# Critical National Infrastructure

## myGov User Audit

January 2023

**Volume 1:** Findings and recommendations

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# Definitions and glossary

## DEFINITIONS

In this report, these terms are defined as follows:

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Enhanced myGov program** | A two-year program established in 2021 to design and deliver an upgraded myGov website and improve usability and functionality. |
| **govCMS** | Content management and web hosting for government. Providing consistent tools for government to create and host websites that are secure, modern and accessible to the public. |
| **Hub and spoke model** | The term hub and spoke refers to a primary ICT system (such as a main user account) as the 'centralised location' or the 'hub', connecting to other systems to access detailed services via the 'spokes'. |
| **Identity proofing levels (IP1, IP2, IP3)** | The strength of a digital identity. A stronger digital identity proofing level requires verification of more identity documents.<br>Basic digital identity – Identity proofing level 1 (IP1, IP1+)<br>Standard digital identity – Identity proofing level 2 (IP2, IP2+)<br>Strong digital identity – Identity proofing level 3 (IP3) |
| **member service** | A digital service linked with myGov. As at December 2022, there are 15 member services that can be accessed through myGov:<br>ATO, Centrelink, Child Support, DVA, Health Applications Portal, Housing Victoria, Individual Healthcare Identifier, Jobsearch, Medicare, My Aged Care, My Health Record, National Cancer Screening Register, National Redress Scheme, NDIS, Victoria State Revenue |
| **myGovID** | Australian Government identity provider managed and operated by the ATO. |
| **Tell Us Once capability** | An optional capability offered through myGov to enable a user to update their personal information once, and have that information updated across all member services linked to their myGov account. |

## GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACMA | Australian Communication and Media Authority |
| AEC | Australian Electoral Commission |
| AGD | Attorney-General's Department |
| API | application programming interface |
| APS | Australian Public Service |
| ATO | Australian Taxation Office |
| ANAO | Australian National Audit Office |
| DSS | Department of Social Services |
| DTA | Digital Transformation Agency |
| DVA | Department of Veterans' Affairs |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ICT | information and communications technology |
| NDIS | National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PORO | Proof of Record Ownership |
| TDIF | Trusted Digital Identity Framework |
| UX | User Experience |
| WA | Western Australia |
| WCAG | Web Content Accessibility Guidelines |

# Foreword

The myGov User Audit Expert Panel is pleased to submit our report to government.

The Panel was commissioned in September 2022 to oversee the audit and make recommendations to shape the future direction of myGov. During the course of the audit, two initial improvements were made to the usability of myGov including transitioning to a new, contemporary technology platform and the release of the myGov app in December 2022.

Despite these improvements, over the course of the audit the Panel heard there is a significant opportunity to improve user experience, particularly within the member services linked through myGov, and make myGov a world-class, trusted and citizen-centric digital service delivery platform serving all Australians.

The report is set out in two parts. Volume 1 details the Panel's 10 findings on the current and future state of myGov, and 10 recommendations to government to fulfil myGov's potential.

Volume 2 of the report contains detailed analysis across user experience, functions and performance of myGov, the potential features of a desired future state for myGov to meet the needs and expectations of Australians, and potential actions to get there. Detailed analysis has focused on:

- delivering intuitive, tailored services through myGov
- ensuring no one is left behind in digital service delivery
- keeping people and their information safe
- the requirements for myGov to operate on a modern technology platform
- the governance, accountability and funding arrangements to deliver the future myGov.

In addition to the recommendations made in Volume 1 of the report, Volume 2 provides further guidance government could consider in prioritising delivery of improvements to myGov.

Input from individual users of myGov, peak bodies, industry and all levels of government has informed the Panel's deliberations. The Panel thanks all those who contributed to and engaged with the audit, particularly within short timeframes. The support of the Secretariat is also appreciated.

While there are many issues that can be easily addressed to improve the satisfaction of Australians with myGov, several of the recommendations set out in this report are ambitious and the Panel recognises achieving the vision for myGov will not be easy.

It will require discipline across government to deliver truly connected services for the benefit of Australians, a long-term commitment to invest in myGov as a key piece of national infrastructure and building a foundation of trust in myGov by all Australians.

**David Thodey AO (Chair), Professor Edward Santow, Professor Emily Banks AM, Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, Amit Singh**

myGov User Audit Panel

# Executive summary

myGov is critical national infrastructure.

The nation's energy grid, roads, schools, and hospitals are indispensable to our country and its people. Previous generations built this national infrastructure to be safe, reliable, and readily available to all. We must now do the same for the digital infrastructure that Australians rely on to access government services.

myGov has many strengths and also some serious shortcomings. The right mix of technology, cooperative government arrangements and community protections is required to make myGov the kind of national infrastructure that truly meets the needs of Australians.

Over the last 5 years, the number of myGov users has more than doubled. Australians are conducting up to 1.4 million sessions in myGov each day – more than triple what it was 3 years ago. The proportion of users who are satisfied overall with myGov has improved from 40 to 45%, but this is still too low. myGov provides many tangible benefits for the nation. Australians get better services, saving them time and effort. Taxpayers gain savings which can be applied to creating even better services. The economy benefits from increased productivity. And all Australians benefit from potentially higher levels of cyber security when dealing with government – provided we get the settings right.

