Parliament and Government to exercise these powers.\(^ {96}\) Legislative power at the federal level is held by a bicameral Parliament.\(^ {97}\) “There is no hierarchical relationship between Belgian government"\(^ {98}\) and “political discussions are sometimes required to determine which of these separate entities has responsibility for specific policy areas and concrete activities.”\(^ {99}\)

Under the Copernicus Reform several federal ministries were created: ten vertical, four horizontal (providing support functions across the federal level), and several programmatic ministries (working on cross-cutting social themes).\(^ {100}\)

The Belgian social security system is based on the payment of social contributions (as a percentage of salary), which are used to fund the social security system. The system provides allowances in the event of sickness/incapacity/invalidity, unemployment, family allowances and pensions. Other supplementary supports are funded from the budget, including income support, income guarantees and other payments to the handicapped and elderly.\(^ {101}\)

\(^{95}\) Ibid p87.

\(^{96}\) However, the Flemish Region and Community merged their executive and legislative powers, giving birth to one single Flemish Parliament, one single Flemish Government and one single Public Administration, competent for Community and Regional matters.


\(^{99}\) Ibid, p43.

\(^{100}\) http://www.belgium.be/en/family/social_security_in_belgium/index.jsp

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

Integrated front end

The Belgian portal (www.belgium.be), branded as ‘Portal belgium.be’ groups information under categories including health, housing, the environment, education, work and family\(^\text{103}\). Limited information is provided under this branding, with the client then redirected to the relevant delivery agency. Headings have not been standardised, instead the information provided is that considered most useful to the client.

On-line transactions

In Belgium, each private individual has a single identification number. Since 1996, a social identity card with a memory chip has been issued to individuals, upon which the single identification number can be read visually or electronically. The card is used for identification purposes, at each direct or indirect contact with the public sector (when used with a PIN code), and enables clients to digitally sign electronic documents\(^\text{103}\).

Unfortunately, due to language barriers, it was not possible to interrogate many aspects of the Belgian websites to ascertain whether it was possible to apply on-line for government services, and whether this occurred in an end-to-end manner. However, assessment by the EU indicates that the level of e-transactions facilitated differs across sectors\(^\text{104}\).

While information is generally available on-line, including for passports, drivers licences and building applications, forms can be downloaded for unemployment benefits and scholarship application. Only a few transactions like child allowance are fully automated and only a few, like taxation returns, car registration, births/deaths and marriage functions and library services are facilitated on-line in an end to end manner.

Generally, passport applications (with signature) are made to the municipal or provincial administrations, with photographs, and a certified copy of the birth certificate or identity card attached. A private firm is contracted to collect the applications and return the passports, for collection by the client, in person\(^\text{105}\).

Recognising the increasing flow of workforce across country boundaries the Limosa project provides a one-stop shop for persons seeking to work in Belgium, while meeting all regulatory requirements (including work and residence permits and declarations) and providing sufficient information to enable monitoring of working conditions to maintain a level playing field with Belgian workers. Limosa, a simplified application which establishes the name of the traveller and employer, and the key elements of the assignment – information that can be filled in by clients in five minutes, with the information directed behind the scenes to the relevant agencies. The process occurs wholly on-line. The identity of the client is checked by verifying details against a passport, social security or pension number, before a client supplied user name and password are accepted and access the system facilitated. The client can access the system to check their status at any time. The application form and call centre support are available in four languages to assist clients. The Limosa project is modular based in design, meaning that elements can be applied behind the other scenes to other initiatives. It is also being considered to be applied more widely across the EU. The Belgian government purports that Limosa has achieved savings of €50m per annum.

Shopfronts

The social security system in Belgium involves more than 2,000 offices that collect contributions, and deliver benefits (such as unemployment, holiday pay, health care reimbursement, old age pensions) and


\(^{105}\) www.practice.eu/en/print/288184
supplemental benefits. These institutions are spread across all governments – federal, community, regional, provincial and municipal"\textsuperscript{106}.

As its “federal structure allows for a regionally diversified approach”\textsuperscript{107}, service delivery reform has been concentrated in the back office through the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS)\textsuperscript{108}.

CBSS is the ‘single face’ of government for all federal social security benefits. It provides the back-office infrastructure for social service delivery across the country, simplified processes and reporting requirements for individuals and employers. It also integrates these benefits with services provided by regional and municipal governments. CBSS is governed by an autonomous public sector body, with a management board comprising representatives of the public, companies, and government service providers\textsuperscript{109}.

“Before the creation of the Bank, there were 3,000 different government agencies exchanging 1 million lengthy paper forms, meaning citizens and employers had to fill in countless forms to repeatedly provide the same information to government agencies”\textsuperscript{110}. Anecdotal evidence would therefore suggest that the number of agencies has been rationalised as a result of service delivery initiatives.

\textit{Community Access}

Belgium is working to diversify the ways in which citizens can access services. While “all channels are considered equal … four channels for all services; Internet, telephone, mail and in-person”\textsuperscript{111}, “a number of new delivery channels were introduced over the past year, including SMS, interactive digital television and online chat; a voice portal and info mobile to serve the underprivileged are currently under consideration”\textsuperscript{112}.

In addition, Belgium has several mechanisms to increase access to computers including: a package of computer services (computer, card reader, software, four hours of training and a year’s worth of broadband access); and a computer recycling project to enable children to borrow refurbished computers to develop their skills\textsuperscript{113}. Some of the regional governments have implemented other initiatives including training for persons over the age of fifty, a travelling service bus for outreach to the underprivileged, and free Internet access in public locations\textsuperscript{114}.

The Belgian government also engages with the public to seek feedback, with the “aim to reduce red tape, over-regulation and bureaucratic complexity across all levels of government. Citizens are encouraged to communicate their views on complex forms, redundant processes, useless regulations and contradictory procedures” under the ‘Kafka’ initiative\textsuperscript{115}.

\textsuperscript{115} ibid, p57.
How

Due to its multi-layers of government, Belgian service delivery reforms are generally framework based, enabling the different layers of government flexibility to meet their clients need and maintain the autonomy accorded to each level of government.

The frameworks are set through formal cooperation agreements to set common approaches and technology platforms, including its identification card.

“Formally, the Inter-governmental Co-operation Agreements define the framework for collaboration and co-ordination among Belgian governments, supporting a common prioritised goal across and within governments: delivering integrated services. Co-ordination within governments is ensured by the e-government bodies set up by the federal, regional, and community governments individually. Two Inter-governmental Co-operation Agreements for e-government (2001 and 2005) have been signed by the Federal Government and the regional and community governments, cementing formal commitments to e-government co-ordination efforts across governments” 116.

“While all Belgian governments have created specific strategies and action plans for developing and implementing e-government, each defines the scope and pace for implementation of its e-government programmes. Each Belgian government has identified its own priorities, leading to different e-government outputs and outcomes across the Belgian state structure” 117.

The OECD recognises that “this leads to the risk of incoherence in approaches, incompatibility and (semantic, organisational, and technical) interoperability, and redundancy of e-government building blocks. Efficiency losses are highly likely Belgium-wide. Enabling re-use of readily available components does not necessarily satisfy governments and cannot replace bottom-up sharing of application and experiences” 118.

At the agency level, CBSS has a “client and user focus, which is formulated in ex ante agreements with ministries, social partners and administrations active in the social security domain and which is renewed on an annual basis. Every year in March a letter is sent to about 2 000 representatives of institutions who state their individual needs and requirements within the CBSS’ activities. A meeting is held in June to commonly agree on concrete needs and requirements. Finally, in September, the board of stakeholders agrees on an overall action plan for the coming year” 119.

Summary

Belgium has a number of layers of government, all with their own parliamentary arrangements and service delivery responsibilities. Consequently, service delivery reform has been concentrated behind the curtain through the CBSS. Limited on-line transactions are available. Belgium has exhibited some innovative solutions to provide services and overcome the digital divide, however they are local or regionally based, rather than national.

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117 ibid, p15.
118 ibid, p22.
119 ibid, p105.
Country analysis: western, English speaking countries

Two English speaking countries, which have strong societal and cultural synergies with Australia, were also examined - New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

New Zealand

New Zealand has a population of 4.3 million people. While similar to Australia in terms of culture and society, New Zealand takes a different approach to government – with only one national house of parliament and local government authorities (which include regional councils, city councils and district councils)\(^{120}\). Local government regulates planning (including building permits), facilitates libraries, parks, rubbish services and street lighting. Some local government authorities have wider responsibilities including regional sustainability, managing waterways, regional emergency management and civil defence preparedness, regional land transport planning and contracting passenger services\(^{121}\).

In essence, the New Zealand national government effectively delivers those services provided by both the Australian federal and state governments.

Integrated front end

The whole of government integrated portal for New Zealand is found at newzealand.govt.nz. It provides information to clients under thematic headings, for example Education and Training, Health, Sport and Recreation, Families and Communities, Kids and Youth and 60 plus. This enables clients to access information under these categories from a variety of agencies. While this information is primarily provided by the national government agencies, it also facilitates information from a variety of non-government sources, including societies and counselling services. There is also a section linking to community groups and sector organisations including charities, voluntary organisations and client advocacy groups.

Many of New Zealand’s social welfare services, which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, are provided on the Work and Income (WI)\(^{122}\) website. At that site, advice (under the WI branding) is provided for all listed services and entitlements (including eligibility and application requirements). These services and entitlements are delivered by both WI and other government agencies. For services delivered by other agencies/entities, links to the relevant organisations are provided.

WI’s listed services are focused on welfare related issues, unlike the Service Canada model which attempts to cover off all government services including passports, licences etc.

Work and Income also does not refer clients to non-welfare government services at either level of government.

While exhibiting many useful features, including standardised headings and information, the Work and Income site is not a one-stop-shop for welfare services – other websites have been created, for example, the StudyLink, and Working for Families sites.

On-line transactions

While New Zealand appears to have implemented common ICT standards and published a regularly updated ICT plan, this does not yet appear to have enabled the bulk of transactions to occur wholly online.

It is possible to populate most benefit application forms on-line (excluding Superannuation and Veteran’s Pension). This involves filling-in and submitting the application and in most cases then arranging a meeting with WI to sign the application form and provide relevant proof of

\(^{120}\) www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lpip.nsf/wpg_url/about-local-government-index

\(^{121}\) ibid

\(^{122}\) www.workandincome.govt.nz
identity/relationship documentation. Once the form has been submitted changes cannot be made, except by starting and submitting a new application form\textsuperscript{123}.

While the Working for Families site pre-populates application forms, information is not collected or stored electronically – it has to be printed and sent by post.

The New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) currently has in place an on-line service which allows clients to use the same (rather than multiple) logon details to access all participating on-line government services\textsuperscript{124}. To use this service, clients need to register with a participating government service provider. Additional steps in the registration process may be required by some providers\textsuperscript{125}. The DIA is also developing an on-line identity verification system to enable clients to prove their identity to participating service providers via the Internet\textsuperscript{126}. Currently only a very limited number of agencies are involved with the DIA on-line services. Services include enabling clients to: view their Auckland City Council rates on-line; citizens to apply on-line for central government jobs; change of car registration; conduct some Emissions Trading Scheme transactions; and access (for limited persons) to statistical information\textsuperscript{127}.

\textbf{Shopfronts}

WI indicates that case managers are at the centre of its service, providing ongoing case management to people and support them to achieve independence through financial assistance, work, training and development opportunities, client plan development and ongoing in-work support. WI also have staff in specialist roles, including family violence; health and disability; and childcare coordination.

WI also uses specialist areas to deal with some of the more complex/sensitive issues, including International Services; fraud and non-compliance, debt recovery, veteran’s pensions and residential care.

\textbf{Community Access}

In order to address ‘digital divide’ issues, New Zealand retained the ability to interact with services over the counter, by phone or through mail\textsuperscript{128}. The disabled were catered for by adopting internationally recognised standards for government websites\textsuperscript{129}.

New Zealand provides services to geographically isolated clients through Heartland Services - a government funded inter-agency initiative providing people in provincial and rural New Zealand with access to government services. A long term aim of Heartland Services is to have voluntary and community groups located in the same building as government agencies. This will improve the linkages between government and community services, and enable them to share resources\textsuperscript{130}. Heartland Services provides onsite coordinators who can arrange appointments with visiting representatives from a range of government agencies, as well as free access to government websites and government phone lines.

In its Vision Statement for e-government reform, New Zealand committed to using information and communications technology in ways that would increase rather than limit opportunities for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{123} www.workandincome.govt.nz/on-line-services/apply/help-on-how-to-apply.html
  \item \textsuperscript{124} The basic logon comprises a username and password. For sensitive transactions, a successful login will generate a random code by text message or token, to be entered.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} https://www2.i.govt.nz/cls/static/logonservice
  \item \textsuperscript{126} https://www2.i.govt.nz/cls/static/homepage
  \item \textsuperscript{127} https://www2.i.govt.nz/cls/static/participatingagencies
  \item \textsuperscript{128} www.e.govt.nz/about-egovt/faqs.html
  \item \textsuperscript{129} ibid
  \item \textsuperscript{130} http://www.heartlandservices.govt.nz/ Services provided through the Heartland Services network include: Accident Compensation Scheme; Careers Service; Child, Youth and Family agency; Department of Corrections; Court services; Department of Labour; Housing New Zealand; Inland Revenue; Internal Affairs; Maori Land Court; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Studylink; Work and Income.
participation. New Zealand has a number of initiatives that utilise Web 2.0 and social networking tools. These include a shared government agency information sharing site, public contributions to proposed legislative changes (wiki.policeact.govt.nz), on-line forums, blogs and facilitation of e-petitions. For example www.thecouch.org.nz, where “Since April 2006, 3,000 people have signed up to answer on-line questionnaires and short polls that help the [Families] Commission better understand the experience of New Zealand families”. The Government, including through the Community Sector Taskforce works to “build stronger Community and Voluntary Sector networks” to further enable communities “to engage with local issues, lead positive change and provide a greater voice and visibility”.

How

“Meeting people’s needs on-line has meant changing the way government works by integrating processes and services across traditional agency boundaries. To achieve this, government has increasingly adopted common policies and standards, developed shared data resources, software applications and infrastructure”.

The majority of reforms occurred following the creation of an “IT policy Taskforce in 1997. The taskforce worked with the Chief Executive’s Group on Information Management and Technology and advised the government on how to develop a guiding vision for on-line services and initiate the development of a sector-wide strategy”. The taskforce subsequently issued a number of significant policy documents. Following the government adoption of the Vision Statement, an E-government Unit was established in the State Services Commission on 1 July 2000, with the aim to facilitate greater co-ordination, strategy and collaboration; and the development of overarching standards. Currently, three agencies (the State Services Commission, the Treasury and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) are responsible for taking an all-of-government view, and for working across the system to lift overall performance and improve the delivery of services to New Zealanders. New Zealand also currently assesses Public Service chief executives against their progress on the State Services Development Goals (which include key elements of service delivery reform). The State Services Commission is also setting the performance priorities and expectations with chief executives aligned to the delivery of specific outcomes over the short and medium term. The Code of Conduct has also been revised and “seeks to reinforce a spirit of services and sets common standards of behaviour”.

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134 http://cst.org.nz/about/work_programme/weaving_communities_together/
137 The current Development Goals are
- Networked State Services: Use technology to transform the provision of services for New Zealanders;
- Value-for-Money State Services: Use resources and powers in an efficient, appropriate and effective way;
- Coordinated State agencies: Ensure the total contribution of government agencies is greater than the sum of its parts;
- Assemble State Services: enhance access, responsiveness and effectiveness and improve New Zealanders’ experience of State Services;
- Trusted State Services: Strengthen trust in the State Services and reinforce the spirit of service;
- Employer of choice: Ensure the State Services is an employer of choice attractive to high performers who are committed to service and the achievement of results; and
- Networked State Services: Use technology to transform the provision of services for New Zealanders.

139 ibid, p16.
E-government in New Zealand was supported by the rollout of two-way high-speed broadband services to rural New Zealand. In addition, some government websites began providing information in both Maori and English\textsuperscript{140}.

New Zealand has also completed a comprehensive review of government services \textit{Kiwis Count}, and have committed to continue such reporting in order to “benchmark performance .. [and] continue to improve over time and better meet the needs and expectations of the New Zealand public”\textsuperscript{141}.

\textit{Governance arrangements}

The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry), contains both policy and service delivery functions. Specifically, policy areas under the responsibility of this Ministry include employment and training, disabilities, children, families, youth development, community, older peoples and international welfare arrangements.

Key delivery responsibilities include delivering employment and income support, providing student allowances and loans, administering concessions, co-ordinating social/support services, and funding community service providers. Service delivery is achieved through four separate service delivery entities (each with its own delivery network): Work and Income; Child Youth and Family; Studylink; and Family and Community Services. Each entity is a separate division within the Ministry.

As a result, the Ministry services six Ministers – a set of primary Ministers (the Minister and Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment), and Ministers for specific elements of the portfolio: the Minister for Senior Citizens, the Minister and Associate Minister for Disability Issues, the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, the Minister of Youth Affairs, and the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs\textsuperscript{142}.

\textit{Summary}

New Zealand is moving towards a service delivery environment characterised by a common integration framework, case management of multi-disadvantage clients, and specialisation of front line client service officers. New Zealand also enables forms to be electronically submitted (to prevent re-keying of information), is adopting pre-population of forms and is emphasising the importance of “integrating processes and services across traditional boundaries”\textsuperscript{143}.

\textit{United Kingdom}

The United Kingdom (UK) is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with a sovereign and a parliament that has two houses: the House of Lords, and the House of Commons.

The UK has identified two key reasons for public service reform: huge social, economic and technological changes (including ageing of the population, changes in the size and composition of households and family structures, increases in income, and new ways to deliver services); and changes in public attitudes and expectations (where people are accustomed to greater choice, higher quality products, improved convenience, as well as greater control over their lives and better equipped to exercise choice)\textsuperscript{144}.

\textsuperscript{140} www.e.govt.nz/about-egovt/faqs.html
\textsuperscript{142} ibid, p5.
\textsuperscript{144} The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office, \textit{The UK Government’s Approach to Public Service Reform}, The Stationery Office, 2006 p4.
The UK government’s vision was for public services that are citizen-centric, available to all, efficient and effective, equitable, of high quality and that empower and improve citizen participation\(^\text{145}\). The UK chose to reform from four directions\(^\text{146}\), as part of a circle of continuous improvement:

- to enhance managerial performance (a top down approach), through more effective targets and performance management tools, providing greater flexibility for government and providers to respond to circumstances and closer outcome monitoring, particularly for worst performing services;
- to encourage choice and participation by clients to enhance services (a bottom up approach), including to tailor services to individual circumstances, to facilitate choice (for example for hospitals for planned care);
- to enhance collaboration, and the skills and attitudes of employees, including through making central government more strategically focussed, more effective use of ICT, and enhanced stakeholder feedback and communication; and
- to use market incentives to increase efficiency, to facilitate innovation, efficiency and quality.

Britain’s journey of service delivery continues today.

**Integrated front end**

The UK’s government portal (Direct.gov.uk) provides information and links to clients, irrespective of which level of government delivers the services, in a manner that is easy to navigate and under topics that clients can relate to, including age groups, subject groups, listings and life events. Unlike Service Canada which provides only a thin level of assistance before referring the client to the relevant entity administering the program, quite detailed information is provided under the Directgov branding. Where necessary, links to the relevant agencies are provided, but this generally occurs only to facilitate transactions.

This has occurred as a result of a ministerial decision in 2004 that government departments should fully utilise the capability of Directgov as the primary on-line channel to citizens and rationalise their own citizen-facing e-channels\(^\text{147}\).

Information on each page is not generally provided under standard categories (as occurs in the newzealand.govt.nz) but provides information under headings relevant to the topic and the needs of the user. Links to community organisations are also provided, but generally through encouraging participation in the voluntary sector, rather than as service providers. Directgov seems to carry only a Google-type search capacity, which does not shape query responses to client needs.

Directgov works closely with ministerial departments and non-departmental public bodies to collate key information all in one place. Directgov is accountable to the Departments that fund and use it\(^\text{148}\).

**On-line transactions**

It is possible that some transactions can occur in an on-line environment through the Directgov site, which is also accessible through Internet enabled mobile phones.

Generally these transactions are simple in nature, relating to payment of fines, reporting potholes/streetlights, parking permit applications, complaints, applying for volunteering opportunities, and delays in public transport/roads, or renewal of library books. For more complicated transactions, it is generally not possible to complete the whole transaction on-line. For example, enrol to vote registration forms can be filled in on-line but must be printed and signed and then posted\(^\text{149}\).

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\(^{146}\) Ibid, p6-10.


\(^{148}\) Ibid, p32.

\(^{149}\) [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register_to_vote/postal_vote_application/registration](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register_to_vote/postal_vote_application/registration)
Passport services also have limited on-line functionality. The UK government endeavours to utilise the information held with the passports service (for current passport holders) to aid in identity management, and where the client gives permission to utilise the passport photograph for the driver’s licence, indicating that this enables licences to be applied for on-line and processed more quickly. However there are differences in the security requirements for the licences site which mean that clients may have to redo their gateway password before accessing the licence area.

While it is possible to apply for passports on-line, on completion of the web-form a paper application form is then posted to the client for signature, and onward submission to the Passports Service with supporting documentary evidence, photographs and payment. However other arrangements exist (utilising Passport or Post Office facilities) if clients are travelling within four weeks.