Recent improvements in myGov have come on the back of a two-year investment in the Enhanced myGov program. This investment runs out in June 2023.

The Enhanced myGov program has shown what a well-crafted and implemented development program can achieve. Independent economic analysis commissioned by Services Australia estimated that completing the program over 4 years would deliver net benefits of $3.2 billion over 10 years.

The Enhanced myGov program has put in place much needed building blocks for a better myGov. The new platform is scalable, more secure and more flexible. The user-interface is more intuitive and easier to navigate. The new myGov app is easy to use and provides faster access to services for users.

While positive, these changes fall well short of the long-expressed vision of providing a primary digital front door to government for Australians. They are a starting point. The government has an opportunity to build upon these foundations and provide world-class services for all Australians.

Future development of myGov needs to focus strongly on its users – the Australian people. myGov must be easy to use, secure, leave no one behind and deliver smart, tailored services that meet people's needs. Funding, governance and planning arrangements need to appropriately reflect myGov's role as a critical piece of national digital service delivery infrastructure.

For myGov to develop as it should, behaviours within government also need to change. Too often in the past, myGov development has been hampered by agencies pursuing their own agendas. These separate perspectives are important but should not dominate at the expense of bringing things together for Australians.

As a nation, we have been here before and failed. The promise of myGov has been promoted by government many times in the past. The failure has not been in articulating myGov's promise. It has been in developing and implementing the detailed, long-term plan needed to bring that promise into reality.

The Panel's 10 recommendations represent a blueprint for investing in myGov as critical national infrastructure for all Australians.

Given the importance of myGov and the issues and opportunities we have highlighted, the Panel also encourages the Government to demonstrate its practical commitment by publishing its response to the audit and an implementation plan by 1 July 2023.

**Box 1: Summary of recommendations**

**The Panel's 10 recommendations to Government**

1. Confirm myGov as the 'go to' place for people to access services online from the Australian Government and communicate to all Australians.
2. Ensure myGov leaves no one behind and upholds Australians' human rights.
3. Legislate myGov as national service delivery infrastructure.
4. Provide ongoing annual funding of myGov at the same level as sustainment funding in 2021–22 and the Enhanced myGov program and establish a 'myGov development fund' to resource onboarding of new services and improvement of existing linked services.
5. Publish during 2023 a rolling 5-year roadmap for developing myGov, updated annually.
6. Accelerate development of Australia's national digital identity ecosystem, prioritising the protection of security, privacy, safety and other human rights with a view to government digital identity being safe, easy to use and secure.
7. Introduce by mid-2023 citizen-centred governance and operational arrangements for myGov and myGovID to overcome government siloes and drive inclusion and performance.
8. Partner with the states and territories on a five-year plan to make it easy for people to find and do what they need to across all levels of government.
9. Design and build myGov in alignment with a refreshed and enforced Australian Government Architecture, incorporating the Design System and the Service Standard.
10. Services Australia develop and adopt a new world-class approach to service and support to government agencies utilising myGov.

# Introduction

## WHAT IS MYGOV?

myGov is the government's front door for digital services and supports individuals to access the services of participating government agencies.

Launched in May 2013, it provides Australians with secure online access to a range of government services in one place. myGov operates on a "hub and spoke" model where myGov provides a central secure website and smartphone app for users to access services (the hub) and member services/agencies provide most of the available services though their own digital systems (the spokes). Some services are delivered in the myGov "hub" itself, however, the number of services available in this way is currently limited.

**The 15 government services available in myGov**

myGov provides access to:

- Australian Taxation Office
- Centrelink
- Child Support
- Department of Health Applications Portal
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Housing Victoria Online Services
- Individual Healthcare Identifiers service
- Medicare
- My Aged Care
- My Health Record
- National Cancer Screening Register
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- National Redress Scheme
- State Revenue Office Victoria
- Workforce Australia

Services Australia leads implementation and delivery of myGov with the DTA having overarching policy responsibility for myGov and digital identity. Over time, myGov has gone from a strategically important ICT system to an indispensable part of the Australian Government service delivery ecosystem. Over its 9 years, myGov has continued to incrementally evolve, introducing new features and services.

For most people, digital services are ubiquitous across all areas of their lives including when interacting with governments. Today, delivering a digital service as good as or better than traditional channels is core business, not an optional extra.

## WHERE DID MYGOV COME FROM?

The goal of joined-up online services for citizens is not new. In government, discussions on citizen-centred digital services have been occurring since the 1990s. However, myGov itself did not come into existence until 2013. This was 3 years after the 2010 *Ahead of the Game* report recommended making access to government services more convenient for Australians through automation, integration and better information sharing.

The vision has always been ambitious. Successive governments have promised a central digital entry point, information and services tailored to individual needs, and a way for people to see and manage their affairs with government.

However, until recently, progress has been slow.

When launched, myGov included 1.3 million user accounts (transitioned from australia.gov.au) and 3 Australian Government entities providing 5 member services.

People were able to securely access a range of Australian Government services online, in one place. The services myGov itself provided to Australians were:

- **login** – a single username to access (member) services
- **inbox** – more timely communications from services via a digital mailbox
- **Tell Us Once** – the ability to notify multiple services about changes of details.

Between 2013 and 2020, new services and features were gradually introduced including state and territory government services (August 2016), allowing the use of the myGov login to access agency services directly (October 2017) and introduction of two-factor authentication through the myGov code generator (December 2017). In parallel, myGovID (a digital ID incorporating biometric checks) was launched in October 2019 as the replacement to AUSkey, the authentication tool for businesses used by the Australian Tax Office (ATO). myGovID was integrated into myGov in late 2020 to give users an alternative log in option.

In 2022, the Enhanced myGov program has delivered a step change improvement in the underlying myGov platform, transitioning myGov to new, contemporary technology comprising:

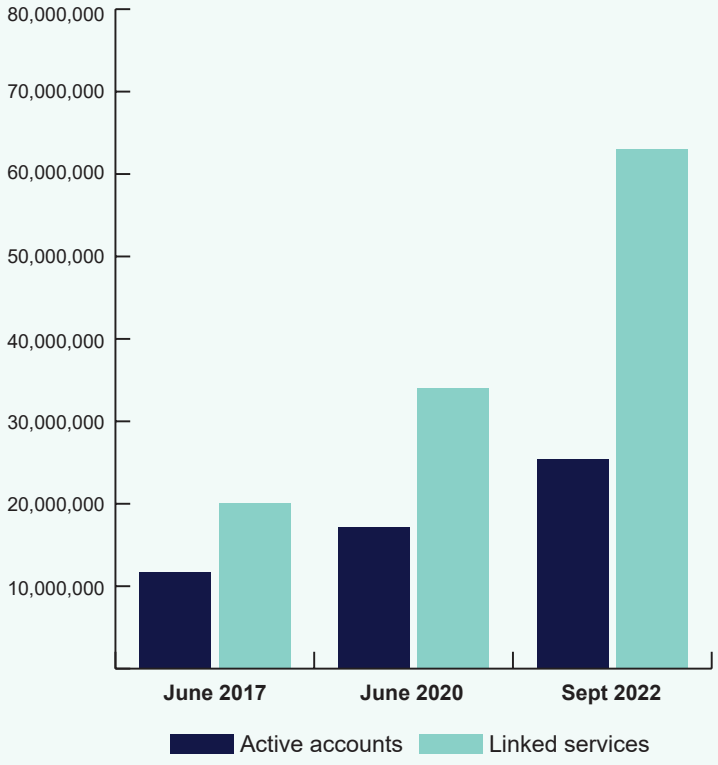
- software and infrastructure, leveraging a combination of public and private cloud hosting to provide high performance, resilience and security
- a microservices architecture based on scalable and flexible APIs
- a Content Management System (CMS) enabling information about services to be published through myGov
- a Digital Experience Platform (DXP) enabling the tailoring of services and information to meet the needs of individuals
- a Customer Journey Analytics tool producing data and insights which can used to improve services.

The recently released myGov app is also a big step forward. The app delivers functionality and user experience closer to that provided by the private sector including:

- an easy way to login to myGov using the biometrics on a mobile device
- a secure digital wallet
- access to the myGov Inbox
- access to member services without needing to sign in again
- a central list of tasks
- push notifications such as alerts about new messages received in the myGov inbox which include the name of the agency and a short summary.

The growth in usage of myGov is considerable, especially since 2020 when the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a substantial increase in Australians accessing government services.

### Active user accounts and linked services




**Active user accounts**

The number of active myGov accounts has grown significantly in recent times. Starting from a base of 11.7 million active accounts in June 2017, the number of accounts reached 25 million in September 2022.

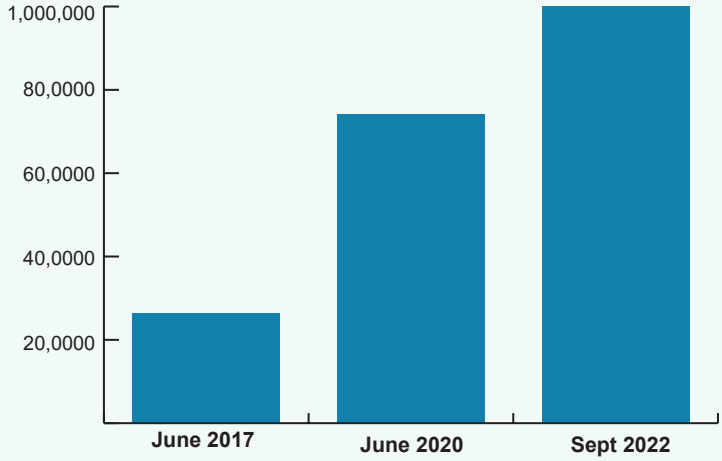
While one person can have multiple accounts, in general terms the number of accounts provides a sense of the scale of individual myGov users.

**Linked services**

The number of linked services in myGov has equally grown. The base number of 20 million linked services in June 2017 grew to 63 million in September 2022.