The actual number of welfare transactions that can wholly occur on-line is very limited. While it is possible to enter information to receive advice on what benefits a client may be entitled to, the form did not appear to be Smart-form based, in that it asked questions which the client had previously indicated were not relevant. It also failed to indicate other services that may have been available to assist the client in the circumstances that were provided, for example it did not offer any assistance to a client for non-benefit assistance even though the client had chosen the drop-down box indicating they were homeless. In addition, the information entered into the Benefits Adviser was not transferrable to an application form. Information on available benefits for students, children under 18 years, and residential care clients are not available through this system.

Generally forms are available and can be filled in on-line. However the on-line system notes that if clients are (or have been until less than 3 months before) an recipient of Income Support to Jobseeker Allowance it is faster to claim by telephone rather than on-line. It is also common for benefit forms that are submitted electronically to flag that the agency will need to contact the client by telephone in the following days (for around 40 minutes) to seek additional information.

However some forms, like assistance in covering the costs of a child, must be printed, filled in by hand, signed and then sent. Even registration of a death is encouraged to occur in a face to face environment.

Shopfronts

Directgov does not have a shopfront or call centre network. Instead it simply refers clients to the existing, individually branded departments and or delivery agencies, for example the Jobcentre Plus shopfront network, motor vehicles department, passport service etc.

Community Access

There was very little reference to programs to provide services and assistance to clients affected by disabilities, other than Directgov adhering to international disability protocols for on-line services.

The only initiative identified to address the digital divide was the ‘myguide’ service launched in 2008. My guide is a website designed to help people take their first steps with computers and the Internet. Registered users get access to an easy-to-use email system and a wide range of on-line courses that cover everything from turning a computer on, to surfing the Internet.

The UK Government is also devoting resources to the Office of the Third Sector to support a range of activities by the third sector, including community action and campaigning; investing on the long-term future of the sector; and improving local partnerships. This includes funding community groups, identifying opportunities for third-sector organisations to deliver more and better public services, encouraging businesses to engage in social or environmental interests, and improving the third-sector

150 http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/Motoringtransactions/BeforéyouapplyD/DG_174531
152 http://www.myguide.gov.uk/myguide/MyguideHome.do
How

Government service delivery reform in Britain has been developed in response to a number of key reports provided over several years, including the Gershon and Varney reports. Service delivery reform is overseen through a council of government Chief Information Officers to pursue common infrastructure services and supplier management, and a broader Service Transformation Board containing senior representation from the main affected government agencies to promote end-to-end service design and delivery.  

Britain is moving towards a scenario where “customers should experience a common, consistent process to establishing their identity, including sign-on to on-line services. Services should use a common set of standards for identification, and manage risk within a common risk management framework consistent with an evolutionary path towards identity cards. New customer identifiers should be avoided wherever possible.”

A prominent element of Britain’s service delivery reforms is its shared services reform. “Shared Services involves the common delivery of a transactional operation or a function to more than one organisation (and often tens or even hundreds) to improve the effectiveness of those operations and to deliver them better, at lower cost. The component being shared might be a frontline service, a process or function in the back office (Human Resources, Finance, IT) or it can be a specific resource (a building, data, networks, information, a system or process). Through this approach greater efficiencies and effectiveness can come from Economies of scale, standardisation and streamlining, better resource utilisation, greater professionalism and management focus on supporting service delivery, releasing front-line service management time to focus on front-line delivery.”

Britain is also utilising emerging technologies to facilitate information sharing and collaboration across the public service: “currently, three pilot projects are under way to achieve this: Civil Pages, CivilWiki and Civil Blogs, all of which have been developed by customising low-cost software and are already connecting 3,000 individuals throughout the Civil Service. Civil Pages is a pilot programme that provides a private people directory for the Civil Service and allows collaborative ways of working within on-line communities. CivilWiki is a knowledge-sharing site for all civil servants on the government secure intranet. Civil Blogs is a personal publishing tool, which enables sharing of work experience, knowledge and thinking, in text or image forms, across the government secure intranets.”

Governance arrangements

The Department of Work and Pensions is Britain’s social welfare policy and service delivery agency. Given the breadth of its responsibilities, DWP services six Ministers – one with overarching responsibility for the department, with the others covering specific areas of the Department’s responsibilities, for example disabilities. In addition, complicated governance arrangements exist for DWP – which has more than 100,000 staff.

Senior Executives of DWP are responsible for the provision of policy advice to Ministers and for the development of policies to achieve government objectives. They are also responsible for the delivery of

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156 ibid, p30.
157 ibid, p35
Public Service Agreements; and oversee the performance of the delivery businesses against their objectives.\(^\text{160}\)

A new performance framework introduced cross-Government Public Service Agreements to drive inter-departmental relationships. DWP is the lead department for two Public Service Agreements, and contributes directly to the delivery of nine others. DWP works directly with a number of agencies, including: HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs; the Office for the Third Sector; and the Departments of: Communities and Local Government; Innovation, Universities and Skills; and Health. In addition DWP partners with local authorities to deliver (DWP) business objectives, and to provide valuable knowledge of customer needs, experience in the welfare sector and local knowledge.\(^\text{161}\)

Service delivery occurs through two Executive Agencies: Jobcentre Plus; and Pension, Disability and Carers Service (formed on 1 April 2008 following the merger of the Disability and Carers Service and The Pension Service).\(^\text{162}\) An executive agency is a public institution that delivers government services. It does not set the policy required to carry out its functions - these are determined by the department that oversees the agency. Agencies are headed by chief executives (CEOs), who are personally responsible for day-to-day operations. They are normally directly accountable to the responsible minister, who in turn is accountable to Parliament.\(^\text{163}\) Responsibility for the operations and performance of DWP Executive Agencies is formally delegated to its Chief Executives. Ministers receive reports on performance against agreed targets from each of the main DWP businesses.\(^\text{164}\) The CEO of the executive agencies are “accountable to the DWP Permanent Secretary via the Department’s Executive Team”,\(^\text{165}\) the Department’s principal corporate leadership and decision making team, comprising the Permanent Secretary, Executive Agency CEOs, and senior departmental executives.

Executive Agency CEOs are directly accountable to the Permanent Secretary and the senior portfolio Minister for the performance of their Agency against its key targets, within the resources allocated, and for the financial management of the Agency (targets and resources are negotiated between Agency CEOs, the Permanent Secretary and relevant Ministers). Agency CEOs are the principal advisers to Ministers on operational matters involving the development and provision of their Agency’s services. On these matters, the Agency Chief Executive is directly accountable to, and has right of access to, the Secretary of State (the senior portfolio minister).\(^\text{166}\)

Executive agencies “have partnership agreements with first tier local authorities, many district councils and local voluntary organisations... [they] also work together with local authorities and Government offices to support the delivery of our Public Service Agreements.”\(^\text{167}\)

Summary

Britain’s service delivery reform, facilitated by cross agency steering committees, is characterised by a deep integration layer, encouragement of community participation, local service delivery, and a shared services approach.

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\(^{161}\) ibid, p33.


\(^{163}\) www.direct.gov.uk


\(^{167}\) ibid, p34.
APPENDIX D
State/Territory experience in service delivery
Introduction

Globally, there is an increasing focus on government becoming citizen-centric and Australia is starting to follow the trend. However, as Australia has a federal system of government, with each State and Territory having their own government and working independently, the focus and drive to establish systems and processes to improve service delivery is vastly different across Australia. The Australian Capital Territory (Canberra Connect); Queensland (Smart Service Queensland); South Australia (Service SA); and Tasmania (Service Tasmania) appear to be the most advanced in providing integrated, citizen-centred service delivery with integrated cross-Government websites, call centres/telephone numbers and shopfront networks, enabling citizens to access Government without needing to understand how government works and, sometimes, even which tier of Government they need to access.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is in a unique situation in Australia given its governance, community dynamics and location. There is no third tier of Government in the ACT, making the ACT Government more like a municipal or council-type government in other States but with State functions. Canberra Connect, a branch in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS), was launched in 2001 and is an ACT Government initiative that aims to make it easier for ACT residents to access information and government services. The intention is to allow the community to interact with government, without needing to understand the structure and workings of the various ACT Government departments and agencies.

Canberra Connect (www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au) is the on-line services portal and www.act.gov.au (also run by Canberra Connect) is the information portal for the ACT Government. The separation is intentional to make the management of information on the web easier. Canberra Connect also runs four shopfronts across the ACT and a call centre. It has to compete for government business as its use is not mandated. Knowledge management is used to ensure that residents get the same information no matter which channel they use. However, surveys have found that user satisfaction for the website is lowest (around 80-90 per cent) of all channels as there is no human interaction. Canberra Connect has a mixed funding model, with approximately 80-85 per cent of its funding coming from the Government and about 15-20 per cent from a fee-for-service charged to agencies for which Canberra Connect delivers services. The annual operating budget is $11.3 million.

Each ACT Government department or agency is responsible for its own content and answers questions sent to the website in relation to its policies/services (forwarded on by Canberra Connect). Each has a Service Level Agreement with Canberra Connect for the relevant services. Canberra Connect can provide numerous services for departments and agencies and works with them to establish on-line payment systems, on-line forms, etc.

- **Website:** the Canberra Connect website provides information and links to apply or request any of over 233 ACT Government services, including enabling on-line payment for 69 of these services. Payments can be made using Visa or Mastercard. The Canberra Connect website also enables users to book or hire (and pay for) any of seven ACT Government facilities.
- **Emergency Management:** Canberra Connect is the Emergency Information Centre. LifeLine has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canberra Connect to provide call handling services in the event of a major emergency. Canberra Connect Call Centre provides the State Emergency Service (SES) with call handling and incident reporting services during flood or storm events.
- **Postbillpay:** Canberra Connect has a Postbillpay agreement with Australia Post that bundles all of the ACT Postbillpay transactions into one account managed by Canberra Connect. It offers discounted rates for using Postbillpay based on the collective transaction volumes and enables some of the smaller ACT government agencies to adopt Postbillpay and benefit from collective savings. Canberra Connect helps agencies to design and roll out any new Postbillpay services.
• eMove: (www.emove.com.au) is a free, on-line service accessible through Canberra Connect that can inform relevant ACT Government agencies (and non-government organisations) of a resident’s new address when they move house (as well as providing other moving services). Residents can use eMove to change their address for up to nine ACT services by ticking the relevant organisations to be notified, providing some additional information for each organisation and registering the moving details. Where organisations require a printed, signed letter to process an address change notification, eMove will email residents pre-addressed "change of address" letters to print, sign and post.

• On-line SmartForms: Canberra Connect uses Adobe LiveCycle solutions to enable citizens to access and complete a range of government service requests on-line using SmartForms, which can be integrated with electronic payment systems for rapid processing. The interactive forms offer a range of features, such as having embedded payment capabilities linked to the Commonwealth Bank’s CommWeb credit card payment gateway. Canberra Connect can build forms for clients/agencies. The use of SmartForms claims to have enhanced citizen services; reduced administrative costs; improved data accuracy and reduced processing errors; and enabled government staff to devote more time to high-value services.

Queensland

In many ways, Smart Service Queensland (SSQ) is very similar in nature to Canberra Connect. SSQ, originally a division within the Queensland Department of Communities (now part of the Department of Public Works following the machinery-of-Government changes in March 2009), was first established in 1999 to make it easier for the public to access government products, services and information anywhere and anytime through a variety of channels. Its use by Government is not mandated and it relies on voluntary participation by agencies. Agencies retain absolute control over their policies, business processes, business systems and revenue, with SSQ coordinating the presentation of information from participating agencies to customers of the Queensland Government. SSQ now delivers over 205 services on behalf of agencies. In the year to 30 June 2009, SSQ processed over 5.4 million transactions (up 3.6 million from 2003-04) through its three major channels: Internet (39 per cent of the interactions); the SSQ Integrated Contact Centre (57 per cent of the interactions); and Counters (4 per cent of interactions), the Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP).

In May 2008, the government endorsed the five-year strategy for SSQ, Delivering to Queensland: Smart Service Queensland Strategy 2008–13, which includes the target that 50 per cent of SSQ services be delivered on-line by 2013.

Like Canberra Connect, not being mandated has required SSQ to compete for Government business and this has resulted in it building up expertise to assist agencies to deliver a range of services. In addition, services delivered through SSQ are grouped into service clusters to share and build knowledge across government and support cross-agency service delivery opportunities.

The Queensland Government Gateway (www.qld.gov.au) is the on-line services portal and SSQ also manages the community engagement website www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au and the youth engagement website www.generate.qld.gov.au. These websites use a range of interactive tools such as e-surveys, e-polls, and discussion forums to engage the community on a range of selected issues.

• Website: the Queensland Government Gateway offers government customers on-line information, services and transactions 24 hours a day. The website enables users to pay renewals and infringements notices; apply for permits, seniors cards and other services; buy from on-line bookshops and gallery shops; find information; and even report a smoky vehicle. There is a shopping cart credit card payment (using Visa or Mastercard) capability for a lot of the services on the website.

• The SSQ Integrated Contact Centre (two site locations) delivers more than 200 services on behalf of 24 government agencies and handles over 3000 different enquiry types. Interactive

2007-08 Annual Report.
Voice Response (IVR), Natural Language Speech Recognition (NLSR – 13 36 77) and Short Message Service (SMS) are used. Customers can make payments and receive information from a range of government departments during a single transaction. The award-winning contact centre is a single point of contact for customers wanting to find services via the telephone, email, facsimile, IVR and standard mail. SSQ has a single telephone number, with a different number for automated payments.

- **Counters:** the Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP), a network of 70 one-stop government service shops located in rural and remote communities (population less than 3000) across Queensland, offer the same level of service and accessibility that is afforded to Queenslanders living in more densely populated areas (Queensland is the most regionalised state in Australia: its 4 million residents are spread over 1.7 million km², with most residents living outside the capital city). All QGAP offices are connected to the internet and are capable of securely receipting transactions. Over 400 services from all tiers of government are delivered through QGAP agents, with some isolated communities offering additional services. Services are offered at one counter in a community – eg a post office, a local clerk of the court, a police station, a newsagent or another small shop. The agent enters a franchise agreement with the state and is paid per referred query.

- **Health Contact Centre:** the Department of Health uses their own staff and SSQ’s contact centre infrastructure to deliver the service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for easy access to health advice, information referral and triage services. They pay SSQ for its use. Services currently offered include: the 13HEALTH service; Quitline; the Intentional Contamination of Food line; and Health Emergency Response lines. Child Health, Chronic Disease Self Management and a Statewide Oral Health Call Centre may be offered as well by now.

- In 2007-08, SSQ delivered 18 campaigns on behalf of Queensland Government agencies. SSQ also played a central role as the public’s contact point for the floods in North Queensland, equine influenza and storm damage in Munruben, the Gold Coast, Logan, Beaudesert and Daisy Hill. In addition, SSQ managed the State Emergency Service line on behalf of Emergency Management Queensland from 12 June 2007 to 27 April 2008.

- **Awards:** SSQ has won numerous state and national awards for outstanding achievements in service delivery and project management.

- **New contact centre:** a new contact centre is being built north of Brisbane which will be co-tenanted by Queensland Police (for a "non-urgent", 131 444, contact centre) and SSQ. The same technology platform will underpin both operations.

**South Australia**

Like Canberra Connect and SSQ, Service SA is not a separate organisation, it is a division in the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI), and there is no mandate for government agencies to use Service SA to deliver services on their behalf. Service SA is funded by a combination of budget allocations and fee-for-service charges (cost recoveries) from client agencies. Service SA is currently funded by 14 per cent Treasury appropriation and the remainder on a fee-for-service basis.

Unlike Canberra Connect and SSQ, Service SA does not seem to have an integrated website, call centre and shop network, although there does appear to be a telephone number for government information and Service SA Customer Service Centres. www.service.sa.gov.au (or www.sa.gov.au) is a website managed by Service SA and aims to make SA government services and information much easier for users to access. The website contains a range of information and lots of links to departmental websites where the information and ability to pay/apply on-line are located. Service SA makes good use of partnerships with Australia Post but it is not easy to find details of the Service SA Customer Service Centres on the website (a search for ‘Service SA’ on this website returned no results).

- Service SA’s 20 Customer Service Centres provide a comprehensive range of Government services over the counter. Each Service SA Customer Service Centre features a Hearing Assistance Device and is accessible for mobility-impaired customers. Customer Service Centres enable people to conduct financial transactions (eg vehicle registration and licensing;
SA Water, Emergency Services Levy, Land Tax, licences and fines), obtain government information and purchase government products and publications.

- 10 Regional Service SA Customer Service Centres provide additional services including applying for birth, death or marriage certificates, lodging a rental bond, registering a business name, and renewing occupational licences.
- Australia Post: SA residents can also use most Australia Post outlets to register vehicles, renew driver’s licences and have a photograph taken. There are 24 Metropolitan Adelaide outlets and 45 country outlets.
- Bizgate: In 2004, Service SA entered into a partnership arrangement with Bizgate, to enable on-line transactions and provide a back-office facility for the Service SA Call Centre and Shops. Bizgate, also part of the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, is an award-winning on-line transaction solution. It is a payment gateway that allows members of the public and business to make prompt, reliable and secure transactions with both State and Local Government.
- VANguard: ServiceSA has introduced VANguard’s User Authentication Service and Timestamping Service, key facilities developed for authentication (verification of a business or individual’s details) and notarisation (time stamping and validating the integrity of a document), to reduce the compliance burden on SA businesses in their interaction with Government. SA Government has a transaction portal for ICT procurement; approved ICT vendors login to South Australia’s transaction portal using an ATO digital certificate and responses to significant requests for quotes are timestamped by VANguard’s Timestamping Service.

**Tasmania**

Despite being the first region in Australia to focus on citizen-centred service delivery, Tasmania is not as technologically advanced as it could be, especially compared to Canberra Connect and SSQ. There appears to be more focus on the network of shopfronts and having a regional and rural presence than increasing the number of transactions done over the Internet or over the telephone (although there was an initial incentive for some telephone payments).

The Service Tasmania Project was initiated by the Tasmanian Government in 1997. It was designed using Service New Brunswick, Canada as a model and uses the principle that people should be able to conduct business with government without knowing that there are different tiers involved.

Service Tasmania provides information and services through three service delivery channels: over the counter, telephone and Internet. The use of Service Tasmania is mandated by the State Government and Service Tasmania is governed by a Board. Master Level Agreements exist between the Board and each of the three lead agencies for the delivery of consistent services state-wide over the three service delivery channels and each lead agency has Service Level Agreements and contracts with State, Commonwealth and Local Governments and other Board-approved organisations for the delivery of services. Client agencies retain financial and legislative responsibility for services delivered by Service Tasmania on their behalf. Having three lead agencies for management of the three service delivery channels is intended to provide the advantage of creating a collaborative working relationship across agency boundaries.

Service Tasmania delivers services on behalf of State government agencies, statutory authorities, GBEs and State-owned companies as well as Commonwealth Government organizations and Local

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169 VANguard is a whole-of-government service (delivered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research) that can be used by all levels of government (federal, state and local) to streamline its interactions with its business customers. VANguard supports business by allowing business users to conduct secure transactions with government agencies using a digital credential. It enables an agency to accept a business user's digital credential and then direct that credential to VANguard for authentication. VANguard verifies the digital signature and validates the digital certificate using an appropriate certification authority within a secure environment. VANguard provides a range of secure e-authentication services: user authentication service; signature verification service; user non repudiation service; timestamping service; security token service [future service]; and single sign-on service [future service].

Government Councils, a bank and a not-for-profit community organization. Partnership contracts are arranged for all services delivered for organizations other than State government agencies. Service Tasmania is 60 per cent funded by the Consolidated Fund and 40 per cent by fees paid to the Service Tasmania Board by client agencies and partner organizations. Fees are paid for both financial and non-financial transactions based on volume and the order of complexity (time taken).

There are 500 different services available to customers through 27 shops in city, urban and country areas, with each country shop providing the same range of services that are available to city customers. Although they claim there is one telephone for government, this number is only for information or to request forms; there are six different telephone numbers which use Interactive Voice Response for the payment of over 30 bills (from Tasmanian Government departments, councils, schools and water). Over 20 payments can be made using Visa or Mastercard over the Internet at Service Tasmania On-line (www.service.tas.gov.au). The website also contains on-line applications, forms, contacts, feedback, information and help. The website contains icons to indicate to the customer whether they are viewing a Commonwealth, State or local government information source or service; it contains a lot more information (such as links to other Government websites) than services.

**New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia**

New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia appear to have far less well-developed approaches to client-centred service delivery than the above States and Territory. While they all have a central website (www.more.nsw.gov.au; www.nt.gov.au; www.vic.gov.au; and www.wa.gov.au) to enable users to access information quickly and easily in relation to topics of relevance to the different regions, these are largely portals with hyperlinks to separate government agency websites (local, state and Commonwealth agencies). None of these regions appears to have integrated or combined shopfront networks or the facility to make payments over a central telephone number.