This demonstrates that not only the number of users in myGov has grown, but so too has the number of services people are connected to (linking) within myGov. This tells us not only more people are using myGov, but also that they are connecting to more services when they do.

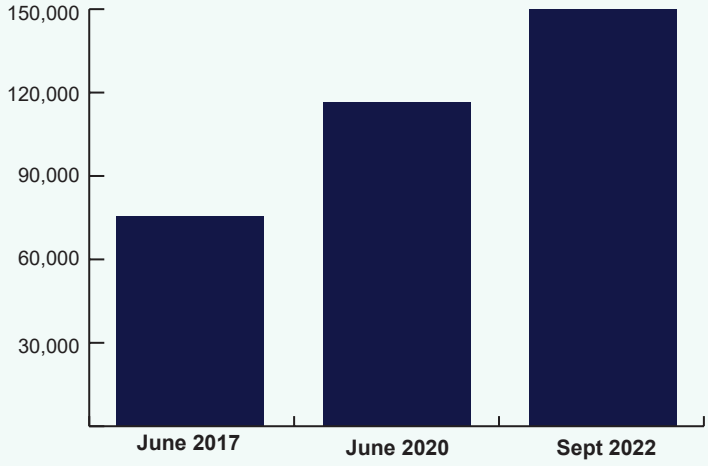
### Daily logins




The number of daily logins saw a significant increase between June 2017 and June 2020, and further growth demonstrated in September 2022.

This demonstrates the sustained use of myGov by Australians following the rapid growth of logins to access COVID certificates in 2020 with more Australians than ever regularly logging in to myGov.

**Tell us once updates (per month)**




The number of people using the tell us once service has not seen the same growth, although higher than both the 2017 and 2020 snapshots.

Although further analysis is needed as to the drivers for this, evidence examined by the panel suggests this is due to both user awareness of the service and the limited number of agencies the tell us once service connects with, meaning there is lower value to users than other services.

## THE PANEL'S APPROACH

The Terms of Reference (refer to Attachment A) set the aim and outcomes of the audit. The Panel was asked to consider the user experience, functions and performance of myGov in order to shape the future direction of myGov and its connection with government services.

The Panel's assessment is based on:

- desktop review of existing user research, analysis and data
- insights from over 700 survey responses, 91 submissions and the input from 66 participants in 12 focus groups conducted for the audit
- insights from 20 submissions from Australian Government agencies and state and territory governments
- 5 roundtables with peak bodies and industry experts
- 6 roundtable discussions with senior Australian Government and state and territory government officials.

The Panel assessed myGov by reference to four principles focused on **citizen value**.

- **Simple**: myGov should make it easy for citizens to engage with government, saving time and effort.
- **Beneficial**: myGov should promote well-being by connecting citizens quickly and seamlessly to the services they need.
- **Fair**: myGov should promote the human rights of all people and integrate with other services to ensure that all citizens can engage effectively with government.
- **Trustworthy**: citizens should be able to trust myGov to work when needed and that services will be delivered transparently, safely and securely.

And; two principles focused on broader **societal value**:

- **Efficient**: myGov should deliver better services for citizens at a reduced cost to taxpayers and with productivity-enhancing efficiencies across the economy.
- **Leading**: myGov should place Australia at the leading edge of quality digital service delivery globally and be an exemplar service within government.

Drawing on the evidence and principles, the Panel undertook detailed analysis of features of a great service experience for myGov, as well as the foundations of funding, planning, governance, accountability, and technology that would be needed to deliver that experience. While the procurement arrangements for the new myGov platform were not within the scope of the audit, the Panel notes the ANAO undertook analysis on these in early 2022. Volume 2 of the report provides the detailed analysis on the current state, features of a desired future state and actions required to realising the potential of a future myGov. From this detailed analysis, the Panel has distilled 10 findings and 10 recommendations in Volume 1.

## The importance of trust

To build and maintain trust, myGov needs to work for people. It must be accessible, easy to use and secure. It must improve to meet evolving expectations. Each time a person has a positive experience when using myGov a little trust is gained. Conversely, each negative experience, reduces trust. Of the principles outlined above, the Panel considers trust to be foundational for Australians to have a positive and functional relationship with government.[1]

The Government's demonstrated ability to securely collect, use and share data for Australians' benefit with prior, free and informed consent will build confidence and overcome concern and discomfort around government use of data.[2]

To earn the trust of Australians, government must also demonstrate responsiveness, reliability and commitment to values of openness, integrity and fairness.[3] Efficiently coordinated services that serve and anticipate citizen needs are key. Doing so in a transparent and ethical way that holds government accountable is essential.

**Australians having their say on myGov**

The audit invited input from Australians through an online survey open from 13 October 2022 to 10 November 2022. Key findings from the 723 respondents were:

67% used myGov in the last week

10% spoke a language other than English as their primary language

75% thought government should do more for people who do not use online services

54% had their myGovID connected to their myGov account

20–40% reported negative experiences when using myGov

75% thought government online services need improving

50% of respondents did not know where to go for help if having problems

1 Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA), myGov User Audit Research Report, 2022 (unpublished)

2 ibid.

3 ibid.

# Findings

## FINDING 1

**myGov is indispensable national digital infrastructure.**

Australia's transport networks, hospitals, utilities and education systems are critical infrastructure relied on by Australians everyday as they go about their lives. Investing in roads, hospitals and schools is essential to serve Australians' basic needs, to drive economic growth and build a stronger Australia. So too, myGov is essential infrastructure that connects people to information and digital services leading to better health and social outcomes.

The *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* defines nationally significant infrastructure as including transport, energy, communications, and water infrastructure 'in which investment or further investment will materially improve national productivity'. Social infrastructure is also considered, such as health, education, social housing and community facilities. As a guide, for a proposal to be considered nationally significant, it should concern a problem or opportunity that will have more than $30 million per annum impact on the economy (nominal, undiscounted). Unquantified social benefit considerations are also taken into account.[4]

Providing high-quality, resilient, accessible and equitable digital infrastructure in an era of accelerating digitalisation has been identified as a key priority for Australia by Infrastructure Australia.[5]

Similarly, the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy 2015 defines critical infrastructure as 'those physical facilities, supply chains, information technologies and communication networks, which if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact the social or economic wellbeing of the nation, or affect Australia's ability to conduct national defence and ensure national security'.[6]

Daily myGov usage has more than tripled in the past 5 years. myGov now supports more than 1.1 million sessions on an average day, with daily rates often exceeding 1.4 million. More people use myGov each day than use public transport[7]. *Daily* myGov usage is also greater than the average number of *monthly* hospital admissions in Australia.

In 2017, there were 11.7 million myGov accounts. Today, there are more than 25 million. Almost 20 million Australians have a digital COVID-19 vaccination certificate, and almost 4.6 million have downloaded their International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate – all through myGov.

myGov is part of most Australians' lives and unlocks the value of government policies. With this comes an important caution. myGov's strong recent performance has raised the stakes. When performing well, myGov drives positive outcomes for Australians, the economy and government. If myGov fails to deliver, the impacts are severe, with those who need help the most significantly and disproportionately affected.

4 Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Glossary [website], accessed December 2022, <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/Infrastructure-glossary>

5 Infrastructure Australia, *2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan*, 2021

6 Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre, Defining critical infrastructure [website], accessed December 2022, <https://www.cisc.gov.au/what-is-the-cyber-and-infrastructure-security-centre/defining-critical-infrastructure>

7 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia's Journey to Work [website], 2022, accessed December 2022, <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/australias-journey-work#public-transport>

The myGov experience mirrors what is happening in the private sector. In Australia, one study found that Australian businesses undertook 10 years' worth of technology adoption and transformation during the pandemic alone.[8] It also reflects global trends. Internationally, digital increased from 20% of customer interactions in 2018 to 58% in 2020 across the private and public sectors.[9]

The challenge for government used to be how to create demand for digital services. No longer. The challenge now is how to meet rapidly growing demand for high-quality, safe and secure digital services. There is rightly a higher standard for government digital services. That is why approaching myGov as a piece of indispensable infrastructure, and not just another IT project, is key in meeting this new challenge.

Other countries are also building this infrastructure for their citizens. The Panel commissioned a review of global best practice from the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (refer to Volume 2, Attachment A). This evidence was used to inform the Panel's recommendations and to benchmark Australia's progress.

From this review it is clear no nation has fully realised the 'promise' of connected digital service delivery. Each national path reflects history, culture, and investment and technology choices. Nevertheless, BCG discerned 4 features of high-quality government digital service offerings:

1. single whole-of-government entry points that have the highest adoption and satisfaction combine navigation, information and transactions
2. citizens increasingly expect omni-channel experiences in line with best practice private offerings (e.g. chatbots, virtual assistance, telephony, mobile, online)
3. best practice portals eliminate redundancy by promoting Tell Us Once
4. portal design and development leverage a contemporary open and modular architecture with embedded digital identity.

## FINDING 2

**Recent investments have built the foundations to deliver on myGov's promise, but myGov will not fulfil its potential without further investment and discipline to ensure adoption of new capabilities across government.**

myGov today is changing thanks to a temporary $200 million boost provided in 2021–22 for the two-year Enhanced myGov program.[10] This temporary boost came on top of business-as-usual sustainment funding in the order of $38 million per year. This brought annual funding for myGov to a total of close to $138 million per year over the 2021–22 and 2022–23 financial years.

The program is delivering overdue improvements to myGov's underlying IT platform and the quality of the digital front door it provides Australians. Importantly, the new technology is based on open standards using an approach designed to allow services to come easily together in a single interface. Testing suggests that myGov can now support 500,000 concurrent users – 50 times more than it did previously.[11]

The recently released myGov app is another a big step forward. myGov has been late to the app game, but the new app delivers functionality and a user experience close to that provided by the private sector.

8 Alphabeta Australia, *Australia's digital resilience: How technology strengthened Australian business during COVID and beyond*, 2020

9 McKinsey and Company, *How COVID-19 has pushed companies over the technology tipping point and transformed business forever*, 2020

10 Australian Government, *2020–21 Australian Government Budget – Budget Paper No. 2*, 2020

11 Services Australia data (unpublished)

The Government's recent investment merits both praise and caution. Praise because it has funded much needed improvements to myGov's out-of-date technologies and capabilities. Caution because opportunistic funding bursts, without ongoing funding certainty, provide an unsustainable basis for developing myGov as a critical element of national service delivery infrastructure.