**New South Wales**

The New South Wales (NSW) website has been set up as a portal with a search tool only (‘search’ and ‘browse by topic’ facilities) and the NSW Government is not responsible for the content of linked sites. There is no comprehensive list of the services provided by the Government over the Internet. There is also a NSW Government Directory website (www.directory.nsw.gov.au) which is a guide to the structure, organisations, and key people within the 160 state agencies of the NSW Government (which have been arranged into 13 ‘super departments’ since 1 July 2009). Most Government agencies have their own telephone number, address and website. Some have links from this website to their own website. A third Government-wide website (www.shop.nsw.gov.au) presents publications and products offered by NSW Government agencies; the relevant NSW Government agency is responsible for order processing and despatch. NSW has a Government Contact Centre (133 679) to answer queries or direct callers to the right person within NSW State Government but this does not appear to allow residents to make payments. There do not appear to be any combined Government shopfronts.

**Northern Territory**

The Northern Territory (NT) website enables users to access the corporate websites of all NT Government agencies; there are also links to other governments to help users access the broadest range of government services. The website is a little more integrated than some regions around Australia (eg NSW). There is a Government switch telephone number but there is no information on the website as to what function it serves. Each government agency seems to have its own telephone number and office.
Victoria

Victoria Online is the Victorian State Government’s portal which provides links to websites that are from Victorian Local and State Governments and the Commonwealth Government (as well as some organisations that are associated with government, were previously government-owned or associated with government, or are considered by some of the public to provide ‘government’ style services). Victoria Online went live on 27 September 2003. As a portal, Victoria Online helps users find the information and services that exist on other websites and links directly to those websites; it does not control the other websites, individual organisations are responsible for the information on their own websites. However, it is both a directory and a search engine, all organised so that users do not need to have knowledge of government or the way government is structured. It classifies information into categories and provides ‘multiple pathways’ to information based on how different people think about information. Website pages are classified using 'metadata', a system of describing information to provide more precision for search results. The website is a little more user-friendly and comprehensive than some of the other regions.

Victoria has a State Government Call Centre (1300 366 356; TTY (03) 9603 8806) to answer queries directly or connect caller to the right person within the Victorian State Government. This is in addition to every government agency having its own telephone number.

Western Australia

The Western Australian (WA) website is designed to help residents find what they are looking for quickly and easily, even if they don’t know which Government department provides the service or information they need. It provides information, products, services and payment facilities (e.g., vehicle Licence and registration, fines, bills, land tax and minerals and petroleum royalties) through links to the relevant department’s website. All departments seem to have their own payment systems. The WA Government provides a Life Events website (www.lifeevents.wa.gov.au) which is a secure on-line service that allows users to simultaneously notify a number of WA government agencies of changes to personal details (e.g., change of address, birth, death, change of name); not many Departments can be notified in this manner. There is a single Government telephone number (there is a separate one for country callers) for queries relating to the WA Government only. There do not appear to be any integrated or combined Government shopfronts.

Governance

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is sometimes referred to as a ‘city state’ as there is no third tier in the ACT; the ACT Government (the Legislative Assembly) performs various state (e.g., education and health) and municipal functions (e.g., waste management). The ACT Government has 10 departments and 5 Ministers, including the Chief Minister, who performs the role of both State Premier and Mayor. Although most of the departments have their own contact phone numbers, email addresses and postal addresses, Canberra Connect plays an important role as a first point of contact for a lot of the departments as well.

New South Wales

The New South Wales (NSW) Government has 22 Ministers, including the Premier. On 11 June 2009, Premier Nathan Rees announced the biggest structural reform to the NSW public sector in more than 30 years with the creation of 13 super departments from the 160 existing...
state agencies. These super agencies came into effect on 1 July 2009 and their stated aim is to improve service delivery by providing a greater focus on clients, better integration of public services and to cut internal red tape.

The new departments are: Premier and Cabinet; Treasury; Health; Education and Training; Services and Administration; Police and Emergency Services; Planning and Local Government; Justice; Human Services; Transport and Infrastructure; Environment, Climate Change and Water; Industry and Investment; and Communities. This is similar to reforms undertaken in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.\(^{172}\)

The Government Chief Information Office (GCIO), now part of the Department of Services and Administration, runs several programs which aim to improve service delivery. Since July 2006 it has been implementing the NSW Government ICT Strategy, People First, to set the framework for a coordinated approach to planning, expenditure and allocation of ICT resources. The strategy has three key areas of focus and eight programs:

- **Front Line Systems:** Support services (one phone number and a central website for NSW Government Services); and Government Licensing (www.licence.nsw.gov.au to enable licence (business, trade, event, etc) application and renewal on-line);
- **Corporate Systems and Information:** Collaborative Government Services (aiming to improving the electronic sharing and exchange of information); Application Consolidation (efficient back office systems to support front-line services); Desktop Environment (innovative personal technology for government workers);
- **Infrastructure:** Data Centre Reform (co-location of current data centre infrastructure); Government Radio Networks (supporting Emergency Service Workers); Telecommunications (improving communications across NSW).\(^{173}\)

The Department of Services Technology and Administration (formerly the Department of Commerce) is responsible for several cross-Government initiatives, including:

- **Procurement:** NSW eTendering and smartbuy®. eTendering provides a complete electronic tendering process for all government organisations; smartbuy® is an electronic procurement solution which helps organisations to purchase a broad range of products and services on-line, quickly, securely and efficiently.\(^{174}\) In 2007-08, NSW eTendering grew by 178 per cent on the previous year and the use of smartbuy® increased significantly with more than 67,000 purchase orders valued at $359 million placed through the system (up from 44,000 orders valued at $224 million in 2006-07).\(^{175}\)
- **ServiceFirst:** in November 2007 three separate shared service businesses were integrated to form ServiceFirst, the largest shared services group in the NSW public sector. ServiceFirst looks after the corporate shared services, finance, human resources, IT and business support for over 80 clients in the NSW public sector.\(^{176}\)

Several departments provide services through or work with community partners such as non-government community and human services organisations and other government agencies.\(^{177}\)

**Northern Territory**

The Northern Territory Government has 12 principal agencies and 8 Ministers, including the Chief Minister.

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\(^{172}\) Premier Nathan Rees Press Release, 11 June 2009.
\(^{174}\) smartbuy® is available to all NSW Government agencies, state owned corporations, educational institutions, public hospitals, and not for profit organisations. It was developed and is managed by eBusiness Solutions, part of the Office of NSW Procurement.
\(^{175}\) NSW Department of Commerce Annual Report 2007-08.
\(^{176}\) ibid
\(^{177}\) Departments of Community Services and Housing websites and Annual Reports – 2007-08.
Queensland

The Queensland Government has 18 Ministers, including the Premier. On 26 March 2009, Premier Anna Bligh announced the most sweeping and significant reform of the Queensland Public Service in almost two decades, with the existing 23 stand-alone government departments streamlined into 13. The changes were implemented immediately, aiming to simplify Government, reduce bureaucracy and cut red tape to allow better coordination of services. The 13 new ‘super departments’ are grouped under six clusters to allow better coordination of services: Policy and Fiscal Coordination; Employment and Economic Development; Environment and Sustainable Resource Management; Social Development; Law, Justice and Safety; and Government Services. The media release announced that the reform is also expected to put more regional services under the one roof, making access a lot easier through departmental one-stop-shops. The new departments are: Premier and Cabinet; Treasury; Health; Employment and Economic Development; Infrastructure and Planning; Transport and Main Roads; Environment and Resource Management; Communities; Education and Training; Justice and Attorney-General; Police; Community Safety; and Public Works.

Under the Social Development cluster, the new Communities Department is a key driver of integrated community service delivery and a major contributor to social inclusion and community development across Queensland. The department has responsibility for the following key services: child safety; community and youth justice; disability; home and community care; community mental health; housing and homelessness; multicultural; sport and recreation; and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, seniors and women. The department also funds integrated services for individuals and families who experience disadvantage to actively promote community participation.

The Department of Public Works is responsible for some cross-Government bodies/initiatives:

- Shared Services Australia (SSA): supports Queensland Government service delivery by providing financial, procurement, human resource, mail, facilities and information and communication technology services across a number of departments and agencies.

- The Queensland Government Chief Information Office: manages a range of projects and programs, and offers a range of services to: improve service delivery for Queensland Government’s clients; develop best practice approaches to ICT management; and improve access to affordable telecommunications for all Queenslanders.

According to a pre-print conference paper on Victoria’s regional management forums, Queensland has 15 Regional Managers’ Coordination Networks to assist agencies to achieve improved outcomes through better regional engagement and coordination. The Department of Communities supports the networks; the most senior public servants in each region (e.g. regional managers) are members and meetings must be held at least every two months. Agreed priority projects are jointly signed off by relevant CEOs and the Director-General of the Department of Communities. This information could not be verified through a search of the Queensland Government website or Google searches.

South Australia

The South Australian (SA) Government has 15 Ministers (including the Premier) and 15 departments: Auditor-General; Environment and Heritage; Families and Communities; Department...
for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure; Education and Children’s Services; Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology; Health; Department of Justice; Planning and Local Government; Primary Industries and Resources; Premier and Cabinet; Trade and Economic Development; Treasury and Finance; Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation; and Parliament of South Australia.

Although Service SA is described as providing a one-stop contact point for government information, products and services including vehicle registration and driver licensing\(^{184}\), it is not the main point of contact for SA Government departments. Departments all have their own contact phone numbers and email and postal/physical addresses. Service SA does undertake some services for other government departments. In 2007-08, Service SA:

- introduced on-line payment of SA Police expiation notices;
- continued providing Bizgate, the whole-of-government on-line payment channel, and EzyReg, the on-line registration and licensing payment system, with an increase in transactions in excess of 20 per cent;
- implemented on-line facilities for the Department for Families and Communities including: an applications facility for Seniors Cards; an applications facility for Energy, Water, Sewerage and Council Rate Concessions; and a Concessions Finder which enables South Australians to determine eligibility for concessions\(^{185}\).

Like Queensland and Victoria, the SA Government seems to achieve joined-up service delivery through large departments. For example, the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) is responsible for setting strategic priorities, policy development and administration of public and community housing, child protection, disability services and ageing and community care services and is made up of four main service areas: Disability SA; Domiciliary Care SA; Families SA; and Housing SA. The DFC works with strategic partners through: Community Connect; Office for the Ageing; Office for Carers; Office for Problem Gambling; and the Volunteers Unit and also provides support to the Council for the Care of Children, Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee and the Guardian for Children and Young People, who report directly to the Minister\(^ {186}\).

**Tasmania**

The Tasmanian Government has 10 Ministers (including the Premier) and 9 Government Departments. Like Canberra Connect in the ACT, although most of the departments have their own contact phone numbers, email addresses and postal addresses, Service Tasmania plays an important role as a first point of contact for a lot of the departments.

In addition to the mandated use of Service Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government works on joined-up service delivery through partnership agreements with local government. To date, 47 partnership agreements have been signed\(^{187}\).

**Victoria**

The Victorian Government has 20 Ministers (including the Premier) and 11 departments with over 40 ‘portfolios’\(^ {188}\). In 2005, the operations of Victorian Government departments were aligned to eight standard regions (three metropolitan and five rural regions) that match local government boundaries. Although each department is still responsible for their own policies and service delivery, this alignment is intended to allow better integration of service planning and delivery.

Regional Management Forums, made up of senior officers from each State Government department and council CEOs, support Government departments and local government.

\(^{184}\) Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Annual Report, 2007-08.
\(^{185}\) ibid
\(^{188}\) ‘Portfolios’ is the term used by the Victorian administration to define a category of interest. The term is not used in this sense in the rest of the report.
authorities to work together more closely at a regional level. A departmental Secretary champions the operation of each Regional Management Forum. The Secretary oversees the operations of the Forum, facilitates joined-up action between departments, engages with stakeholders to understand local issues, and develops proposals for addressing priority issues.

For both the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), the regions are the first point of contact for their programs in each area. DHS was Victoria’s largest department in 2008-09. DHS plans, funds and delivers community and housing services through Victoria’s eight geographical regions. Most departmental clients receive services from regional staff. Almost 80 per cent of the department’s workforce is located in regions, and regions deliver services from more than 500 locations across the state ranging from regional offices, housing offices, community residential units and large residential centres. In 2008-09, the regions provided services to the community through 1394 agreements with community service organisations, local government and directly by regional staff.

DPCD leads and supports the development of liveable communities. DPCD regional teams manage grants and deliver community programs in a way that is coordinated and ‘joins-up’ the different government departments. The regional teams: help government and community groups work together to develop services, projects and programs for the community; compile local intelligence so that policies, programs and projects are developed and reviewed to reflect local needs; support or deliver selected DPCD programs locally; and coordinate DPCD community investments.

The Victorian Government appears to deliver services through the structures of departments. Joined up service delivery is achieved through the existence of large departments as opposed to being achieved across departments.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Government has 17 Ministers, including the Premier. It does not have ‘super departments’ and has a very large number of departments and agencies.

Regional Development Commissions have been established to enable collaboration between State and local government at the regional level. There are nine Regional Development Commissions with twenty-one offices statewide.

Service Delivery

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Connect – gateway to ACT Government services

Canberra Connect, a branch in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) (which provides a broad range of municipal services for the ACT), is an ACT Government initiative that aims to make it easier for ACT residents to access information and government services. Since its launch in 2001, residents have been able to pay bills, make bookings, seek information, report a fault and request government services through the one government contact point. It is wholly owned by the ACT Government and does not operate under legislation.

Canberra Connect provides information and services through three direct channels: Call Centre, Shopfronts and On-line. This allows the community to interact with the ACT Government, without the need to understand the structure and workings of the various ACT Government Departments and agencies.

189 Annual Report, 2008-09.
• Shopfronts are located at four locations across Canberra: Belconnen, Dickson, Tuggeranong and Woden and provide information and enable ACT residents to make payments to ACT Government agencies. The Civic Driver Licence Service (Civic Library) offers drivers licence and Proof of Age card transactions only. They are intended to be centres of excellence for complex matters.
• The Canberra Connect Call Centre (13 22 81) can be used by ACT residents to contact any ACT Government agency.
• On-line (www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au): ‘Your gateway to ACT Government on-line services - what they are, how much they cost and how to pay’. The website has frequently asked questions (including links to detailed information) and provides customers with the ability to lodge and track feedback (sent directly to the relevant Government agency) or service requests on-line.

Funding

Canberra Connect has a mixed funding model, with approximately 80-85 percent of its funding coming from the Government and about 15-20 per cent from a fee-for-service charged to agencies for which Canberra Connect delivers services. The annual operating budget is $11.3 million.  

Website:

The Canberra Connect website contains a privacy statement which discusses the use of personal information. It outlines that all personal information collected and/or stored must be voluntarily provided by each individual and that Canberra Connect will only collect personal information about customers when they voluntarily participate in an activity that asks for information, such as participating in a survey or undertaking a payment or other transaction. If users choose not to provide personal information when completing one or more of these activities, they may not be able to complete that activity.

The Canberra Connect website provides information and links to apply or request any of over 233 ACT Government services, including enabling on-line payment for 69 of these services (except to apply for birth, death and marriage certificates). These services include: ACT emergency information, notifying the ACT Government of a change of address, tenders and contracts. Payments can be made using Visa or Mastercard for services including: rates and land tax; CIT student fees; vehicle registration renewals; traffic or parking fines; pre-paid parking and bus tickets; and water infringements. The Canberra Connect website also enables users to book or hire (and pay for) any of seven ACT Government facilities, including: ACTION bus hire; campsite hire; GardenSmart Service; sportsground hire; and waterski timeslots.

Emergencies

Canberra Connect has arrangements in place to help out the Canberra community in an emergency. An independent inquiry following the 2003 Canberra bushfires put Canberra Connect into the Territory Emergency Plan as the Emergency Information Centre. In addition, the personal counselling service, LifeLine, has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canberra Connect to provide call handling services in the event of a major emergency. Canberra Connect Call Centre also provides the State Emergency Service (SES) with call handling and incident reporting services during flood or storm events; Canberra Connect has an MOU with the SES to log calls and send SMS messages to SES workers who can then prioritise work.

192 Ibid
Postbillpay

Canberra Connect has a Postbillpay agreement with Australia Post that bundles all of the ACT Postbillpay transactions into one account managed by Canberra Connect. The agreement replaced multiple contracts that previously existed between Australia Post and individual ACT government agencies and offers discounted rates for using Postbillpay based on the collective transaction volumes. This enables some of the smaller ACT government agencies to adopt Postbillpay and gain a benefit from the collective savings. Canberra Connect helps agencies to design and roll out any new Postbillpay services.

Postbillpay enables ACT residents to pay a range of ACT government bills using cash, cheques and debit or credit cards from any financial institutions in Australia at 53 Post outlets in the ACT region (and 3,800 outlets throughout the rest of Australia); over the phone at any time; and via the Postbillpay website. Postbillpay also enables ACT residents to check payment history on the Postbillpay website and to receive and pay bills electronically.

eMove

eMove (www.emove.com.au) is a free, on-line service accessible through Canberra Connect that can inform relevant ACT Government agencies of a resident’s new address when they move house. eMove can also help residents: find removalist quotes; utility connections; address changes; cleaners; storage; packing; etc. eMove has over 500 organisations and brands on board.

After free registration, residents can use eMove to change their address on their ACT driver’s licence, ACT vehicle registration, ACT rates and land tax, ACT dog registration, ACT library card, ACT senior’s card, CIT enrolment and ACT Government housing rent and sundry payments. Residents can also ask to be notified about any developments adjacent to their property (ACT Planning and Land Authority).

eMove also enables residents to give a change of address to private companies or organisations, from banks and insurance companies to magazine subscriptions, at the one point. Residents sign in and tick the organisations they want to be notified of their change of address (those with a letter icon next to their name require a printed, signed letter; eMove will email pre-addressed “change of address” letters to users to print, sign and post). Currently, eMove can notify change of address to: mobile phone providers; health funds; national and regional newspapers; magazines; catalogues/mail order companies; community organisations/charities; financial institutions, banks, building societies and credit unions; credit/charge cards; insurance agencies; motor vehicle finance companies; automotive organisations (eg E-Way, Citylink, E-Tag, NRMA); clubs; councils; loyalty programs and store cards; gym, health and fitness; libraries; and TAB/gaming.

On-line SmartForms

Canberra Connect uses Adobe LiveCycle solutions to enable citizens to access and complete a range of government service requests on-line using SmartForms, which can be integrated with electronic payment systems for rapid processing. SmartForms are interactive digital forms that make it easier to handle services requests. The interactive forms offer a range of features, such as having embedded payment capabilities linked to the Commonwealth Bank’s CommWeb credit card payment gateway. Canberra Connect can build forms for clients/agencies.

The use of SmartForms claims to have enhanced citizen services, reduced administrative costs, improved data accuracy and reduced processing errors, and enabled government staff to devote more time to high-value services.

193 Adobe Success Story: Australian Capital Territory Government, Territory and Municipal Services, Canberra Connect,
The forms available have a consistent look and feel, are easy-to-use, and contain information prompts to guide users through proper form completion. In addition, built-in intelligence in the forms helps verify that citizens enter the proper type of information into each field. As citizens submit data on forms, the information is made available electronically and sent instantly to the agency responsible for handling the request. This automated step can eliminate the time, costs, and potential errors that can result if data is manually keyed from forms into backend systems. Another advantage of SmartForms is that they can facilitate the use of shared web services for common tasks such as address validation and Australian Business Number (ABN) lookup. The forms also support processes for accessing and updating internal line-of-business systems.

Summary of the ACT Region:
- Not mandated; Service Level Agreements between Canberra Connect and clients. Canberra Connect has to compete for Government business.
- Canberra Connect is the services portal and www.act.gov.au (run by Canberra Connect) is the information portal.
- Canberra is unique in that there is no third tier of Government.
- There is also uniqueness re the dynamics of the community – highly educated/paid.
- Average costs of the different channels: On-line - $0.45; phone $4.50; in person $8.80.
- Knowledge management used to enable clients to get the same information no matter which channel they use.
- On-line questions – facilitated by Canberra Connect and sent to relevant agency.
- Surveys have found that client satisfaction with Internet is the lowest of all channels as there is no human interaction.

Queensland
Queensland is the most regionalised state in Australia: its 4 million residents are spread over 1.7 million square kilometres, with most residents living outside the capital city.

Smart Service Queensland
Smart Service Queensland (SSQ) was first established in 1999 as “Access Queensland”. It was supported by the government based on an identified need to make it easier for the public to access government products, services and information anywhere and anytime through a variety of channels. SSQ promotes itself today as a one-stop shop ‘working across all government agencies to simplify, standardise and integrate services, resulting in cost savings and a consistent, quality user experience for all Queensland Government customers’.

Governance
There is no government mandate to use SSQ; the initiative is dependent on voluntary participation by agencies. SSQ is a division within the Queensland Department of Communities and does not operate under legislation. SSQ operates under a SSQ CEO Committee (co-Chaired by the CEO for the Department of Communities and the Under-Treasurer) and a dedicated Strategy Office within the Strategic Policy and Evaluation Directorate, Department of Communities to support and drive new strategic directions for SSQ at a whole-of-government level. A Program Board provides advice on SSQ’s program of work activities. SSQ only coordinates the presentation of information to customers of the Queensland Government; agencies retain absolute control of their policy, business processes, business systems and revenue.