Recent investment will deliver some on-going benefits for Australians. But without a commitment to long-term investment in developing the complementary capabilities (such as digital wallets) and new services (such as passport applications), the risk is that myGov will become an empty shell.

Refreshed myGov capabilities are potentially of significant value to a broader range of government service delivery agencies. A number of Australian Government agencies, and key states and territories, have expressed interest in onboarding their services to myGov, with some of these providing significant value to Australians.

For example, the potential for Australians to renew their passport through myGov, or update the electoral role, both expands the day-to-day utility of myGov and, importantly, makes accessing these services much simpler. Making these types of services available to people through myGov should be a priority.

## FINDING 3

**Australians often still have difficulty finding what they need and 'getting things done' in the services they access once they're through myGov's improved front door.**

Originally, 3 government agencies provided 5 member services through myGov. Today, there are 15 member services including 2 state government services.[12] However, a 2022 Citizen Survey found 46% of respondents believe the increased range of channels makes the process of accessing government services more confusing than ever before.[13]

Recent investments in myGov have focused primarily on improving the hub. User reactions to these changes have been positive – myGov is better laid out, uses simpler and clearer language, and generally functions well.

However, few people can do all the business they need in one place. More than 70% need to engage with at least one other service agency through myGov and other channels (such as telephone).[14] This means most people still need to understand how services align with government agencies and structures to access government services.

Less investment has gone into developing the member agency 'spokes'. This is a mistake. While the distinction between hub and spoke is important within government, for users it is irrelevant. Most people think they are still 'in myGov' when they are in fact in member services.

The user survey conducted by the audit found people are still struggling to get things done. Around three-quarters of survey respondents think that government online services need improving. Further, up to 40% of respondents highlighted having a negative experience when accessing information, signing in, having to go to multiple places to access the services they need, linking their services to myGov, and the myGov inbox notification.

12 Services Australia, number of member services as at 15 December 2022

13 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

14 Services Australia, *myGov Performance Report August 2022,* 2022 (unpublished)

The connection between the myGov hub and its existing member service spokes is a long way from ideal. Almost 40% of calls taken by the myGov help desk are about linking to member services. Problems range from needing to navigate across sites with a very different experience, needing to re-login, and needing to resubmit information already given. Further, people with incorrect mobile phone numbers linked to their accounts can only get a correct number added if they open a new myGov account.

Another problem is the experience of myGovID. Despite the potential benefits of digital identities (see below), fewer than 1% of people signing in to myGov use a digital identity. People see the process as “circular”, “self-referencing” and “too difficult to understand”. These problems need to be fixed urgently.

More broadly, no considered process exists for prioritising the addition of new member services. Services are added based on building a coalition of the bureaucratically willing rather than on any assessment of what would deliver the greatest benefits to Australians. While a level of pragmatism is appropriate in selecting new services for myGov, the forward program of adding new services needs to be prioritised primarily on the value they deliver for Australians and not whether government agencies ‘play nice’ together.

Similarly, a perennial issue is the limited consideration given in the policy development process to how Australians will experience the delivery of the support or service. Policies that are complex or require new patterns of delivery make it harder for Australians to access services or support. Too often, engagement of delivery agencies such as Services Australia still comes too late in the policy development process and/or delivery issues are given limited weight in finalising the program design.

### FINDING 4

**Australians who most need support, including priority populations and those in crisis, often have the greatest challenge accessing government digital services.**

The Government’s responsibility is to deliver high quality services to all citizens, not just some.

Digital channels are becoming the most common way of engaging with government for most Australians. Expectations of digital government services are being set by the digital experience people have in the private sector. myGov needs to rise to this challenge. But it needs to do so in a way that ensures those less able, or willing, to engage digitally are not left behind. Very often, these are the Australians for whom access to services is the most important. Some 37% of Australians find it difficult to navigate government services now that more processes are digital, while only 44% can find help if they have difficulty using digital systems.[15]

Around 11% of the Australian population in 2021 were highly excluded from digital society.[16]

The United Nations[17] and Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII)[18] each explore the digital divide and its impacts on people. In the Australian context, progress continues against key aspects of digital inclusion. This has however, been slower than other countries, contributing to Australia’s drop in the UN’s eGovernment rankings from fifth in 2020 to seventh in 2022. The overall score in the ADII is improving, going from an average index score of 67.5 in 2020 to 71.1 in 2021.

15 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

16 Australian Digital Inclusion Index, Key findings 2021 [website], accessed November 2022, <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/key-findings-and-next-steps/>

17 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *E-Government Survey 2022: The Future of Digital Government*, 2022

18 Australian Digital Inclusion Index, Key findings 2021 [website], accessed November 2022, <https://www.digitalinclusionindex.org.au/key-findings-and-next-steps/>

Some of the ADII key data points shows concerning gaps remain:

- the overall regional score is 3.6 points less than the national average
- 11% of Australians remain highly excluded
- 14% of all Australians would need to pay more than 10% of their household income to gain quality, reliable connectivity with the impacts on lower income Australians being higher again.

Some Australians need or prefer to engage face-to-face or by telephone. The existence of myGov, or even its improvement does not justify ignoring those needs and preferences.

> "While digital access is increasing overall, this is not the story for everyone. …many Australians are being left behind (notably: mobile-only users, people aged 75+, people who did not complete secondary school, and people on lower incomes)." [19]

For people in crisis, access to government services becomes more important and often more difficult. These people generally need to engage across government, and levels of government, at a time where their ability to do so is limited.

Providing a better digital service through myGov can help. Contributors to the audit emphasised the importance of government digital services having a common experience to make them easier for people to navigate. They also emphasised the importance of 'connecting' services that respond to crisis events (e.g. housing and financial support).

Important improvements have been made to the accessibility of myGov for people with disabilities and those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is as it should be – myGov should be a leader in accessibility. However, further improvements, such as those proposed by the Centre for Inclusive Design, are also clearly possible.

**Heuristic Review**

The audit engaged the Centre for Inclusive Design to conduct a heuristic analysis of myGov's design elements and content to identify any potential accessibility and usability gaps. User experience experts evaluated user journeys and evaluated them against accepted usability principles. These principles are used to ensure users with a disability can interact and access all features of the myGov platform. Key findings of the review were:

- overall, the myGov website has solid foundations
- there is evidence of considerable work to make the website more inclusive
- there are a series of smaller potential barriers to inclusion
- minor issues with error prevention, design complexity, and unexpected behaviour from the website lead to some barriers.

Recommended next steps were to conduct user testing with very low literacy and low levels of English, and to create a unified design library that includes an icon suite.

A major issue with the current service relates to nominees. Over 10.7 million nominee-like arrangements currently exist across the main Australian government services. These arrangements need to be set up, in different ways, unique to individual member services.

19 PwC Australia, *The life-changing potential of digital inclusion*, 2022, accessed via <https://www.pwc.com.au/consulting/connected-government/pwc-the-life-changing-potential-of-digital-inclusion.pdf>

Currently, myGov provides no mechanism for a representative or helper to log in to myGov on behalf of another person. This leaves people with little option but to share passwords or have people sit with them. Creating a nominee arrangement in myGov which could be used by other agencies would be a major step forward.

The digital services provided through myGov can only do so much. Meeting the needs of some people dealing with government will almost always involve a combination of digital and other channels (such as telephone or face-to-face). It is critical that myGov integrates effectively with these other service delivery pathways to provide high quality services for all Australians – and especially those who need support the most.

### FINDING 5

**Practical issues relating to managing myGov accounts, such as linking new services, being locked out and duplicate accounts, remain frustrating and create potential barriers for many Australians.**

Creating, maintaining and using a myGov account needs to be simple. Currently it is not.

In the first half of 2022 more than 300,000 calls were made to the myGov help desk seeking help to sign-in or create an account.[20] This is too high. Signing in to myGov should be quick and simple (and preferably via a digital identity) and so should account management.

> "Like the Service NSW portal, myGov should offer a user experience where citizens can search and apply for the services they need without having to understand which government agency or department is responsible for delivering the services."[21]

Currently, with the intention of making 'signing in' easier, Australians can by-design create as many accounts as they wish. If a user becomes locked out of their account (e.g. as the result of a lost phone with multi-factor authentication), they are advised to start over and create another one. There are currently more than 4 million dormant myGov accounts.[22]

If myGov were solely a means for Australians to obtain general information about government services, there would be a powerful case to enable Australians to use myGov anonymously or pseudonymously. After all, there is no compelling reason for the Government to know who a person is when that person is simply seeking general information about the services that the government makes available.

However, myGov has been changing over time, and this trend is continuing. myGov has increasingly become the portal through which Australians access digital government services and receive personalised messages. That personalisation – of services and communications – makes it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to enable anonymous or pseudonymous transaction while protecting Australians, and the system as a whole, from security, fraud and other such threats.

For instance, a fraudster can create one or more myGov accounts in respect of another individual simply because the fraudster has detailed information about that other individual. This serious risk needs to be addressed.

20 Services Australia, *myGov Performance Report August 2022*, 2022 (unpublished)

21 myGov user submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

22 Services Australia data – 17% of all 25m (~4.25m) myGov accounts with at least one link have not been accessed in the last 18 months

## FINDING 6

**myGov could be considerably smarter and more helpful; trust and autonomy for Australians will continue to be critical.**

Since it was first established, the vision for myGov has been the creation of services that are tailored to the needs of individual users. Rather than telling government many times about a change in circumstances, people would only need to do it once. Information would be prefilled to save people time in filling in forms. Services around life events would be tailored to ensure people receive everything they need quickly and efficiently.

Tailored information and service offerings have the potential to substantially reduce the complexity of accessing government services. This is a particular benefit to those who have trouble navigating government services, those who do not know what they are entitled to and to vulnerable people who do not have the ability or resources to access services.