SSQ was established as a shared operational entity to manage service provision on behalf of government agencies through a fee-for-service structure to achieve integrated service delivery; it delivered its first integrated services to the public in 2002. In 2006, SSQ started receiving government appropriation in addition to its fee-for-service funding arrangements. SSQ now
delivers over 160 services on behalf of agencies. In the year to 30 June 2007, SSQ processed 4.7 million enquiries, visits and transactions through its three major channels:

- **Internet:** the Queensland Government Gateway (www.qld.gov.au) offers government customers on-line information, services and transactions 24 hours a day. There is a shopping cart credit card payment capability. (SSQ manages the community engagement website www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au and the youth engagement website www.generate.qld.gov.au. These websites use a range of interactive tools such as e-surveys, e-polls, and discussion forums to engage the community on a range of selected issues.)

- **The SSQ Integrated Contact Centre** (two site locations) delivers more than 200 services on behalf of 24 government agencies and handles over 3000 different enquiry types. Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Natural Language Speech Recognition (NLSR – 13 36 77) and Short Message Service (SMS) are used. Customers can make payments and receive information from a range of government departments during a single transaction. The award-winning contact centre is a single point of contact for customers wanting to find services via the telephone, email, facsimile, IVR and standard mail. SSQ has a single telephone number: 13 13 04; and uses 1300 729 606 for automated payments.

- **Counters:** the Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP), a network of 70 one-stop government service shops located in rural and remote communities (population less than 3000) across Queensland, offering the same level of service and accessibility that is afforded to Queenslanders living in more densely populated areas. All QGAP offices are connected to the Internet and are capable of securely receipting transactions and accessing Government information using Internet technology. Over 400 services from all tiers of government are delivered through QGAP agents, with some isolated communities offering additional services. Services are offered at one counter in a community – e.g. a post office, a local clerk of the court, a police station, a newsagent or another small shop. The agent enters a franchise agreement with the state and is paid per referred query. Commonwealth Government services offered include services provided by: Australian Taxation Office; Department of Veterans' Affairs; and Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Other services provided include enquiries relating to Suncorp/NRMA insurances.

Services delivered through SSQ are grouped into service clusters to support cross-agency service delivery opportunities: Human Services (led by Department of Communities); Business (led by Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development); Transport (led by Queensland Transport); Land and Resources (led by Department of Natural Resources and Water); Education and Learning; Jobs and Work; Law and Safety; and Leisure and Culture.

**Health Contact Centre**

SSQ has a co-location arrangement in place with Queensland Health in relation to the government’s Health Contact Centre; the Department of Health uses their own staff and SSQ’s contact centre infrastructure to deliver the service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for easy access to health advice, information referral and triage services. They pay SSQ for its use. Services currently offered include the 13HEALTH service, Quitline, the Intentional Contamination of Food line, and Health Emergency Response lines. Child Health, Chronic Disease Self Management and a Statewide Oral Health Call Centre may be offered as well by now.

SSQ Customer Service Advisors are the first point of contact, filtering calls, directing calls to nurses and Quitline Advisors, transferring calls to other agencies as appropriate and providing health information from the Health Information Directory (HID) or the service provider directory, QFinder (which are available to the public).

On average this service handles 171,680 calls per year for triage advice. The Quitline commenced operation at the Health Contact Centre in November 2007, and receives about 15,000 calls a year for smoking cessation advice, information and assistance.
Partnerships
SSQ currently leases its infrastructure to a third sector organization for the delivery of a counselling service.

SSQ, through its QGAP counter network, engages in partnership agreements with local councils and private sector organizations (such as a video store) for the delivery of some government services in rural communities where community infrastructure is not as developed.

New contact centre
A new contact centre is being built north of Brisbane which will be co-tenanted by Queensland Police (for a "non-urgent", 131 444, contact centre) and SSQ. The same technology platform will underpin both operations.\(^{194}\)

Awards and accolades
SSQ has won numerous state and national awards for outstanding achievements in service delivery and project management.

Some of SSQ’s successes in 2009:

- Finalist in four of the five Australian Teleservices Association Awards categories. Jenny Pye won Queensland Teleprofessional of the Year.
- Best Government Contact Centre (over 30 full-time employees category) at the International Quality Productivity Centre Awards.
- Winner of the Community Service/Development category at the Queensland Project Management Achievement Awards for the SES Flood Storm Emergency Line Project.
- Winner of the Australian Institute of Project Management Achievement Award Small Project category for the Local Government Electoral Campaign.

In 2006, Smart Service Queensland won the International Quality and Productivity Centre National Awards in the category of Best Government Contact Centre Operation, as well as the Australian TeleServices Association’s Queensland Award for Best Team Leader.

Contact:
Smart Service Queensland: Reception – Level 3, 127 Creek Street, Brisbane QLD 4000.
Office Locations: Brisbane CBD and Mt Gravatt.
For more information: (07) 3405 5810, enquiries@smartservice.qld.gov.au, www.qld.gov.au/smartservice

Summary of the Queensland Region:

- Most similar to Canberra Connect.
- Non-mandated.
- On-line forms and shopping-cart credit card facility for a lot of services on the website.
- Works in clusters to share and build knowledge and integrate service delivery.
- Built up expertise in the SSQ to compete for Government services and assist them with their needs.

\(^{194}\) "Queensland Police builds "non-urgent" contact centre, by Ry Crozier, 20 October 2009."
South Australia

Service SA is a division in the Department of Transport Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) and does not operate under legislation. There is no mandate for Government agencies to use Service SA to deliver services on their behalf.

The operations of Service SA are funded by a combination of budget allocations and fee-for-service charges (cost recoveries) from client agencies. Service SA is currently funded by 14 per cent Treasury appropriation and the remainder on a fee-for-service basis.

Phone: 13 23 24

Website: ‘find what you are looking for’:
- www.service.sa.gov.au (or www.sa.gov.au) is a website managed by Service SA and developed to make SA government services and information much easier for customers to access. The website contains a range of information and lots of links to Departmental websites where the information and ability to pay/apply on-line is located.

Customer Service Centres:
- Service SA’s 20 Customer Service Centres provide a comprehensive range of Government services over the counter. Each Service SA Customer Service Centre features a Hearing Assistance Device and is accessible for mobility-impaired customers. Customer Service Centres enable people to conduct financial transactions (eg vehicle registration and licensing; SA Water, Emergency Services Levy, Land Tax, licences and fines), obtain government information and purchase government products and publications.
- 10 Regional Service SA Customer Service Centres provide additional services including applying for birth, death or marriage certificates, lodging a rental bond, registering a business name, and renewing occupational licences.
- Australia Post: SA residents can also use most Australia Post outlets to register vehicles, renew driver’s licences and have a photograph taken. 24 Metropolitan Adelaide outlets (some of which are open Saturday mornings) and 45 Country outlets.

Partnerships

Service SA has several ‘partnership’ arrangements:
- Australia Post - business arrangements for the delivery of some ‘transport’ transactions such as vehicle registrations and contract for the provision of photographic hardware (for licences) in all Service Centres;
- Rural Agents;
- Local/District Councils – delivery of some Council services such as council rate and dog registrations;
- 1 Local Council (Roxby Downs) in an advanced suite of services delivery model;
- Motor vehicle dealers;
- Bill ExPress – payment of vehicle registrations at locations (such as Newsagents) with registered outlets; and
- APY lands initiative – delivery of discrete services in 2 remote South Australia community service outlets via a third party provider.

196 ibid
Bizgate

In 2004, Service SA entered into a partnership arrangement with Bizgate, to enable on-line transactions and provide a back-office facility for the Service SA Call Centre and Shops. Bizgate, also part of the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure is an award-winning on-line transaction solution. It is a payment gateway that allows members of the public and business to make prompt, reliable and secure transactions with both State and Local Government.

South Australia, through Bizgate, provided one of 4 national pilots with the Commonwealth’s $30m VANguard program. Service SA implemented a VANguard interface to reduce the compliance burden on SA businesses in their interaction with Government. The VANguard program is a key facility developed for authentication (verification of a business or individual's details) and notarisation (time stamping and validating the integrity of a document). Authentication and notarisation are critical when moving to on-line delivery of applications that require an authorised signature such as occupational license (eg: electricians) and lodgement of electronic development plans.

Summary of the South Australian Region:

- Seems to be a push on-line once you are there – not easy to find details of Service SA Customer Centres.
- Doesn’t seem to be an integrated website, phone, shop network.
- Good use of Australia Post.
- Not necessarily a one-stop-shop approach.

Tasmania

Service Tasmania is about government adopting a customer-focussed approach, instead of one driven by bureaucratic processes. It operates on the ‘one entry point to government’ model and uses the principle that people do not need to know what level of government they are dealing with (State, Commonwealth or local government) and should be able to conduct their business without knowing that there are different tiers involved. It basically represents the tip of an iceberg to the user and ‘under the tip is the huge apparatus of government, in the form of all the departments, public servants and technology that ties it together’.

There are 500 different services available to Service Tasmania customers through 27 shops in city, urban and country areas, with each country shop providing the same range of services that are available to city customers. There are 80 different bill payment services available over the telephone and over the Internet. Service Tasmania delivers services on behalf of State government agencies, statutory authorities, GBEs and State Owned Companies as well as Commonwealth Government organizations and Local Government Councils, a bank and a not-for-profit community organization. Partnership contracts are arranged for all services delivered for organizations other than State government agencies.

The Service Tasmania Project, initiated by the Tasmanian Government in 1997 and fully endorsed by the incoming Government in 1998, was aimed at improved service delivery rather than cost reductions. Service Tasmania was designed using Service New Brunswick, Canada as a model and provides information and services through three direct channels:

- Over the Counter: Service Tasmania has 27 shops located around the State that provide access to a number of Government transactions, services and information (payments, applications, purchases, bookings, help and feedback, change of address).
- Phone: One Number for Government (1300 13 55 13): Tasmanian residents can call to obtain information, or to request forms to be sent out by post or fax. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) bill payment services: there are several (6) different phone numbers which Tasmanian

197 Service Tasmania Story.
198 Institute for Citizen-Centred Services, Integrating Service Delivery Case Study – Service South Australia, Institute for Citizen Centred Service, 2008.
residents can use to pay over 30 bills (from Tasmanian Government departments; Councils, Schools, Water). There was an initial $5 reduction for some bills (not taxes or fines) paid by phone using IVR technology but these were discontinued once take-up increased. Agreements have been signed with Telstra and scripts had to be agreed by the relevant Departments.

- Internet: Service Tasmania On-line (www.service.tas.gov.au): ‘All your Government Services in one place’. Over 20 payments possible over the Internet; on-line applications, forms, contacts, feedback, information and help; provides a single web location with fast and easy access to Commonwealth, State and local government services. The website contains icons to indicate to the customer whether they are viewing a Commonwealth, State or local government service.

**Funding**

Service Tasmania is 60 per cent funded by the Consolidated Fund and 40 per cent by fees paid to the Service Tasmania Board by Client Agencies and Partner organizations. Fees are paid for both financial and non-financial transactions based on volume and the order of complexity (time taken).

**Governance**

There is no statutory authority for Service Tasmania and it has no statutory powers. Agencies are required to use Service Tasmania channels to deliver their services, but not exclusively. They may also provide customers with a choice of bill payment options by using private sector providers or a Government Business Enterprise (GBE) such as Australia Post.

Service Tasmania essentially established a ‘long, virtual counter’ that ran along the front of every government agency so each had responsibility for maintaining it. The view was that creating a new agency would diminish the collective responsibility (and the cooperation to set it up) even though it may have made things easier at times.

The use of Service Tasmania was initially, and still is, mandated by the State Government at the highest level and is governed by the Service Tasmania Board, with members drawn from all agencies and Local Government and appointed by the Premier.

The Service Tasmania Business Unit supports the Board and manages the Master Level Agreements (between the Board and each lead agency) for the delivery of consistent services statewide over the three service delivery channels by three lead agencies: the Department of Primary Industries, Water and the Environment (DPIWE) manages the shop channel; the Telecommunications Management Division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet manages the phone channel; and the State Library of Tasmania within the Department of Education (DoE) manages the Internet channel. Each Lead Agency has entered into a Service Level Agreements and contracts with State, Commonwealth and Local Governments and other Board-approved organisations for the delivery of services. Having three lead agencies for management of the three service delivery channels is intended to provide the advantage of creating a collaborative working relationship across agency boundaries.

Client agencies retain financial and legislative responsibility for services delivered by Service Tasmania on their behalf. Accordingly, client agencies need to have continued involvement in the policies and practices of Service Tasmania. It is also intended to ensure that customer service standards are “owned” by all agencies, not just the lead agencies.

**BPAY**

BPAY has been introduced as an additional payment option for some bills.

---


200 Service Tasmania Story.
Summary of the Tasmanian Region:

- Mandated.
- No separate organisation – 3 lead agencies need to collaborate and each look after one of the communication channels.
- Very dated technology – one phone number for information but 6 for payments; shopfronts in regional areas and don’t seem to push people on-line. Not a lot can be done directly through the website – a portal to other websites.
- Focus on shopfronts and regional and rural presence.
- Intention for same Government services delivered from every location – urban, rural or regional.
- Working to develop cross-jurisdictional service packages that can be accessed through each of the service delivery channels – shops, phone and Internet.
- Provides a lot more information (such as links to other Government websites) than services.

New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Western Australia appear to be far less developed in their approaches to service delivery:

New South Wales (NSW)

- www.more.nsw.gov.au: maintained by the NSW’s Government Chief Information Office (GCIO) is an entry point to enable users to quickly and easily access information on the Internet in relation to topics of relevance to New South Wales and its residents. The website is mostly made up of hyperlinks to other government websites (local, state and Commonwealth agencies) and some non-government organisation websites. The website has been set up as a search tool only (search and browse by topic) and the NSW Government is not responsible for the content of linked sites.
- NSW Government Directory: there are 287 agencies. www.directory.nsw.gov.au – a guide to the structure, organisations, and key people within NSW Government – lists them all and provides contact details for them. Most have their own telephone number, address and website. Some have links from this website to their own website.
- NSW Government Contact Centre (133 679); to answer queries or direct callers to the right person within NSW State Government. Each agency/organisation has its own telephone number.

eMove

eMove is used to a limited degree by the NSW Government to notify changes of address: RTA – Drivers Licence and Registration; Coal Compensation Board; Commission for Children and Young People; Healthcare Complaints Commission; NSW Department of Primary Industries. However, it is not easy to find on the website unless you actually search for eMove.

Summary of the New South Wales Region:

- There don’t appear to be any combined Government shopfronts.
- Website: no list of all services you can do on-line – only a search engine or ‘browse by topics’. Doesn’t spell out what you can and can’t do – only links to other sites and not really aggregated.

Northern Territory (NT)

- www.nt.gov.au: this website is a ‘one-stop shop for information on the Northern Territory, including government services and news’.
- NT Government switch (08) 8999 5511

The Northern Territory Government is made up of 12 principal agencies along with a range of other agencies, statutory bodies and government-owned corporations.
From these pages you will be able to access the corporate websites of all Northern Territory Government agencies. We’ve also included links to other governments to help you access the broadest range of government services.

In addition to locally sourced information, the Northern Territory Government web server provides links to external Internet sites. These external information sources are outside our control.

Summary of the Northern Territory Region:

- The website is a little more integrated than some other regions around Australia (eg NSW). A lot of the government agencies have websites that seem to be a part of the website, as opposed to just being a link. They all seem to still have their own telephone numbers and offices.
- The website links to www.theterritory.com.au for living and working in the territory; and www.en.travelnt.com for visiting the territory.

Victoria

Victoria Online: the fastest way to find local, state and federal government information and services

Victoria Online (www.vic.gov.au) is the Victorian State Government’s portal which provides links to websites that are from Victorian Local and State Governments and the Commonwealth Government (as well as some organisations that are associated with government, were previously government-owned or associated with government, or are considered by some of the public to provide “government” style services), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Victoria Online went live on 27 September 2003.

As a portal, Victoria Online helps users find the information and services that exist on other websites and links directly to those websites; it does not control the other websites, nor is it responsible for the content on the other websites. Individual organisations are responsible for the information on their own websites.

Victoria Online is owned by the State Government of Victoria, Australia. It is administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development in Melbourne and is an outcome of the Victorian Government's eGovernment strategy: Putting People at the Centre.

Victoria Online is both a directory and a search engine, all organised so that users do not need to have knowledge of government or the way government is structured. It classifies information into categories and provides “multiple pathways” to information based on how different people think about information. Website pages are classified using ‘metadata’, a system of describing information to provide more precision for search results.

In addition to Frequently Asked Questions, Victoria Online has launched “Got a Question?” where the user types in a question in natural language (as if it were a spoken question) and the system matches it to the best match answer in the Victoria Online knowledgebase. The system learns as it goes to optimise the chances of getting the answer required.

The Social Media section of Victoria Online provides a comprehensive list of social media pages for Local, State and Commonwealth Government. This includes Facebook, flickr, MySpace, Podcasts, RSS feeds, Twitter and YouTube and other Web 2.0 technology communication tools.

Victoria also has a State Government Call Centre (1300 366 356; TTY (03) 9603 8806) to answer queries directly or connect caller to the right person within the Victorian State Government for specific needs. This is in addition to every government agency having their own telephone number.

Summary of the Victorian region:

- Portal only.
- No control over web content.
- Not central or integrated.
Western Australia (WA)

The www.wa.gov.au website, owned by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (managed by Online Solutions), is a single point of entry to the Government of Western Australia and the many services it provides. wa.gov.au is designed to help residents find what they are looking for quickly and easily – even if they don’t know which Government department provides the service or information they need.

Phone: (08) 9222 9449; Country callers: 1800 198 274

On-line

www.wa.gov.au: This site includes information and transactions for areas such as vehicle licence and registration, fines, bills, land tax, Department of Housing and Works, minerals and petroleum royalties. Citizens are sent to the relevant website through a link and all Departments have different payment systems rather than being managed through the wa.gov.au website.

WA LifeEvents Website

Life Events (www.lifeevents.wa.gov.au) is a secure on-line service provided by the WA Government that allows you to simultaneously notify a number of WA government agencies of changes to your details. Through the website you can notify information and details pertaining to change of address, birth, death, and change of name. There are tick boxes to select which of the participating departments you wish notified of the event. Not all Departments can be notified in this manner.

Summary of the Western Australian Region:

- There don’t appear to be any combined Government shopfronts.
- Website very thin and links user to Departmental websites for payment, services, information.
APPENDIX E
Current Commonwealth service delivery networks
**CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE**

**Current Australian Government Service Delivery Networks**

This matrix provides an overview of Commonwealth service delivery networks currently in operation. These figures are indicative only and are not intended to be definitive. For the purpose of this matrix, eight agencies have been selected based on their relevance to service delivery. They include Centrelink, Medicare Australia, the Child Support Agency, the Australian Taxation Office, and the Departments of: Veterans’ Affairs; Foreign Affairs and Trade; Immigration and Citizenship; and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The matrix is intended to provide a simple view of the current physical footprint of the Commonwealth to enable the reader to have a general understanding of how and where these organisations interface with citizens.

Table A2: Matrix of select Australian Government delivery networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink (CLK)</td>
<td>321 Service Centres. Generally stand alone sites. A number are co-located with Processing Centres. One co-located with Medicare. One site co-located with a State Govt ‘one stop shop’. A number of sites have other government agency presence eg. ATO, DVA, Medicare and CSA. Shopfront staff: manage customer interactions; respond to enquiries; assess and provide information on payment eligibility; where possible, the majority of work is done when the customer is present.</td>
<td>197 Access Points. Generally placed within local businesses or community organisations.</td>
<td>25 Call Centres. Generally call centres are not co-located with other Centrelink offices. The Call Centres take queries relating to specific telephone numbers. Calls flow from one to another if call load is high. Some numbers are answered by specialist teams (eg Business Hotline). The nominated Emergency Call Centre operates 24/7. It is also the 1st point of call for Govt surge. Centrelink and ATO share the contract for overflow from the National Security Hotline. CLK delivers DFAT passports information call centre.</td>
<td>15 Area Offices. Many share a site with a shopfront and/or processing centre. Generally the Area Office is to provide corporate support rather than deliver services. Some Area Offices house consolidated processing teams and national out-posted functions. Area offices also do community engagement and intervention including response to emergencies and liaison with other levels of government.</td>
<td>Two data centres. Not co-located with other CLK facilities.</td>
<td>No overseas offices. Agents located on Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island.</td>
<td>185 processing centres. Generally co-located with shopfronts and/or Area Offices. Approximately half of shopfronts have a consolidated processing team that specialises in certain payment types. Generally, mailed claims/reviews/changes in circumstance are referred to the relevant consolidated processing teams in each Area. CLK currently reviewing where the work is done to maximise efficiencies.</td>
<td>459 Third Party Agents. Agents are contracted to provide Access Point Services. At times of client review, information is sought from various third parties to clarify or confirm information. e.g employers, valuations office, banks, housing authorities, BDM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Medicare Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>239 Shopfronts</td>
<td>928 Access Points.</td>
<td>8 Call centres.</td>
<td>6 state offices.</td>
<td>Two data centres, both of which are outsourced to and managed by IBM.</td>
<td>Not Applicable.</td>
<td>8 processing centres.</td>
<td>Access points are delivered through third party arrangements.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicare offices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 is co-located with Centrelink;</td>
<td>52 telephone service numbers.</td>
<td>General managed within Program Service Centres which process work types from various channels.</td>
<td>State Offices:</td>
<td>Key functions include:</td>
<td>All co-located with State and/or regional offices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 MA sites provide limited Centrelink services;</td>
<td>Generally managed within Program Service Centres which process work types from various channels.</td>
<td>Some calls answered by shopfronts.</td>
<td></td>
<td>program operations;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 CLK sites provide limited Medicare services.</td>
<td>Program Service Centres experience peaks and troughs within all work types from all channels.</td>
<td>Program Service Centres experience peaks and troughs within all work types from all channels.</td>
<td></td>
<td>workload distribution;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main functions:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>branch Office support.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing information;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State/Regional offices also deliver services to medical providers and business focussed services.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>enrolling clients;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processing transactions;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>staff in some sites also answer telephone enquiries.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access points are delivered through third party arrangements. Generally located in pharmacies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Support Agency</td>
<td>Child Support has 15 metropolitan offices and 26 regional offices.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>Child Support does not have call centres as such, as Child Support has nationally connected phone services with all calls being nationally call routed. There are 4 major sites (Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Parramatta), with majority of staff at these sites. See shopfronts.</td>
<td>Data centre arrangements for Child Support are overseen by the Department of Human Services and include 2 data centres. These are outsourced to EDS and are located in Qld.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>No processing centres as such but various functions are provided in various locations. E.g. Change of Assessment, employee withholding and personalised services.</td>
<td>Senior case officers are employed through a tender process and they complete change of assessments. These senior case officers are in addition to non-contracted internal staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Taxation Office</td>
<td>21 Shopfronts.</td>
<td>Up to 1453 points.</td>
<td>10 inbound call centres; and</td>
<td>25 Main office</td>
<td>2 Data centres.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>13 Processing Centres</td>
<td>The ATO outsources several service-related functions, listed below:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: 12 co-located with tax offices;</td>
<td>: 21 shopfront access points;</td>
<td>: 8 centres co-located with state/regional offices;</td>
<td>: 5 VIC</td>
<td>: 1 Data centres.</td>
<td></td>
<td>: Bulk Printing Services: Printing, collation and distribution of bulk correspondence, Statements and Notices.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: 1 co-located with CLK, DVA and MA in Launceston</td>
<td>: 573 information points</td>
<td>: 2 overflow call centres operated by contractor (high volume, low complexity)</td>
<td>: 1 NSW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: Mail Management: Management of incoming mail, scan and capture, delivery of internal correspondence, processing and despatch of outbound mail.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The shopfronts provide a face-to-face service for client enquiries as well as:</td>
<td>: 859 volunteer provider centres</td>
<td></td>
<td>: 2 WA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: Debt Collection services: The ATO uses debt collection agencies for low value tax debts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: Indigenous outreach work and hotline</td>
<td>Access points located within 21 Shopfronts.</td>
<td>: 136 fax numbers (1300, 1800 numbers)</td>
<td>: 3 SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: Call Centres: The ATO utilises the services of a Contact Centre outsource provider for Inbound calls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: correspondence</td>
<td>: 55 computers (etax and .gov access)</td>
<td>: 153 telephone numbers (13, 1300 and 1800)</td>
<td>: 1 TAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: This provides an increased ability to meet service level standards during peak periods and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: complaints</td>
<td>: 58 phones</td>
<td>: 3 of which attract majority of calls;</td>
<td>: 1 QLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In regional and remote shopfronts:</td>
<td>Information/Referral points (July-October, inclusive):</td>
<td>: includes 3 self help lines</td>
<td>: 7 ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: a Tax Help program; and</td>
<td>: Brochures and a referral service to Tax Help from July-October incl</td>
<td>: includes IVR lines</td>
<td>: 1 NT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>: Schools Education program</td>
<td>: 323 CLK sites</td>
<td>: a Tax Help program from July-October incl</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 250 MA sites</td>
<td>: 12 Field offices (remote areas)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tax Help volunteers from July- Oct inclusive:</td>
<td>: 2 VIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 859 centres with phone and fax</td>
<td>: 3 NSW</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>: 467 of these have etax</td>
<td>: 1 TAS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 6 QLD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: The Fields sites are set in remote areas to service the regional community in meeting their tax obligations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 8 shopfronts not co-located with ATO offices</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 1 VIC</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 4 NSW</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>: 2 QLD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>: 1 ACT</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Call Centres:**
- Data Capture and Imaging (Mail management services)
- New Registrations
- Exceptions Processing
- (correcting errors and omissions on forms)
- Client Accounting (maintaining client accounts, transferring amounts and paying refunds)
- Register
<p>| Facilities | Small products are concentrated into as few sites as practical, e.g. Superannuation enquiries are handled by 2 of the 10 inbound call centres. Considerable peaks and troughs are experienced throughout the year, with the most significant peaks occurring during the period July – October. |
| Functions managed nationally. They include: Compliance, Law, Corporate, IT, Client (mail, enquiries, processing etc) |
| Maintenance (updating client details, including addresses). The centres experience peaks and troughs which are generally related to meeting the requirements of Income Tax Legislation and peak lodgement periods. The operational business of the ATO is undergoing transformation and moving towards a new business model. This will impact the functions performed at various sites and the location of processing centres. |
| Maintenance (updating client details, including addresses). The centres experience peaks and troughs which are generally related to meeting the requirements of Income Tax Legislation and peak lodgement periods. The operational business of the ATO is undergoing transformation and moving towards a new business model. This will impact the functions performed at various sites and the location of processing centres. |
| to service specific campaigns to taxpayers during the financial year that result in a large volume of return inbound calls. The use of this provider also seeks to reduce the impact of attrition rate within the ATO Contact Centres. The majority of non-complex inbound calls are able to be handled by the third party. Tax Practitioners provide services to the community by assisting with their interactions with the ATO and with meeting tax obligations. Approx 26,141 tax practitioners registered. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices [STROs]</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>26 Veterans Affairs Network offices, 8 of which are co-located in State/Regional offices.</td>
<td>Offices manage counter enquiries, phones, outreach, community development and support activities, and some minor processing of claims lodged at the counter.</td>
<td>DVA provides outreach services (one-on-one interviews and seminars) from its shopfronts to provide veterans and serving members with information on DVA services. Veterans can also obtain information and receive assistance and information from their local Ex Service Organisation, many of which have established information centres to assist in this way.</td>
<td>1 call centre (servicing two separate phone numbers) Co-located in 3 State/Regional offices. Approximately 75 per cent of calls are resolved by call centre staff, the remainder by subject matter experts in line areas. Call centre staff also undertake other administrative tasks when they are not on the phone.</td>
<td>9 offices including National Office Canberra.</td>
<td>3 Centres, 1 of which is co-located in National Office Canberra.</td>
<td>1 ASL in Turkey to manage the annual Gallipoli commemoration. Response excludes War Graves.</td>
<td>8 State/Regional offices process claims relating primarily to income support and compensation. These offices might also have a contract management role in relation to health services purchased by the Department. There is also a minor processing capacity in National Office Canberra. All Shopfronts in QLD and NSW process simple Income Support reviews. Darwin and Townsville process MRCA/SRCA compensation cases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE**
## Overview:

More than 95 per cent of all passport client contact is undertaken by third parties mainly via Australia Post at interviews and Centrelink via phone contact.

### Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

- **Agency:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **Shopfronts:** 9 domestic passport offices in total - 8 in state capitals with additional office in Newcastle. All offices have passport processing and production capacity.
- **Access Points:** Less than 5 per cent of face to face client contact is at passport offices. Australia Post conducted 93.4 per cent of all passport interviews in 2008-09.
- **Call Centres:** Passport Appointment Service (PAS) provides phone access for appointments in the State Offices. Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) – 131232 provides full advice and assistance to public via call centre. The Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) is contactable by telephone.
- **State, Territory, or Regional offices:** 1 contract with Centrelink (APIS) for all domestic and limited o-seas calls in relation to passports. Provides full call centre functions. APIS responded to 1,607,532 phone calls in 2008-09 which is 95 per cent of all calls in Australia.
- **Data centres:** 1 Head Office based in Canberra which manages domestic and o-seas Australian Passport Office Network.
- **Overseas offices/posts:** 8 State Offices and 1 Regional Office in Newcastle NSW. They provide the full range of passport services. They issue passports and emergency passports, provide notarial services, conduct passport interviews and provide advice to public.
- **Processing centres:** Larger offices have dedicated staff for customer service and processing functions. In the smaller offices, staff undertake passport related tasks in conjunction with Consular and administrative functions.
- **Third parties:** Posts also conduct passport interviews, scan applications to Canberra and provide advice to public.

### Agency Details

- **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**
- **Shopfronts:** 9 domestic passport offices in total - 8 in state capitals with additional office in Newcastle. All offices have passport processing and production capacity.
- **Access Points:** Less than 5 per cent of face to face client contact is at passport offices. Australia Post conducted 93.4 per cent of all passport interviews in 2008-09.
- **Call Centres:** Passport Appointment Service (PAS) provides phone access for appointments in the State Offices. Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) – 131232 provides full advice and assistance to public via call centre. The Consular Emergency Centre (CEC) is contactable by telephone.
- **State, Territory, or Regional offices:** 1 contract with Centrelink (APIS) for all domestic and limited o-seas calls in relation to passports. Provides full call centre functions. APIS responded to 1,607,532 phone calls in 2008-09 which is 95 per cent of all calls in Australia.
- **Data centres:** 1 Head Office based in Canberra which manages domestic and o-seas Australian Passport Office Network.
- **Overseas offices/posts:** 8 State Offices and 1 Regional Office in Newcastle NSW. They provide the full range of passport services. They issue passports and emergency passports, provide notarial services, conduct passport interviews and provide advice to public.
- **Processing centres:** Larger offices have dedicated staff for customer service and processing functions. In the smaller offices, staff undertake passport related tasks in conjunction with Consular and administrative functions.
- **Third parties:** Posts also conduct passport interviews, scan applications to Canberra and provide advice to public.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Call Centres</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>All DEEWR Offices can be an access point for an individual who requires assistance, but generally the design of services involves the citizen engaging with Centrelink, or another third party provider.</td>
<td>There is a range of call centre and help line services provided across the department involving direct support to the citizen in relation to programs and how to access programs.</td>
<td>The State network is the department’s primary means of program service delivery. It is an interface between the department, providers and stakeholders and is the link between policy development and program implementation. State-based staff have developed relationships with local organisations, including state government departments, industry and educational bodies, the community and non-government sector. Those relationships strengthen linkages and help achieve outcomes across the portfolio.</td>
<td>Currently there are 3 data centres which are in dedicated data centre facilities and not co-located with any shopfronts or call centres or state/regional offices or processing centres. Between them, these data centres support all of the department’s IT systems that support the department’s programs - with the exception of child care which is supported by a system provided by FaHCSIA (also hosted in a dedicated data centre facility that is not co-located with any shopfront).</td>
<td>There are 25 posts of which the majority are co-located in Australian Government Chanceries, there are three which are located as stand-alone offices. The main functions are:   - Manage, liaise with, and provide assistance to government officials and institutional representatives in the field of education and training and develop and maintain a network of senior contacts.   - Manage bilateral program activities and events and liaise with DEEWR National Office and other contacts.   - Coordinate the development of language information and promotional materials   - Provide high level analytical advice on relevant developments in the education and training sector.   - Monitor education and training developments in country and provide advice and reports on policy issues, developments, and trends. Please note: The Marketing and Promotion function of Australia’s International education will transfer to Austrade on 1 July 2010. DEEWR will then have 15 offices, all located within Chanceries.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>Human Services Portfolio Centrelink, through the Multilateral Strategic Partnership Arrangement and Bilateral Management Arrangements is responsible for all income support related payments, and various education, employment and child care related programs and services. The Family Assistance Office provides the child care program and payment processing. Other Third parties The majority of the department’s programs that involve service delivery to citizens are contracted to another party for delivery. Some examples:   - Employment Services providers (Job Services Australia Providers and others);   - Australian Apprenticeship Access Program;   - Language Literacy and Numeracy providers;   - Australian Apprenticeship Support Services; and   - child care services registered to administer the child care benefit and child care rebate on behalf of the government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopfronts</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>State, Territory, or Regional offices</th>
<th>Data centres</th>
<th>Overseas offices/posts</th>
<th>Processing centres</th>
<th>Third parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration and Citizenship</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>4 Call Centres: NSW – 1, VIC – 1, Canada – 1, London – 1. Domestic call centres are co-located with state/regional offices. Additional specialist teams respond to technical issues, and assist with call overflow.</td>
<td>Total: 14: ACT - 2, NSW - 2, NT - 1, QLD - 4, SA - 1, TAS - 1, VIC - 2, WA – 1. The main functions at these sites include visa and citizenship processing; compliance; correspondence and some corporate functions. Two offices are also co-located with call centres.</td>
<td>5 Data centres: ACT - 3, VIC - 2. All but one of the data centres are owned and managed by private sector providers.</td>
<td>DIAC has offices in more than 69 countries. Main function undertaken is visa processing. All overseas posts are co-located with DFAT sites.</td>
<td>23 processing centres: ACT - 3, NSW - 5, QLD - 1, SA - 4, TAS - 3, VIC - 3, WA - 4. Processing centres are co-located with State/Regional offices. Processing centres generally specialise in specific types of visas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
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APPENDIX F
Rural Transaction Centres
Rural Transaction Centre (RTC) program

Brief history of the program:

- The RTC program was launched under the then Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) in March 1999 to respond to bank closures and the withdrawal of basic services from rural communities.
- Funding of $70 million was allocated to the RTC program for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2005 under the Telstra (Further Dilution of Public Ownership) Act 1999.
  - Funding for the RTC program ceased on 30 June 2005 with final project payments being made prior to that date for projects with an executed funding agreement.
    - Based on advice from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (DITRDLG) a large number of projects were not completed prior to 30 June 2005 and DITRDLG continues to work with proponents to finalise projects for two RTCs are not yet operational.
- While funding for the RTC program came from the sale of Telstra, it was included under the Regional Partnerships (RP) program for reporting purposes. Once the RTC program ceased, proponents could apply for funding under the RP program.
  - The RP program was closed for new applications in May 2008 but payments continue to be made under the program for projects with executed funding agreements, with current appropriation due to cease on 30 June 2010.
- As at 2008 there were approximately 230 RTCs in Australia.

Program aims and objectives:

- The primary objective of the RTC program was to assist communities to establish locally run and self-funding centres that improve access to basic government, financial and other services in communities that had lost access to these services or have never had them. RTCs were also intended to:
  - enhance or complement existing or planned commercial or government services, especially those bringing together new and existing services in one location; and
  - focus on maximising the involvement of businesses and government agencies to encourage private sector and community collaboration and minimise direct competition.
- The RTC program approach (demand focus) is philosophically quite different to the provision of services through Government shopfronts (supply focus) and reflects the distinctly different roles and functions of RTCs and government shopfronts.
  - The RTC program’s focus was at the community level, where it is the community which identifies and prioritises required services and establishes and maintains the service outlet.
  - On this basis, each RTC was meant to be as individual and innovative as the community it served and provide a range of services including: financial services; post, phone, fax, Internet; facilities for visiting professionals; printing, secretarial services; tourism, involvement in employment schemes; insurance, taxation; Federal, State and Local Government services (such as Medicare Australia and Centrelink access points); and library services.

Business rules and application process:

Eligibility:

- During the life of the RTC program, there were specific guidelines for assessing the eligibility of applications. This criteria aimed to ensure that the RTC program:
  - targeted communities with up to 3000 people outside metropolitan areas;
  - Communities with populations of 3000 or less were thought to be less likely to have government/financial services and therefore reduce the risk of duplication of services. The program gave priority to communities where basic services were not currently provided and funding could not be granted to establish services that would effectively compete with an existing business.
  - It also produced sustainable RTCs run by incorporated, non-profit community bodies, such as local councils, community groups and associations. Funding was only provided for infrastructure; once completed the Government was to have no continuing role in the ongoing viability of the RTC. Applicants were expected to initially contribute towards the establishment and operational costs of the RTC as well as demonstrate that it would become sustainable within a reasonable period (i.e. by finding other income-generating services, such as phone, fax, and Internet facilities, and child care groups).

- In September 2000 Cabinet agreed to a number of changes to the RTC program, including extension of the eligibility criteria to:
  - allow licensed post offices to apply;
  - relax the viability requirement; and
  - enable Australian Government agencies (i.e. Centrelink, Australian Taxation Office and Medicare Australia) to deliver services through RTCs. Possible co-location of RTCs with other government service outlets offered viability where RTCs would likely not be able to achieve a critical mass of services or clients.

RTC officer network:

- In 2001 an RTC field officer network was formed to provide communities with coordinated support during the development of RTCs. The field officers liaised closely with Australian and State and Territory government bodies to coordinate the provision of government services through RTCs.

Application process:

- Each RTC project assistance application was forwarded to the relevant State/ Territory department prior to being assessed by the RTC secretariat within the then DOTARS. Based on consideration by an independent advisory panel recommendations were made to the then Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government for approval.
- Consultation with the relevant department in the State/Territories enabled potential service duplication to be prevented and information to subsequently be used for planning processes, including needs analyses.
- This information sharing provided opportunities for the development of cross-jurisdictional initiatives (i.e. State/ Territory governments that were not eligible to receive funding under the RTC program could identify potential beneficial partnerships with relevant local governments and small businesses to co-locate government services to RTCs).
- Following the cessation of the RTC program, ongoing applications were considered according to specified transitional arrangements detailed in the 2006 RP Program Guidelines. These Guidelines continued to focus on viability requiring that RTC’s be the responsibility of the organisation that had undertaken to guarantee its viability.
Evaluation of the program:

- There is limited coordinated information available from DITRDLG (or its website) regarding the performance of the RTC program, including the sustainability of RTCs once Australian Government funding ceased.
- Based on advice from DITRDLG the RTC program was not evaluated immediately prior to or after cessation. DOTARS’ review of the RTC program in 2002 found that the program appeared to be meeting its objective to improve access for small rural communities to basic government, financial and other services. It also identified the financial viability of some RTCs as a key constraint that could affect the longer-term success of the program. Once this risk became apparent, DOTARS took a number of steps to try to manage the issue including:
  - using a field officer network to provide assistance to applicants with business plan development and ongoing management of projects;
  - facilitating Ministerial decisions to fund Centrelink and Australia Post to provide services;
  - modifying program guidelines (in July 2002) to increase flexibility by explicitly recognising two main ‘models’ for RTCs: community sponsorship (including local government); and small business;
  - placing increased emphasis (in December 2002) on co-location with post offices and financial institutions as a means of improving the long term viability of RTCs;
  - facilitating a memorandum of understanding with Centrelink in May 2003 to facilitate provision of Centrelink services to help improve the viability of RTCs through earning additional income; and
  - facilitating agreement with the then Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in May/June 2003 for a limited trial of touch screens in selected RTCs as a potential further source of income.
- While the ANAO undertook several related performance audits they predominantly focused on the administration of the RP program and grants. The ANAO performance audit of telecommunication grants however, also considered the administration of the RTC program, finding that:
  - The RTC Programme appeared to be very effective in its primary objective of improving access to services for rural communities.
  - Implementation was sluggish, in part, because of a lack of a needs assessment during the planning phase to identify and target likely communities.
  - The RTC program had a high level of budgeted administrative costs, mainly attributable to the appointment of a separate field officer network to promote and administer aspects of the program.
  - Despite the high level of correlation between the program objectives and the selection criteria and the requirement for business plans as a pre-requisite, financial viability was an ongoing problem for the RTC program from its inception and stems from the failure to conduct a risk identification exercise that could have identified individual financial viability issues as a program risk during the planning phase. As noted above, once this risk became apparent DOTARS took a number of steps to try to manage the issues.
  - There was confusion amongst project proponents about what was meant by ‘self-funding’, in the context of the program’s objective that RTCs have long-term sustainability.
  - There was confusion amongst project proponents about ownership and what this implied, especially with respect to projects that involved applications from community associations but involving councils as sponsors for the project.
  - Poor quality business plans underpinned RTCs, especially in terms of their operation as businesses.

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A need for a more coordinated, whole-of-government approach to guaranteeing and providing a package of government services to RTCs.

Are RTCs sustainable?

- As at 2008 there were approximately 230 RTCs in rural Australia. While DITRDLG no longer actively monitors RTCs it was able to confirm that this figure remains approximately correct at the time of writing. A breakdown by State/Territory is as follows:

Table A3: breakdown of state and territory rural transaction centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Number of RTCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Advice from Centrelink notes that approximately 170 of its 584 Centrelink Agents and Access Points are located in RTCs. The large majority of these numbers involve Centrelink Access Points rather than Centrelink Agents (with Access Points being funded in 2009-10 at a fixed rate of $3,956 per annum, including GST). Following the cessation of the RTC program, Centrelink stopped actively differentiating between Centrelink Agents and Access Points that are co-located with an RTC as opposed to those which are not, for reporting purposes.

- Using available information, a brief analysis of the benefits, risk and impediments associated with the RTC program as well as a web based ‘spot check’ of ten sustainable RTCs have been conducted. (See below.) An analysis of the costs associated with RTCs has not been undertaken.

- Based on the information available and analysis undertaken there is a relatively strong consensus that the RTC model was effective in improving sustainable access to basic government, financial and other services for small rural communities. Moreover, despite financial viability being a key constraint and ongoing concern, it would appear that the majority of RTCs have been successfully sustained by their communities, local councils and businesses (through both funding and interest) beyond the cessation of the RP program. It would also appear that ‘buy-in’ from several layers of government along with a cross section of business and the community is a key factor for success.

- The original program’s objectives could be better achieved however, through a more coordinated, whole-of-government approach to guaranteeing and providing a package of government services to RTCs, including the co-location of a greater range of government and financial services. Such an improved RTC model could be achieved as part of a service delivery reform agenda whereby these issues would be considered and managed through partnerships between communities and all levels of governments from the community as well as private businesses with a distinct interest in the community.

- The RTC model (demand focus) arguably reflects the current philosophical change in approach to service delivery, whereby greater focus and importance is placed on citizen-centricity. With improved ongoing management and accountability it also offers major benefits to government in terms of meeting key regional priorities, including improved collaboration between various levels of government and delivering cost-effective and sustainable access to services in rural communities outside of expensive government shopfronts.

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204 Advice from Centrelink and the Centrelink Annual Report 2007-08.
Prior to recommending that the RTC program model (or a variation thereof) be adopted as part of a national service delivery reform agenda, an estimation of the associated costs and savings would be required. If the model (or a variation thereof) was adopted in this context, careful consideration and planning would be required to appropriately identify and manage key risks and impediments to ensure that outcomes were delivered in an effective and efficient manner. This would include:

- Development of sound needs and risk assessment, business plans (project viability) and ongoing management (applicant viability) to ensure that RTCs meet community demand in terms of government and private services.
- A strong focus on maximising the involvement of businesses and government agencies to encourage private sector and community collaboration and minimise direct competition.
- Greater effort to ensure that program parameters as well as clear lines of accountability are developed and understood by all stakeholders.
- Streamlined administrative costs through adequate promotion of the benefits of RTCs and public and private partnerships and a reduction in the duplications of efforts and services across levels of government.

**RTCs: Benefits, risks and impediments**

Table A4: Table of benefits, risks and impediments of Regional Transactions Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Impediments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For citizens</td>
<td>For Governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provided new and returned private and government services to small rural communities affected by major economic, social or environmental change.</td>
<td>- Addressed key regional priorities, including:</td>
<td>- Financial viability can impede the long-term sustainability of the RTC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assisted communities to bridge the digital divide and strengthen their economic base and social structures.</td>
<td>- improved access to a wide range of social and community services through development of infrastructure for regional delivery of basic services; and</td>
<td>- Poor promotion of the program to communities, leading to increased costs in terms of the RTC field officer network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Addressed key self-determined regional priorities, such as access to a wide range of social and community services by developing the infrastructure for regional delivery of basic services.</td>
<td>- coordination of service delivery to better meet the needs of regional communities and make better use of government resources.</td>
<td>- Lack of skills and resources in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Flexible to community needs and demands (i.e. allows communities to identify and implement development opportunities that address their specific needs).</td>
<td>- Cost-effective and sustainable access to services in small rural communities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evolved to respond more broadly to community needs –</td>
<td>- Improved collaboration between local, State/Territory and Australian Governments, communities, and local and national businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Multiple funding sources increased risks to project viability where: proposed partnership contributions are not forthcoming; or actual contributions are at a level lower than that proposed by the applicant. This risk increased where applicants are heavily reliant on partner funding being realised.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Delays in construction and subsequently operation, as well as difficulties in negotiating arrangements with local education providers, mean that training and employment opportunities may not be fully realised.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Delays in construction and operation increased risks associated with government services and private business co-locating with RTCs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Community politics – in some communities the choice of services provided in RTCs was impacted by key service providers not wanting to co-locate with other services.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Cost shifting between various levels of government.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of information and delays in projects can result in community concern and disinterest.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Poor planning to identify and target likely communities introduced risks, including lack of information or community interest, community concern, delays in implementing projects, and project viability.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Poor assessment of applicant viability.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>Impediments</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For citizens</td>
<td>For Governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not just transactions but services and products too.</td>
<td>• Leveraged off existing infrastructure and third party providers, where available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provided local, cheap and convenient access to private, local, State/Territory and Australian Government services.</td>
<td>• Collaboration between levels of government, specifically during the application process, assisted in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provided one off and ongoing training and employment opportunities for locals, as well as flow on effects to the community in terms of increased employment, income and economic development further in line with metropolitan areas.</td>
<td>- reducing duplication of service delivery costs; and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Local businesses were not disadvantaged.</td>
<td>- building information and knowledge regarding community needs that can inform future policy developments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved community interest, reinvestment, and pride.</td>
<td>including:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved access to services through communication technology assisted to reduce isolation.</td>
<td>- the type of organisation;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- evidence of expertise/skills to manage the project;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- the credentials of the applicant;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- the ability of an applicant to deliver the outcomes, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- the level and likelihood of the risks involved, including how identified risks will be managed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Poor assessment of project viability, including</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ownership of equipment or facilities or other assets that may be funded under the project;</td>
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<td>- the accuracy of the budget and costings, feasibility studies or project plans;</td>
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<td>- information on whether there is any need for planning approvals or licences and that these requirements have been met or fully considered;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- the provision of business plans and cash flow projections;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ongoing maintenance and management;</td>
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<td>- funding that may be required for future stages of the project;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- identification of key milestones and the proportion of project funding for each of the milestones if the project had previous stages, how it was funded in the past, and/or</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- the results of any independent viability assessments if relevant.</td>
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APPENDIX G
Identity Registration and Authentication
Identity Registration and Authentication

Overview
The accurate identification and authentication of citizens is a critical enabler to providing services to them. It provides the Government with the assurance that citizens gain access to the right services, while providing citizens with the confidence that Government is aware of their circumstances and providing them with appropriate support and assistance.

Current identification and authentication approaches are generally managed individually by agencies, often in an inconsistent manner. This means that each time a citizen wishes to interact with Government he or she must physically provide separate proof of identity and personal information to each organisation. Such a situation poses a significant inconvenience to citizens but, it is also costly and time consuming for Government service delivery agencies. A process where identity registration can be undertaken once and be re-used across Government would provide better outcomes for both citizens and government.

In the move to an on-line and automated service delivery environment, the ability to provide web-based identity verification and authentication processes will be a fundamental issue for government.

Identity Registration and Authentication – two distinct elements
It is important to clarify the key elements of the identity and authentication process. The initial element involves identity registration, and this is followed by an ongoing authentication process.

When citizens seek out government assistance and benefits, they must first prove who they are. The process of the citizen establishing proof of identity generally involves the provision of a range of proof of identity documents. These are verified by government and the citizen can then transact with government.

Authentication is the ongoing process of proving that a citizen is who they claim to be. Key elements of the authentication process usually involve something the citizen knows (e.g. username and password), something the citizen has (e.g. security token) and/or something the citizen is (e.g. biometric). It is the combined level of strength of both identity registration and authentication that determines the extent to which Government has confidence that citizens are who they say they are.

Objectives for Identity Registration and Authentication
Identity registration and authentication can be developed for a range of purposes and take a number of forms. With the compelling argument to move to the on-line channel both from a citizen convenience and government efficiency point of view, registration and authentication processes should encourage take-up of the on-line channel.

Mandating on-line registration for the population has the potential to raise significant privacy concerns and risks significant citizen backlash (as was the case with other mandated registration processes such as the Access Card and Australia Card examples). Providing citizens with the choice to register for on-line services, and making the service a compelling offer is a more practical and balanced option.

With these factors in mind, the following considerations are important:

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Any identity and authentication process must continue to manage fraud effectively. This is not to say that the risk of identity fraud must be eliminated, but consideration must be given to successfully managing the risk of fraud in an automated environment.

The process should not impose an arduous process for ID registration or biometric collection on citizens. Under a ‘citizen choice’ model, a particularly complex and detailed process could potentially lead to minimal take-up. This, in turn, will lead to a lower proportion of transactions undertaken in the most cost effective channels and will be costly for government.

Identity registration and authentication should be seen as a government asset and not an agency-specific process. Where citizens choose to do so, identity registration and authentication processes should be captured in an integrated whole-of-government process. This would enable citizens to prove who they are only once to government and would provide them with the opportunity to update changes to their details in a single process. For the Government, this would provide significant efficiencies through the reduction in need to undertake proof of identity checks and the increase in automated transactions.

Current state of play

There is currently no single mechanism that provides proof of a citizen’s identity in an on-line environment across Government. This has significantly limited the scope and number of transactions the citizen and government can undertake on-line.

Government agency assertions of on-line interaction and traffic are, in large part, focused on the availability of information and basic forms on a web browser. These often have to be printed off, filled in and taken into an office. At best, some forms can be filled in on-line then printed off, signed and taken into an office. This is a time consuming and inconvenient process for the citizen.

When the citizen arrives at a government shopfront, they have to undertake a process to determine who they are, usually involving the production of multiple proof of identity documents. They then submit their claim form, where a customer service officer manually keys information from the form into a system that records the interaction. This is manually intensive and costly for government, and can lead to keying errors by customer service officers.

While the technology exists to facilitate automation through the application and assessment process (and remove the need for costly face to face interaction), Government has no mechanism to identify and authenticate its citizens to allow them to undertake transactions on-line.

A range of initiatives are currently underway across the Commonwealth that explore identity management and authentication processes. Some examples of different registration and authentication approaches are provided below.

AGOSP

The Australian Government Online Service Point (AGOSP) is currently being developed by AGIMO. It is intended to be a one-stop-shop for citizens and will give them a primary point of access to online services and information provided by any agency of the Australian Government. The AGOSP model provides no identity registration process and is premised on citizens providing proof of identity with each of the agencies they interact with prior to engaging with AGOSP. The development and phased deployment of AGOSP has been delayed. To date, limited functionality is available. A single sign on service is currently being trialled utilising the Department of Human Services’ myaccount single sign-on portal.

DVS

The national Document Verification Service (DVS) is a secure, electronic, on-line system developed by the Attorney General’s Department to be accessible by participating federal, state and territory
agencies. Agencies authorised to use the DVS can check in real time whether a document presented to them as a proof-of-identity by an individual applying for high value benefits and services was issued by the relevant agency, and that the details on the document are true and accurate.

Progress to date for the DVS has also been limited. Currently, issuing agencies do not include all states and territories (Victoria and NSW are yet to sign up to the services and Western Australia has given a commitment to join up, but are awaiting legislative change). In addition, some states only have limited electronic records, with many still being kept on paper files. Until all state and territories are included and have sufficient electronic records, take up of the verification service will remain minimal. The latest estimate by the Attorney Generals’ Department suggests that all States and Territories should be on board by June 2010.

**Centrelink voice verification**

Centrelink has commenced deployment of voice biometric authentication technology following earlier trials. This involves citizens registering a voiceprint with Centrelink which can then be used to authenticate them for future self service and automated transactions on the telephony channel.

As at 28 September 2009, 42,000 Centrelink customers were registered to use voice verification with an average of 800 new registrations each day. Approximately 2,000 customers were using the service each day to verify themselves for a range of transactions including reporting employment income, providing family income estimates, and confirming payment information.

**Future Whole of Government Approach to Authentication**

Across the Commonwealth, there are now moves to undertake a consistent and coordinated approach to authentication. AGIMO recently received approval from Cabinet to commence a process to establish a consistent and uniform approach to authentication across Government. The focus is currently on three key areas:

- Citizen to government authentication;
- Business to government authentication; and
- Government to government authentication.

The proposal involves the appointment of lead agencies to work on authentication approaches for each of the three areas. Government agencies will have to be consistent with the proposed authentication approaches, unless they receive Cabinet approval to opt out. This will lead to a more consistent and streamlined approach to authentication, and will potentially facilitate a greater proportion of transactions being done in an automated way.

**Key issues for consideration**

**Risk management for identity**

Proof of identity processes are based on a measure of risk. High risk systems, applications and information require different forms of authentication that more accurately confirm a citizen’s identity as being who they claim to be than would a low risk application, where the confirmation of the identity is not as important from a risk perspective.

In shifting a greater proportion of transactions on-line, consideration needs to be given to managing the risk profile for service delivery transactions associated with particular customer groups. On-line transactions, by their nature, will require a certain degree of trust as there is no face to face contact with individuals. While options exist to provide a mandated, high level identity registration and
authentication process (such as the previous Access Card model), this could potentially be invasive to the citizen from a privacy perspective.

Another option is to consider a risk-based approach to service delivery. Such an option would still rely on identification processes, but would not entail mass registration of an entire population. In this scenario, undertaking random sample audits of people receiving benefits may be an answer to mitigating ID fraud issues. Such random sample audits could not only explore identity fraud, but could also look at fraud and non-compliance from an eligibility for benefit perspective.

Privacy

The increased collection and centralisation of identity management across Government has the potential to increase concerns about citizens’ privacy. The management of privacy perceptions and the degree of trust citizens place in the system are important elements of designing a successful model for identity and authentication. It is important to ensure that citizens have control of the information they provide to government and have an awareness of who is accountable for key actions and activities in the identity management and authentication process.

The consideration of these elements will be particularly important when considering potentially sensitive issues such as the collection and capture of biometric information and management of access to information by government.

In managing privacy issues more broadly, it will be important to communicate to citizens not only the benefits that can be provided with service delivery enhancements, but also the obligations they have to help government in the process. This is fundamental to achieving a more citizen-centric approach to service delivery.

Mandating Vs Citizen Choice

A fundamental consideration for identity management and authentication is the extent to which the process – or parts of the process – are mandated as opposed to offering citizen choice.

From a Government perspective, there are significant benefits associated with mandating the process. This would provide a more consistent and uniform approach to the development of the system. It also has the potential to extract the most benefit from preventing identity fraud.

From a citizen perspective, there are potential privacy concerns about the ability of a citizen to control the information they provide if choice is taken out of the model.

Biometrics

The capture of biometric information provides several potential benefits to Government during a registration and authentication process, particularly in relation to identity fraud and security. The collection of biometrics can help to prevent someone stealing an identity and/or to prevent someone creating fake identities. There are various approaches and models that can be considered, each with their own strengths and weaknesses.

Under a model where biometric information was collected from the whole population (and was therefore mandated), biometric information would be used to prevent identity fraud upfront by undertaking a ‘one to many’ matching process. This process would identify any duplicate (and therefore fake) identities and eliminate them from the system.

Such a model would identify the proposed identity fraud at the point of registration. Depending on the biometric chosen, it would not necessarily be used by government in an ongoing capacity to verify identities for transactions.
The types of biometrics that could be used in this process include:

- Photo
- Iris
- Voice
- Fingerprint

Under a model where biometrics were not mandated but could be collected with the citizen’s consent, biometrics would not provide the same identity fraud prevention capability upfront. There would be no national database to verify one citizen’s biometric against all others to remove potential multiple identities.

It could, however, provide a ‘one to one’ authentication process to confirm and protect an individual’s identity on an ongoing basis. This would provide individuals with a second factor of authentication for self-service transactions and would allow the Government to have a high degree of confidence in the people they are dealing with for high value transactions.

Under this model, the biometric that best lends itself to operating in an automated (on-line and telephony) environment is the voice biometric. Other options such as photo, iris and fingerprint are not as practically applicable in a self-service context.

Possible Registration Options

Option 1 – Face to face registration with POI documents and biometric capture

This option would involve a face to face identity registration process at a government or third party shopfront for all citizens wanting to use the integrated on-line citizen interface. Citizens would undertake this registration process regardless of any proof of identity processes they had undertaken previously with government agencies.

Citizens would provide a range of proof of identity documents which could be verified in real time using the Document Verification Service and captured in the on-line citizen interface. Citizens would also provide a voice biometric at the identity registration process for ongoing authentication. A government agency or a third party provider with experience in identity registration and management (such as Australia Post) could be leveraged for this option.

Considerations

For those who will decide to enrol in this process, they will have the ability to undertake their transactions in an on-line environment and will not need to re-establish their identity with each new agency they interact with. However, this option poses a significant up-front barrier for many citizens. Even though they may have proven who they are to Government, they would now need to undertake a separate process (outside of applying for a particular benefit) to prove who they are. For many who do not have ongoing need to provide multiple POI processes on a regular basis, this will not justify the time required to undertake the process.

For Government, this is a costly option and, unlike previous mass registration initiatives where registration was mandatory (such as the access card), this would not have a large impact on identity fraud. Biometric collection upfront at registration would not deter duplicate (fake) identities unless the collection is mandated for the population. It would only provide a mechanism for ongoing authentication.
Option 2 – Face to face registration for new customers or customers with low level POI

This option envisages agreement across Commonwealth service delivery organisations on a standard for proof of identity process which would be accepted by other agencies. More robust and detailed POI processes within Government (such as the passport proof of identity process and possibly some Centrelink POI processes) would be accepted as trusted proofs of identity processes that would be accepted by others. Under this model, citizens who wished to use the on-line citizen interface and who had already undertaken a robust registration process would be pre-registered. They would be provided with a unique identifier and could begin using the interface.

For citizens who haven’t yet undertaken a POI registration process or have only undertaken a low level registration process, citizens would be able to undertake this with an agency when applying for a new benefit or program. This would mean citizens don’t need to undertake a separate registration process for the purposes on the on-line citizen interface. This registration process would be undertaken and captured in the on-line citizen interface (as per the process in Option 1) and would allow this registration to be used for all future interactions with government.

Considerations
From a government perspective, the process of determining standard registration processes across government will be vital in ensuring the effectiveness of this model. An important consideration will be the level of standardised proof of identity registration and the types of existing proof of identity processes that are accepted going forward. This will involve a trade off between higher level registration processes and the cost and inconvenience of re-registering large proportions of the community.

From a citizen perspective, this option provides a more convenient approach to registration. Citizen do not need to undertake a separate registration process if they have previously undertaken a higher level process. They would simply be provided with the details and technology to begin to transact more fully via the on-line citizen interface.

Option 3 – Automated registration process utilising DVS

Under such a model, citizens could provide their range of proof of identity document numbers (passport number, birth certificate number, driver licence number) in an on-line environment. The citizen would visit a government website (such as Australia.gov.au) that included a registration component. They would provide their proof of identity document numbers, personal information, and details of their agency relationships. Once this was provided, the Document Verification Service could verify the document numbers to the name in real time and provide confirmation to the citizen that they had been successfully registered. They would be provided with a unique identifier and could begin transactions.

A similar registration process is being undertaken by some banking providers (such as ING Direct and UBank) and is used by on-line gambling providers (such as SportsBet and Centrebet).

Considerations
For citizens, this provides a more simple and convenient mechanism than earlier options. It allows them to undertake the proof of identity process on-line at a time and place that is convenient to them.

For Government, this is a less costly option than earlier options but poses considerable risk to identity fraud. Under this model, there is no guarantee that the person completing the registration is the same as the identity they are registering. While this risk can be mitigated somewhat through ongoing audit processes and a change to the program design options, it would involve a significant shift in approaches to risk management.

A key difference between the private sector and a potential government model is the ownership of risk. In private sector models, people are providing banks and betting organisations with money and...
therefore, the risk resides mostly with the individual to trust the registration process. In a government model, the risk would reside with government, as they are providing ongoing benefits and payments to citizens.

**Option 4 – Leveraging private sector identity registration processes**

Another option may be to leverage existing high level identity registration processes currently being undertaken in the private sector, particularly from the financial services sector. Financial sector organisations currently have a legal requirement to undertake proof of identity registration to a high level (for anti-money laundering legislation). This process could be potentially be leveraged by government.

**Considerations**

Government would need to consider the implications of such an approach. Currently almost all source documents used for proving identity are government documents. Whether it makes sense for private sector organisations to be verifying government documents to individuals is questionable. Under such a model, it would be important for these organisations to have access to the Document Verification Service to enable them to properly verify documents.

It is also possible that leveraging banking sector registration processes may lead to the banking sector asking the government for a fee to undertake the registration process.

**Ongoing Authentication**

Once citizens have undertaken an identity registration process, there are options for how they could be authenticated for on-line transactions.

More secure forms of authentication focus not only on single factor authentication such as username and passwords, but on multi-factor approaches. This can include the use of a credential that is unique to the citizen or could also include the verification of a biometric. These additional factors would provide an additional level of information that is not linked to usernames and passwords and is provided at the point of transaction. This enhances the security of authentication and makes it significantly more difficult for someone to fraudulently access accounts.

A range of technological options are available to provide credential functions. One option involves the use of mobile phones, through the use of an SMS message at the point of transactions. Banking institutions are already using this process for higher risk transactions. Other options include the use of smartcard or security tokens.

Biometrics provide an alternative for a second factor of authentication. In this instance, a voice biometric could be collected at the point of registration and could be used to verify individuals when authenticating themselves. Voice biometrics provide a user friendly approach under such a model as they can be easily verified on a telephony channel and in future, could also be a viable biometric on the on-line channel through the use of computer-based speaker interaction. Voice biometrics are also seen as a less intrusive form of biometric compared with other biometric options and are a proven option already being used within Government.
APPENDIX H
Performance Measures for Service Delivery
Performance Measurement

Across Government, there are several approaches to managing the delineation between policy, program design and service delivery. This has implications for the way program performance is determined, agreed and measured.

In some instances, policy, program design and service delivery are all managed within a single department, as is the case in the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. In other parts of government, policy development and program accountability reside within the policy department, while service delivery is undertaken by a service delivery agency. This is highlighted by policy departments such as the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) undertaking the role of policy development and program managers, with Centrelink the service delivery provider.

Another alternative involves policy development residing within a policy department, while the administration of the program and the service delivery reside within a service delivery organisation. An example of this approach is demonstrated by the relationship between several policy departments and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Regardless of the governance approach used to deliver programs, it is important that performance measures are captured for both higher level policy/program effectiveness measures as well as specific service delivery measures. However, the examples provided in the following pages demonstrate that performance measurement for each of these models is undertaken quite differently and with varying degrees of completeness.

A sample of performance measurement information has been drawn from the 2009-10 Portfolio Budget Statements to demonstrate how the delineation between policy, program design and service delivery functions are reported and measured in organisations.

Three service delivery organisations have been selected – Centrelink, Medicare Australia and the Australian Taxation Office. Two policy departments have also been chosen – DEEWR and FaHCSIA.

The Australian Taxation Office

In addition to administering the taxation system, the ATO also delivers a range of programs to individuals on behalf of policy departments where the policy is to be delivered through the tax system. The ATO does not provide policy-specific performance measures in relation to these programs but rather a generic statement of performance in delivery as follows:

The ATO’s role in successfully delivering this program is demonstrated by payments being made in accordance with the law.

For some of these programs, policy departments do not provide any performance measurements in their Portfolio Budget Statements. This is the case with the Education Tax Refund, for which DEEWR is expected to have policy responsibility (the ATO budget statements express that expectation).

Medicare Australia and Centrelink

Performance measures included in Medicare Australia’s and Centrelink’s Portfolio Budget Statements are typically based on specific service delivery measures such as customer satisfaction, payment accuracy, and timeliness. Clear performance targets are set and measured for these areas. Medicare provides specific performance measures for the programs that it delivers, while Centrelink does not provide program-specific measures.
Policy Departments – DEEWR and FaHCSIA

Portfolio Budget Statements of DEEWR and FaHCSIA refer more broadly to policy outcomes and objectives. They also provide program-specific indicators which seek to measure the effectiveness of their programs. In some instances, measureable performance targets are less readily identified.

It appears that the key performance indicators provided for the FaHCSIA programs in Outcome 1 establish coverage for the programs, however no measureable performance targets are listed. Similarly, the DEEWR key performance indicators for working age payments also lack measureable targets for determining the success of the programs and assessing the broader impact on citizens.

In the case of Working Age Payments Programs (such as Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment Single), DEEWR is responsible for the policy development and accountable for program, while Centrelink undertakes the service delivery. However, neither DEEWR nor Centrelink provides any measureable performance targets in their respective Portfolio Budget Statements.

Service Delivery Performance Measurement

Centrelink

Outcome – Self sufficiency for individuals and families through access to personalised assistance and coordinated delivery of payments and services on behalf of government.

Centrelink reports its effective achievement of the outcome against three key performance areas:

1. Design and implement service delivery systems that maximise the ability to achieve Government objectives;
2. Deliver ongoing services and respond to emerging needs; and
3. Make it easier for customers to do business with Centrelink, respond in a timely manner and match services and payments to customer’s circumstances.

Table A6: Centrelink Key Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>2009-10 Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.1 – Manage and achieve service delivery improvements as required by the Minister</td>
<td>• Centrelink achieves the outcomes articulated in our Statement of Intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.2 – Implement Government decisions on time and budget</td>
<td>• Less than 5 per cent of Budget initiatives are rated ‘red’ in a traffic light report structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.3 – Connecting individuals to programs that provide educational, social and economic opportunities</td>
<td>• Centrelink meets all agreed referral standards to third party providers designed to support these elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.4 – Supporting social, economic, educational and community engagement for Indigenous and regional Australians</td>
<td>• Centrelink supports the ‘Closing the Gap’ initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.5 – Support individuals and families to participate economically and socially through payments and services</td>
<td>• Positive response to this element in our Customer Satisfaction survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1.6 – Minister is satisfied with the quality, timeliness and relevance of advice for decision making</td>
<td>• 95 per cent of briefs are submitted within agreed timeframes and meet a standard of satisfactory or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 2.1 – Achieve expected program outlay accuracy standards and minimise fraud</td>
<td>• 95 per cent of Ministerial replies to correspondence are submitted within agreed timeframes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 2.2 – Support delivery of Government’s emergency response</td>
<td>• Program accuracy standards are achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide service delivery support in the event of emergency/disaster situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medicare Australia

Outcome – Access to Government health and other payment information services to the Australian public and providers through convenient and efficient service delivery.

Program 1.1 Key Performance Indicators – Delivery of Medicare Benefits and Services

In line with the objective of this program Medicare Australia will continue to increase the convenience and ease of access through increasing the level of electronic Medicare claiming from the point of service and ensuring that, where required, access to face to face service delivery is available. In addition Medicare Australia will continue to implement process improvement within its operations to increase the efficiency of program delivery. Medicare Australia will ensure that the Minister is satisfied with the quality, timeliness and relevance of departmental advice for decision making.

Table A7: Key Performance indicators for Medicare Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target for 2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briefs are submitted within agreed timeframes and meeting a standard of satisfactory</td>
<td>≥ 95 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial replies to correspondence are submitted within agreed timeframes</td>
<td>≥ 95 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proportion of Medicare Bulk Bill Claims processed electronically</td>
<td>≥ 90 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proportion of Medicare Patient Claims processed electronically</td>
<td>≥ 25 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average revenue per Medicare service</td>
<td>≥ $1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community satisfaction</td>
<td>≥ 90 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice manager satisfaction</td>
<td>≥ 85 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner satisfaction</td>
<td>≥ 70 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program 1.2 Key Performance Indicators – Delivery of Pharmaceutical Benefits and Services

In line with the objective of this program Medicare Australia will improve the convenience and ease of access to rebates. In addition Medicare Australia will continue to implement process improvement within its operations to increase the efficiency of program delivery.

Table A8: Key Performance indicators for Medicare Australia’s Pharmaceutical Benefits Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target for 2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>per cent on-line prescription processing</td>
<td>≥ 98 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average revenue per PBS service</td>
<td>≥ 0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist satisfaction</td>
<td>≥ 90 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program 1.3 Key Performance Indicators – Delivery of other Benefits and Services

In line with the objective of this program, Medicare Australia will continue to increase the convenience and ease of access to services within these programs through improving electronic take-up. In addition Medicare Australia will continue to implement process improvements within its operations to increase the efficiency of program delivery.

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE
Table A9: Key Performance indicators for Medicare Australia’s Other Benefits and Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target for 2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged Care per cent on-line claiming</td>
<td>&gt; 45 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program 1.4 Key Performance Indicators – Medicare rebates (Electronic Claiming)
Medicare Australia will continue to ensure that the Software Vendor incentives are paid appropriately and promptly.

Table A10: Key Performance indicators for Medicare Australia’s Electronic Claiming of Medicare Rebates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Target for 2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt payment of software vendor incentive</td>
<td>≥ 90 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian Tax Office

Outcome – Confidence in the administration of aspects of Australia’s taxation and superannuation systems through helping people understand their rights and obligations, improving ease of compliance and access to benefits, and managing non-compliance with the law.

KPI’s for Program 1.1 – Shape, design and build administrative systems
• the level of satisfaction with ATO input to new tax and superannuation policy and law design processes, as per the agreed ATO-Treasury protocol;
• the degree of success in implementing improved business systems and processes in accordance with intent, outcomes and promised user experience;
• the degree of success in implementing new administrative systems and support products for taxpayers and their advisers in time for new laws; and
• the degree of success in managing litigation and consequences of court and tribunal decisions.

KPI’s for Program 1.2 – Management of revenue collection and transfers
• the level of community satisfaction with the management of revenue collections and payments, registrations, client contact and debt collection; and
• the level of collectable debt compared to total collections.

KPI’s for Program 1.3 Compliance Assurance and support for revenue collections
• the successful delivery of active compliance products;
• the successful implementation of specifically funded activities contributing to the collection of revenue, and
• the level of community satisfaction with the information and tools provided by the ATO.

KPI’s for Program 1.4 – Compliance Assurance and support for transfers and regulation of superannuation funds
• the successful delivery of active compliance products;
• the successful implementation of specifically funded activities contributing to the management of transfer or superannuation laws administered by the ATO; and
• the level of community satisfaction with the information and tools provided by the ATO.

KPI’s for Program 1.5 – Services to government and agencies
• engagement in cross-agency activities in accordance with agreed memoranda of understanding;
• the level of success in delivering Australian Business Register services to partner agencies, in accordance with service commitments; and
• the level of client satisfaction with services provided by the Australian Valuation Office, in accordance with service commitments.
KPI’s for Program 1.6 – 1.20 (Specific Programs such as the Education Tax Refund and Refundable Film and Television Tax Offset)

- The ATO’s role in successfully delivering these programs is demonstrated by payments being made in accordance with the law.

KPI’s for Program 1.21 – Bad and Doubtful Debts and Remissions

- The ATO’s role in successfully delivering this program is demonstrated by determining bad and doubtful debts and remissions in accordance with ATO policy and legislation.

Policy Performance Measurements

In order to compare service delivery performance measures with policy performance measures, a sample of programs have been taken from both DEEWR and FaHCSIA.

For DEEWR, Program 4.4 (Working Age Payments) has been selected. This program is part of Outcome 4, which is just one of five outcomes the department is responsible for. For FaHCSIA, programs from Outcome 1 have been selected. This is just one of seven outcomes the department is responsible for.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Outcome 4 – Enhanced employability and acquisition of labour market skills and knowledge and participation in society through direct financial support and funding of employment and training services.

Table A11: Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations: Working Age Payments: Administered Expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administered item expenses ($000)</th>
<th>2008-09 Revised Budget</th>
<th>2009-10 Budget</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Administered Expenses:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Annual Services (Appropriation Bill No.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex Gratia Payment</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified Compliance Framework</td>
<td>6,703</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Appropriations:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security (Administration) Act 1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Age Allowance</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Allowance</td>
<td>117,199</td>
<td>121,150</td>
<td>126,174</td>
<td>131,861</td>
<td>136,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newstart Allowance</td>
<td>5,023,641</td>
<td>8,132,294</td>
<td>9,606,433</td>
<td>9,406,957</td>
<td>8,504,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Payment Single</td>
<td>4,265,052</td>
<td>4,206,501</td>
<td>4,133,243</td>
<td>4,077,464</td>
<td>4,144,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Payment Partnered</td>
<td>984,932</td>
<td>1,045,754</td>
<td>1,119,024</td>
<td>1,203,955</td>
<td>1,272,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Allowance Benefit</td>
<td>55,881</td>
<td>35,955</td>
<td>15,348</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Allowance Pension</td>
<td>318,102</td>
<td>244,703</td>
<td>181,398</td>
<td>138,051</td>
<td>63,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner Education Supplement</td>
<td>65,030</td>
<td>62,965</td>
<td>58,898</td>
<td>54,408</td>
<td>53,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sickness Allowance</td>
<td>92,852</td>
<td>88,841</td>
<td>90,047</td>
<td>92,041</td>
<td>93,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities Allowance</td>
<td>25,746</td>
<td>23,302</td>
<td>20,272</td>
<td>17,967</td>
<td>15,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVA Training and Learning Bonus</td>
<td>2,169</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A12: Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations: Working Age Payments: Key Performance Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program effectiveness</th>
<th>2008-09 Revised Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average (mean) duration on income support by current income support payment (weeks):</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newstart Allowance (NSA)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Allowance (Other) (YA(O))</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Payment Single (PPS)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of income support recipients who exit income support within 3 months of grant:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Newstart Allowance (NSA)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Allowance (Other) (YA(O))</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of income support recipients who exit income support within 12 months of grant:</td>
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<td>Newstart Allowance (NSA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Allowance (Other) (YA(O))</td>
<td>78</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

*Outcome 1* – Improved child development, safety and family functioning through support services for all Australians, payment for low and medium income families with children, and family policy advice.

*KPI’s for Program 1.1 – Family Support:*

**Family Relationship Services/Children and Parenting Services**

- Percentage and number of clients with increased knowledge and skills related to family functioning, parenting, family safety or child development;
- Percentage and number of clients satisfied that the support service they received was relevant to their circumstances and needs; and
- Percentage and number of clients assisted from priority groups.

**Family Relationship Services**

- Number of service providers who meet accreditation requirements or relevant industry standards for service management and governance;
- Average cost per client; and
- Average cost per session.

**Children and Parenting Services**

- Percentage and number of service sites or outlets in disadvantaged or targeted communities;
- Percentage and number of clients assisted to participate in an age-appropriate child/youth development activity.
KPI’s for Program 1.2 – Family Tax Benefit

Family Tax Benefit A
- Percentage and number of families in receipt of FTB A within income test categories

Family Tax Benefit B
- Percentage and number of families in receipt of FTB B within income test categories

Family Tax Benefit A and B
- Total number of recipients;
- Proportion of recipients paid by instalment;
- Amount and proportion of administered outlays paid by instalment and lump sum;
- Proportion of recipients paid by lump sum;
- Proportion of recipients obtaining a qualification debt;
- Proportion of recipients obtaining a debt following reconciliation;
- Proportion of recipients obtaining a non-lodger debt;
- Service delivery agreements are in place with all service delivery agencies;
- Strategies are in place to ensure the requirements under agreements with providers are fulfilled;
- Payment accuracy; and
- Percentage and number of families with children under 16 years of age receiving FTB A and/or FTB B.

KPI’s for Program 1.3 – Parental Payments and Care Incentives

Paid Parental Leave (PPL)
- Number of mothers for whom PPL has been paid as a proportion of all mothers in the same year;
- Proportion of families who take the full 18 weeks of PPL; and
- Percentage and number of parents paid PPL by employers.

Baby Bonus
- Number of children for whom Baby Bonus has been paid as a proportion of children born in the same year

Maternity Immunisation Allowance
- Percentage and number of children vaccinated to the highest level appropriate for their age group in the Australian Community

Baby Bonus/Maternity Immunisation Allowance
- Number of recipients;
- Administered outlays;
- Payment accuracy;
- Service delivery agreements are in place with all service delivery agencies; and
- Strategies are in place to ensure the requirements under agreements with providers are fulfilled.
APPENDIX I
Technology and Servicing Through the Online Citizen Interface
Technology and Servicing Through the On-line Citizen Interface

Introduction

For the first time in 2008, the on-line channel was the most frequent method used by citizens to transact with Government (38 per cent) with face-to-face transactions continuing to decline to 34 per cent\textsuperscript{206}. A key benefit identified by citizens is the convenience of being able to use the on-line channel at a time and place of their choosing\textsuperscript{207}.

With this increasing use of the Internet for government information and services, citizens are faced with an ever increasing array of government websites and portals through which they must search to find relevant information. The proliferation of these websites and portals does not appear to have been considered from a holistic, citizen-centric view with little thought given to how the myriad websites inter-relate to one another and how citizens should navigate through these websites.

With citizens interacting with an array of departments, service delivery agencies, and non-government service delivery providers across all levels of government, there is a growing need to provide a more co-ordinated and citizen-centric approach to managing their on-line interactions. For example, when citizens are not familiar with the types of services they may be eligible for, they must determine which level of government is responsible for the service, then determine which agency they should deal with before trying to find relevant information. A person with complex needs who needs to find information across multiple levels of government would have significant difficulty finding the relevant information and services without human intervention.

From a government point of view, the on-line channel represents a significant opportunity to improve service delivery. Not only does it provide a more convenient channel for citizens, it is also significantly more cost effective than the face to face and telephony channels. By harnessing on-line technology solutions, efficiencies can be achieved by maximising take up of the on-line channel. These can then be re-invested in providing high level services for the most vulnerable in the community.

A key element in facilitating the move to on-line transactions, and thereby improving customer service and generating efficiencies, involves the development of an on-line citizen interface.

What is the on-line citizen interface?

The on-line citizen interface would be a system designed to capture, store and manage citizens’ information and interactions with government. Citizens would be able to view and update their own personal information easily and could choose the types of government information they wished to be presented with. They would also be able to complete a much higher proportion of transactions from beginning to end in an on-line environment and minimise the face to face contact that was required by government.

For the Government, the on-line citizen interface would provide government agencies with a robust and secure identity registration and authentication system for on-line services. It would allow government agencies to place a large proportion of their services into the on-line channel which would significantly reduce traffic to the more intensive face to face and telephone channels.


\textsuperscript{207} Australian Government Information Management Office, *Australians’ use and satisfaction with e-government services*, Department of Finance and Deregulation, December 2008.
What an on-line citizen interface can deliver

The development of an on-line citizen interface can enable and enhance a range of citizen-centric initiatives including:

- a single citizen portal;
- on-line and automated forms systems; and
- improved information mapping and search capability.

Single citizen portal

Much has been made of single citizen portals that provide individuals with a personalised view of their interactions with Government, but to date, this has failed to materialise. Current approaches in Australia, such as the AGOSP initiative, have sought to create this, but have been inhibited from providing a holistic service offer without having a higher level of confidence that the person logging in is who they claim to be.

A secure, personalised web portal for citizens can provide a valuable incentive for them to use the on-line channel. The portal can provide citizens with a range of benefits to improve the way they interact with government. For example, a personalised portal can allow citizens to manage and view information they are most interested in. They could subscribe to information updates on a range of subject matters that are relevant to them and receive information as soon as it becomes available.

Citizens could also view and track a summary of all of their interactions and transactions with government in a single location. If they have dealing with several agencies, a snapshot of these interactions would be provided on the homepage, with the ability to then go straight into detailed interactions.

Another benefit for citizens involves the ability to manage and change personal information in a single location across Government. The ability for citizens to easily change their details and allow this to be provided across Government would provide significant benefits for citizens.

There are also significant benefits to government. In addition to the savings that would be generated by facilitating a greater proportion of transactions on-line, there would also be efficiencies related to a single authoritative source of personal information across Government. The time and resources allocated by each agency to check, verify and update personal information would be significantly reduced as more citizens move to this on-line environment. The on-line citizen interface would significantly streamline government processes for sharing information and data entry.

On-line and automated forms systems

Another area that could be more comprehensively delivered across government involves the use of on-line forms. Currently, some forms are able to be completed on-line and potentially even submitted through a secure portal. However, the vast majority of government claim forms need to be filled in manually and signed. In an environment where government requires proof of identity processes for most application processes, there is currently no mechanism that allows forms to be submitted and accepted on-line. This is time consuming for citizens and costly for government.

A range of on-line form technologies currently exist that provide both automation and customer convenience measures. While the various technology solutions differ in their functionality, there are opportunities to generate significant improvements in service delivery.

A range of efficiencies and improvements can be realised from the current on-line form product offerings. The technology is sufficiently flexible and adaptable that it could be deployed across Government as a key technology platform. Rather than investing in disparate and diverging platforms, a single investment could potentially provide sufficient flexibility to meet the wide range of needs of the Commonwealth.
Agencies would retain the capacity to create and modify forms to suit their own needs and purposes. This could be undertaken by non-technical staff who had an understanding of business specific issues within the organisation. Forms could be generated in a more flexible and simpler manner without the need to undertake technical form building. The technology platform would be able to read and interact with back end systems to automatically populate systems with information provided in the form. The platform could also be used to draw data from agency systems to pre-populate forms. This not only saves time for citizens, but helps to verify existing agency records.

For citizens, the ability to complete and lodge forms at a time and place of their choosing provides a significant improvement to paper-based approaches. Current on-line form technology also provides a range of user-friendly features and benefits that further enhance the process including the ability to present only the relevant parts of the form to the citizen depending on their answers. Some paper-based forms can be daunting for individuals who are completing them. Many questions may not be relevant to their situation and can be removed in an on-line setting. As questions are answered by individuals, irrelevant questions are removed from the form.

On-line forms can also reduce the likelihood that the form is incorrectly completed or incomplete by providing prompts and triggers to remind individuals to re-visit answers. For example, if a phone number doesn’t have the relevant number of digits, the form will prompt the individual to check the number.

Advanced and escalating help options can also be developed to improve the citizen experience. A first level help option could be basic information provided in a static setting (such as a help wizard). A second level escalation could involve a live, text-based interface with a customer service operator. A third level may be a link to an on-line video conference.

On-line forms also provide individuals with the ability to save their progress when completing a form and return to it at a later date. This is particularly useful when people need to source information from elsewhere prior to completing the form.

A key consideration in a more automated forms-based environment is the need to have robust determination, feedback and review processes. In an environment where citizens would no longer have a face to face interaction, there would be increased importance in ensuring that detailed explanation is provided on determinations related to an application. Citizens would need to be provided with extensive information on why a determination was made, what the review mechanisms were, and who could be contacted for further information.

Government savings can be derived in a number of areas. A single investment in an on-line forms platform across government would replace a multitude of investments in disparate forms platforms. Simpler and non-technical forms design processes would also significantly reduce IT specialist resources. The automatic population of agency-specific data systems with forms information would significantly reduce staffing resources who were required to re-key applicant information into agency systems.

In the future, forms technology will offer a more integrated range of solutions than simply an on-line form and automatic population of agency systems. They are increasingly being adapted and used as a mapping and information searching interface across data systems and information sources to pull together relevant information.

This could enable citizens to simply provide information about their circumstances, possibly in an open format. The system would be able to analyse and interpret citizen needs and match them to government programs and services. The system would then identify the programs they are eligible for and seek confirmation from the citizen that they wish to apply. If consent is provided, the system would prompt the citizen for further information required in order to complete an application process.

Throughout the process, the citizen would not have completed a traditional form, but simply provided their life event information and answered some follow up questions. They would have the ability to review and confirm the information that was being provided to government prior to it being considered for services and benefits.
Information mapping and search capability

A barrier to effective citizen-centric service delivery is the complexity of programs and services across and within levels of government. Citizens often have a limited understanding of which tier of government delivers programs and services relevant to them. There is little assistance offered to citizens to navigate through the three levels of government to determine the programs and services they need, and more importantly, where to find them. This is particularly the case in the on-line channel.

There is a need to provide several different mechanisms for people to find the information and services they are seeking. Web design principles suggests that a multi-path approach to structuring website information is good practice, but across Government there is not an integrated or consistent approach to mapping information and providing alternative search mechanisms for citizens. In addition to structuring a website into certain categories or information clusters, it is important to provide alternative approaches to finding information. Search capabilities provide one such alternative.

Across the Commonwealth, there has been limited work undertaken to provide a mapped view of information, services and programs for citizens. While the www.australia.gov.au website seeks to provide some of this assistance and advice, it does not provide a comprehensive or user-friendly offering.

There are several reasons for this:

- across Government, there is no dedicated function currently mapping programs and services and how they inter-relate.
- there is a lack of buy-in (or mandate) across government to ensure that all agencies participate in providing information and how it fits across the spectrum of programs and services.
- there are limited technological solutions currently mature enough to enable this to be automated.

In a future service delivery environment where more is undertaken on-line, there is a need for, and an opportunity to provide, a more effective and intuitive way to present information relevant to citizens.

Mapping of programs and services could be undertaken across the Commonwealth, with information being provided in a consistent format. This would allow people not only to understand how a program operates, but also how it fits with other similar programs. Consideration could also be given to extending this across other levels of Government.

Such an approach would require authority from Government to direct all relevant agencies to provide program information in a consistent structure and format. It would also require leadership and funding to map and co-ordinate program in context with related programs.

Rules engine technology also offers the potential to improve the citizen experience. The technology, which is being used increasingly across both the private sector and government, is based on translating complex business and program rules into a series of citizen-focused questions. By providing responses to a series of questions (which would focus on areas such as their personal circumstances, their areas of interest and their current interactions with government), citizens could be provided with information on the range of programs and services they may be eligible for.

In the longer term, there are also possibilities to harness the growing power of improved search engine capabilities and the Semantic web to enable an even better citizen experience. The Semantic web provides a common framework that allows data to be shared and reused across application, enterprise and community boundaries. In the longer term, semantic web could allow search functionality to evolve to new levels and could significantly improve citizen experience when undertaking web-based searches. It is important to note that this technology is still embryonic and is not envisaged to be broadly applied in the near to medium term.
APPENDIX J
Recording of vital information
Collection and use of births, deaths and marriages data by the States and the Commonwealth

Introduction

All births, marriages and deaths are required by law to be registered in Australia in the State in which the event occurs, or as directed by a court. Although not a legislative requirement, a change of name (or change of sex) may be registered for proof of identification purposes in the State or Territory in which the person lives or where their birth was registered. The collection of personal data at birth is particularly important. Apart from being a legal requirement, the collection of personal data at birth (via registration) is required before a birth certificate can be produced. A birth certificate is required as a proof of identity at many stages throughout life, including school enrolment, to obtain a passport or driver’s licence or to help prove eligibility for social security benefits. A registered change of name or sex or a marriage certificate may also be required in such situations. As a result, although this data is held by the States, it is of vital importance to Commonwealth agencies to confirm the identity or eligibility of someone seeking or obtaining a service or benefit from the Commonwealth; or for research, statistical analysis and planning purposes.

Access to records tends to be unrestricted after a certain period of time from the date of creation of the record, when the release of this information is unlikely to be sensitive or affect someone’s privacy. Birth records are usually unrestricted after 100 years from creation; marriage records after 60-75 years; and death records after 10-30 years, depending on the jurisdiction where the record is held. Access to more recent records, on the other hand, is restricted and it is usually these records which the Commonwealth requires access to confirm the identity or determine the eligibility of someone seeking or obtaining a service or benefit. Therefore the different jurisdictions have competing priorities or needs: the priority of the States and Territories to protect a person’s records from unnecessary intrusion, and to protect their privacy; and the Commonwealth’s need to access these records in order to maintain the integrity of its programs or to plan for Australia’s future.

Recording Life Events

In Australia, the earliest known records of births, marriages and deaths are church records, which recorded baptisms, marriages and burials. Early church records in New South Wales date from 1788; Tasmanian church records go back to 1803; in Western Australia, the church records date from 1829, the year the State was founded (Queensland records also go back to this date); and Victoria holds church records dating back to 1836.

Tasmania was the first Australian colony to take over the function of registering births, deaths and marriages from the church, commencing registration in 1839. Western Australia began registering births, deaths and marriages in 1841; South Australia in 1842; Victoria in 1853; New South Wales and Queensland in 1856; the Northern Territory in 1870; and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 1930 (prior to this events occurring in the ACT were registered in New South Wales).

Each State and Territory has its own legislation regulating the registration of births, marriages and deaths. Some of these also deal with the registration of changes of name and sex. Each jurisdiction also has its own Privacy Act, regulating the storage and release of personal information collected by the jurisdiction (amongst other things). In addition, as each jurisdiction maintains its records in its own way, records in the different jurisdictions are not all stored or back-captured electronically from the same point in time (eg – Queensland only has electronic records back-captured to 1974). As a result, there is variation among the States and Territories as to what information they collect, how they collect it, how


209 Advice from an official from the Attorney-General’s Department.
they store it and what they do with it. It also means that Commonwealth Government agencies seeking 
to access this information need to have arrangements with eight different jurisdictions and to accept that 
they cannot get the same information from every jurisdiction. The most relevant data collected by States 
and Territories, but of great value to the Commonwealth are:

**Births**

It is a legal requirement for births to be registered in the State or Territory in which they occur. A birth 
may be registered in a State or Territory if it occurs outside Australia but the child is to become a resident 
of that State or Territory, or if the birth occurs on a flight or vessel travelling to that State or Territory.

It is the responsibility for the chief executive of the hospital or the doctor or midwife responsible for the 
professional care of the mother at the birth to notify the relevant registering authority of the birth 
between 2 working days and 1 month after the date of the birth, depending on the jurisdiction of the 
birth. In all jurisdictions it is the responsibility of both parents, where possible, or the person with long-
term care or custody of the child, to register the birth of the child within 60 days after the date of the 
birth, using a Birth Registration Statement (BRS). BRS’s are provided to hospitals and birth clinics for 
distribution to parents by State and Territory Registries and are different in each jurisdiction, with 
different questions being asked of parents. Notifications of births are later linked to the parent-
completed BRS and used for following up outstanding BRS forms.

**Marriages**

It is a legal requirement for a marriage to be registered in the State or Territory in which it is solemnised. 
*The Marriage Act 1961* (Commonwealth) requires a Notice of Intended Marriage to be given to the 
authorised celebrant, and the authorised celebrant to lodge the marriage certificate with the appropriate 
registering authority of the relevant State or Territory within 14 days of the date of the marriage.

**Change of Name**

Although it is not a legal requirement, a name change may be registered in a State or Territory where the 
person is domiciled or ordinarily resident in that jurisdiction or whose birth (or adoption, in Queensland) 
was registered in that jurisdiction.

**Change of Sex**

Most jurisdictions (the issue is not covered in the relevant legislation for South Australia or Western 
Australia) allow for a change of sex to be registered where the person’s birth was registered in their State 
or Territory. A change of sex may be registered by a person whose birth was registered in the State or 
Territory and who has undergone sex reassignment or affirmation surgery, depending on the jurisdiction. 
Except for the Australian Capital Territory, a change of sex for an adult may only be registered by an 
unmarried adult. In the case of a child, the parents of a child whose birth is registered in the State or 
Territory may apply for registration of a change of a child’s sex where they have undergone sexual 
reassignment or affirmation surgery, depending on the jurisdiction.

**Divorce**

None of the State and Territory Registries register or maintain records relating to divorces or annulments. 
The current family law system was established in 1975. Prior to this, the local court in each State and 
Territory administered applications for and the granting of divorce in their jurisdiction. Therefore, the 
local courts in the jurisdiction in which the divorce was granted has records for divorces before 1976 (eg 
The Supreme Court of Victoria for divorces granted in Victoria). Subsequent to this, records relating to
divorces or annulments are maintained by the Family Law Courts, however, records prior to 2002 may be archived by either the Family Court or the Family Magistrates Court of Australia.

**Deaths**

It is a legal requirement for deaths to be registered in the State or Territory in which they occur. A death may be registered in a State or Territory if it occurs on a flight or vessel travelling to that State or Territory or if the death occurs outside Australia and the person is domiciled or ordinarily resident, or leaves property, in the State or Territory.

In most States or Territories, it is the responsibility of the doctor at the death or who cared for the deceased before their death to notify the appropriate registering authority of the death within 48 hours of the death. It is then usually the responsibility of the funeral director to notify the appropriate registering authority of the disposal of the remains, along with relevant details for the registration, of the death within 7 days of the disposal of the remains. In Western Australia, the certifying doctor must give the certificate of death to the funeral director or person in charge of the remains within 48 hours of the death, and this person must then notify the Registrar of the death within 14 days of the death or discovery of the body. In Queensland, it is the responsibility of the spouse or other relative to apply to register the death and this application must be done within 14 days after the death or the discovery of the death. A funeral director, hospital or nursing home can make the application. The person who arranges the disposal must notify the Registrar within 7 days after the disposal.

**Use of Information**

The following are examples of Commonwealth Government agencies which obtain and use births, marriages and death data from the States and Territories for their work:

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, under the Government-to-Government arrangements entered into with the states pursuant to the Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956, provides statistical services for state and territory governments.

**Births**

The ABS (formerly the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics) has had responsibility to produce population estimates since its establishment. Births data, although collected initially for purely administrative reasons, is an integral part of this process.

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registries (Registries) in each State and Territory are responsible for processing Birth Registration Statements (BRS) received to register a birth and then forwarding the data to the ABS. Births data is supplied to the ABS on a monthly basis in electronic format by each State and Territory Registry around Australia. State and Territory Registries supply information from the BRS to the ABS for coding (for example, geography, multiple births, marital status and birthplace), compilation, analysis and dissemination. Since 1996, processing of this data has been the responsibility of the Health and Vitals Statistics Unit located in the Queensland Office of the ABS (previously each State and Territory office of the ABS was responsible for the collection and processing of births data registered in their own jurisdiction).

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210 www.abs.gov.au
Australian birth statistics are a component in the production of quarterly estimates of natural increase as a component of population change in the calculation of population estimates. Birth statistics are also used in the analysis of fertility in Australia. Trends in fertility are used in the development of assumptions on future levels of fertility and mortality for population projections. The primary uses of Australian population estimates are in the determination of seats in the House of Representatives for each State and Territory, as well as in distribution of Australian Government funds to state, territory and local governments. Population estimates are also used for a wide range of government, business and community decisions, both directly and indirectly, by contributing to a range of other social and economic indicators. Preliminary counts by State of usual residence are provided quarterly for population estimates. The main output is annual data.

**Marriages**

Marriage statistics are provided to the ABS as an administrative data set from each State and Territory Registry. Annual unit record files for each year since 1974 are available. Each State and Territory Registry provides information on registered marriages to the ABS by either sending the original Notice of Intended Marriage forms or by providing data electronically. The data is received via the ABS secure database in an electronic standard file format, except for Victoria and Queensland which are received in hardcopy.

Marriages data has been collected and published for each year since prior to Federation. A complete review of data items supplied to the ABS by the State and Territory Registries was conducted in 2005. 46 data items are now collected and processed for the marriages collection. Some data for 2005 and after are not available at a national level as some State and Territory Registries were not able to supply information for these data items.

**Deaths**

Death data are an integral part of producing population estimates. State and National death data date back to at least 1860, while death data is available in electronic form on an annual basis from 1964. Since 1996, processing of this data has been the responsibility of the Queensland Office of the ABS (previously each State and Territory office of the ABS was responsible for the collection and processing of death data registered in their own jurisdiction).

Information is collected from State and Territory Registries on a monthly basis. ABS death statistics are based on events registered in respective jurisdictions. Australian death statistics are used as an input into the production of quarterly estimates of natural increase as a component of population change in the calculation of population estimates. Death statistics are also used in the analysis of mortality in Australia. Trends in mortality are used in the development of assumptions on future levels of mortality for population projections.

The primary uses of Australian population estimates are in the determination of seats in the House of Representatives for each state and territory, as well as in distribution of Australian Government funds to state, territory and local governments. Population estimates are also used for a wide range of government, business and community decisions, both directly and indirectly, by contributing to a range of other social and economic indicators. The main output is annual data.
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)\textsuperscript{211}

The AIHW has an agreement with each State and Territory Registry to get the information they require for their research. The agreements go for 5 years, with the agreement for 2009-14 to be signed this week (week starting 19 October). The AIHW does not pay for the information they receive from the State and Territory Registries.

The AIHW collects information relating to deaths for two systems which they manage – the National Death Index (NDI) and the National Mortality Database (NMD). The NDI is a record of everyone who dies in Australia; it records facts of death, not the cause of death. This system does contain identifying information, such as name of the deceased and date of birth. The NMD contains information on the cause of death but there is no identifying information.

Death records are sent directly from the Registries in each State and Territory each month to the AIHW to provide the information for the NDI. This information is then used for research purposes. For the NMD, cause of death coding is done collaboratively between the ABS and the State and Territory Registries and the Registries authorise the ABS to provide this data to the AIHW. This occurs yearly and the information is used to research cause of death trends in Australia.

The AIHW does not use the Document Verification Service or the Certificate Verification Service for their research purposes. They are looking into establishing a system for births data but no such system has been established yet.

Centrelink\textsuperscript{212}

Centrelink administers more than 140 different products and services for 25 government agencies of which 10 are policy departments, including the Departments of Employment and Workplace Relations; Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and Health and Ageing. Centrelink ranks in the top one hundred Australian companies in terms of size and turnover. Its recurrent budget is $2.3 billion and it distributes approximately $63 billion in social security payments on behalf of policy departments. It has 6.5 million customers (about one-third of the Australian population)\textsuperscript{213}.

Centrelink gets daily death data for all jurisdictions which lists all deaths; this data is sent from the Tasmanian Registry which gets ‘fact of death’ reports from each of the jurisdictions and amalgamates it into an omnibus of recorded deaths. Centrelink receives the following information: State; year of registration; registration number; name (first, middle and surname); date of birth; date of death; sex; age at death; and address. This data is then matched against the records held by Centrelink and matched records are flagged, initiating an automated process to cancel payments to the deceased and deactivate their record.

Currently Centrelink doesn’t receive the same bulk data for births, changes of names or marriages. The latter two would be of great benefit to Centrelink in relation to assessing benefit levels, particularly for singles who marry and therefore may no longer be entitled to the level of benefit they currently receive. DHS is aware of this issue and looking into it but the States and Territories are currently blocking access to this information by relying on their relevant privacy legislation. Centrelink does have the ability to check data relating to individual records with the States when investigating cases of fraud, etc.

Although Centrelink built the Document Verification Service for the Attorney-General’s Department, it does not currently use it. Centrelink also does not currently use the Certificate Verification Service.

\textsuperscript{211} Advice from an official from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
\textsuperscript{212} Advice from an official from Centrelink.
\textsuperscript{213} Institute for Citizen-Centered Services, Integrating Service Delivery Case Study – Service South Australia, Institute for Citizen Centered Service, 2008.
DIAC

DIAC used the DVS prototype to verify passports, driver’s licences and birth certificates with the relevant issuing agency.

DIAC has taken steps to provide further notification to applicants to inform them of the additional verification processes that have been instituted with the piloting of the prototype DVS. The addendum to DIAC’s Application for Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship form asks clients to consent to the information provided with their application to be provided to DFAT, Centrelink, NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages, Austroads and NEVDIS for the purpose of verifying POI documents issued by those agencies. The addendum also indicates that if the client’s information cannot be verified by the agency, further processing by that agency may occur.

A request received by DIMA is directed to its client database, ICSE, for automated matching with existing citizenship document data. The inward request information includes a VRN, document type, document details, requesting agency, date and time.

The search and match process for document verification is based on four attributes of a citizenship document: the stock number, family name, given names and date of birth. Two entitlement criteria are also checked in this process to determine if the document is void. If all four of the document verification criteria and the two entitlement criteria are matched then a message containing a ‘verified’ result is sent via the DVS. There is no human involvement in the process where a verified result is achieved. If one or more of the four document verification criteria do not match or any of the entitlement criteria do meet the required status, a ‘not verified’ result is generated. Where a ‘not verified’ result is generated, the request is given a ‘pending’ status by DIAC and is queued for further review to confirm that there is no record in their database corresponding to that particular document.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

DFAT’s role is to advance the interests of Australia and Australians internationally. Part of this encompasses issuing passports. An application for a passport is a claim to an identity of an Australian citizen. In responding to the claim, the Australian Passport Office (APO) establishes identity and confirms citizenship. It does this by testing:

1. what the applicant “has”, which includes verifying the documents evidencing birth and/or citizenship;
2. what the applicant "knows", by comparing the information provided in the application at interview against the current application and against prior records; and
3. who the applicant "is", by comparing the facial image and signature biometric information captured from the client with biometric information already held and associated with prior claims to identity.

Current passport applications require the applicant’s consent to allow DFAT to undertake checks on the documents presented by the applicant in support of their application; applicants acknowledge when signing an application that “the department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) may disclose the information that has been provided in or with this application to any organisation or individual that can verify the information to establish my identity and eligibility for an Australian travel document.”

For Australian born applicants, the APO verifies individual details relating to birth records provided in each application electronically and automatically (through the Certificate Validation Service) with records held at State and Territory Registries. If the electronic verification fails for any reason, manual follow-up is undertaken.

In order to check the citizenship details of passport applicants, DFAT receives a copy of the Australian Citizenship register compiled by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship daily.

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214 Advice from an official in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
DFAT is a provider to the Document Verification Service (DVS) for passport verification. DFAT does not currently use the DVS to verify birth or citizenship data but is actively investigating a transition to use the DVS, which is dependent upon future introduction of new interview procedures and introduction of replacement IT systems.

The APO is developing an on-line service offering that, having regard to national and international responsibilities, aims to maintain and strengthen identity security while improving process efficiency and client service. The solution will continue to require presentation of passport applicants at an interview where all 3 areas of testing of identity can be managed together. This is essential to address fraud exposure, for example the exposure to manipulation of digital facial images prior to the printing of photographs submitted with passport applications will be addressed in the future by live capture of facial images at the time of interview.

**Document Verification Service (DVS)**

Part of the National Identity Security Strategy endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments at its meeting in April 2007, the national DVS is a secure, electronic, on-line system accessible by all key Australian Government, State and Territory agencies, and potentially by the private sector. Agencies authorised to use the DVS are able to verify in real time (with the data recorded in the register of the document-issuing agency) whether a document presented to them as proof of identification (POI) by an individual applying for benefits and services was issued by the relevant agency, and that the details on the document are true and accurate.

A pilot of the DVS was conducted in 2006, concluding on 30 June 2006. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) trialled the verification of POI documents presented in support of a sample of 50,000 passport applications; and the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) trialled the verification of POI documents presented in relation to up to 1600 applications for Certificates of Evidence of Australian Citizenship processed in the ACT. There were four provider agencies participating in the pilot: DFAT which verified passport details; DIMA which verified citizenship certificates and certificates of evidence details; the Certificate Validation Service (CVS) which verified birth certificates and marriage certificates; and the National Exchange of Vehicles and Driver Information System (NEVDIS) operated by AUSTROADS for the state and territory road authorities, which verified driver’s licences.

After a successful pilot, the government decided to implement the DVS on a national basis. During 2007-08, the DVS became operational in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for the verification of citizenship certificates and certified visas.

In 2007-08, a total of 5365 automatic verification transactions were processed by DIAC through the DVS and a further 1628 manual verifications were managed by the DVS helpdesk.

When a POI document is presented to an agency which is authorised to use the DVS, the assessing officer manually enters the details from the document into the DVS computer application. The request is transmitted through the DVS to the relevant agency that issued the particular POI document. The document issuing organisation will compare that information to its registers through an automated checking routine and return either a “verified” (YES), “not verified” (NO) or “error” response.

**Certificate Validation Service (CVS)**

The CVS is an eService operated by New South Wales Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSWBDM) on behalf of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registries of Australasia. It enables user organisations to check birth certificates with the state jurisdictions that are available through the CVS.

The CVS provides for a user organisation to enter pre-determined particulars from a birth certificate presented by a client into the Registry’s database via a secure Internet connection. The information to be matched comprises of a person’s surname, given names, date of birth, year of registration and
registration number. The only information that the Registry insists must be included in the information entered is the registration number as it is an identifier unique to a person's birth registration. An immediate response is returned to the user organisation as to the validity or non-validity of the information on the document presented by the client.

The service does not provide for open access to the Registry's database; it is of no value unless it is used in conjunction with a document purporting to be a birth certificate because all information in all of the pre-determined fields must be an identical match in every character and space entered into the system. Privacy New South Wales has examined the CVS and has endorsed it as being of no threat to the privacy of individuals.
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