Today's reality is a long way from that vision. Some progress has been made – notably around the birth of a child – but life-event services remain more hope than near term expectation. Part of the problem lies in the challenge of coordinating multiple agencies across multiple levels of government. But part also lies in recognising that issues which look small when sitting inside government, loom much larger for individual Australians when dealing with government.

The ultimate vision of delivering tailored services remains sound. But a more pragmatic, and determined, approach is needed.

> "Is there a reasonable option for me to advise our address change to all sections of government without spending countless hours on telephone queues?"[23]

As of June, only 7 of the 15 member services use the myGov Tell Us Once capability. Furthermore, the success rate of member services accepting Tell Us Once updates is low – in January 2022, only 34% of all personal detail updates using the Tell Us Once capability were successfully updated by member services, and a further 38% required manual staff intervention to update.[24] This denies convenience for Australians. The reasons given for this are many and varied: misaligned data fields, legislative differences, difference in how data is captured and used, and poor communication with myGov users. These barriers may make sense within government, but they make no sense to everyday Australians.

Expanding the pre-filling of forms is another practical step that can be taken. Using existing data held by government to pre-fill forms and help people understand what they may be entitled to, needs to be pursued provided Australians retain control via consent (see below).

Providing better help to Australians navigating major life events should not have to wait for the development of a 'all singing and dancing' new coordinated service. A sequenced approach is needed. A good first step, for example, would be the provision of life-event checklists to help people self-navigate through government.

For myGov to deliver on its potential, it must be worthy of peoples' trust.

23 myGov user submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

24 Services Australia, *Tell us Once Discovery Current State Insights Report Final v1.0*, 2022 (unpublished)

Fewer than half of the people engaging with myGov would recommend it to others.[25] This is far too low. Government services are rarely loved by the public, but they need to be good enough and trusted enough to be worthy of recommendation to others.

myGov needs a framework of security and consent based on the principles of choice, control and transparency. This framework should ensure the development of a myGov consent approach which:

- seeks consent on the terms of use and linking agreements
- provides choices for the user on how their data flows in and out of myGov
- seeks further consent whenever changes in terms or privacy settings are made
- makes the user's history of consent available to them

myGov should be an exemplar in meeting the consumer consent and authorisation requirements under the government's consumer data right scheme. In doing so, its arrangements need to ensure that consent is voluntary, express, informed, specific as to purpose, time limited and easily withdrawn.

## FINDING 7

**Moving faster to a well communicated system of digital identity and verifiable credentials, founded on security, privacy and other human rights, can make government services and broader digital interactions safer and more robust.**

Recent cyber breaches have reinforced underlying citizen concerns about security and privacy, and ensuring government upholds the law. Expectations of government here are even higher than they are for service quality. Almost 80% of Australians expect government to use and store personal data ethically, lawfully and securely and 83% of Australians would like the government to do more to protect the privacy of their data.[26]

myGov should be developed in a way that responds to these concerns. Evidence from surveys, focus groups and roundtables suggests that concern about privacy and security is high but awareness about possible solutions (particularly the role of digital identification and credentials – digital versions of common documents, like licences) is low. Substantial work lies in front of government.

Two separate processes, partly linked, have emerged for signing into government services. 15 member services require users to create and link a myGov account. Eighty government services,[27] including (but not limited to) services for businesses, currently support the use of a digital identity, such as myGovID. For example, residents in WA must currently use a myGovID to sign into the ServiceWA app, and digital identity has recently been used to create Director ID. These divergent ecosystems are confusing for users and create a dilemma for government agencies who are forced to pick which one to use.

25 Services Australia, myGov User Audit survey, 2022

26 PwC Australia, *The life-changing potential of digital inclusion*, 2022, accessed via <https://www.pwc.com.au/consulting/connected-government/pwc-the-life-changing-potential-of-digital-inclusion.pdf>

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, *2020 Australian Community Attitudes to Privacy Survey*, 2020

27 Digital Transformation Agency, "Digital identity legislation factsheet", Nov 2021, accessed via <https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/Digital%20Identity%20Legislation%20-%20what%20is%20it%20-%20factsheet.pdf>

The framework that underpins the national digital identity model is generally sound. It has been the result of extensive consultation over 7 years, with privacy and security baked into many of its design decisions, such as the choice of identity provider. However, it has been underserved in its implementation. The sign in process is clunky, and the only available identity provider, myGovID, offers a poor user experience for many.

Whilst several commercial identity providers have been accredited under the TDIF, some government agencies have raised concerns with us about ongoing assurance of commercial providers, the transparency of the accreditation process, and whether security and privacy protections are sufficient.

Currently, many Australians are excluded from setting up a digital identity. Fortyeight per cent of Australians do not hold an Australian passport and cannot get a 'strong' digital identity (Identity Proofing Level 3).[28] People without identity documents, such as the 200,000 First Nations people without birth certificates,[29] cannot set up a 'standard' digital identity (Identity Proofing Level 2). People cannot use it if their identity documents do not match; neither can people who do not have their own mobile device.

Further, the slow progress on legislation, both for the identity framework and biometric matching has restricted wider uptake. In its absence, use of digital identity and limited facial verification is accelerating without any dedicated legal safeguards or governance framework in place, leaving Australians vulnerable to security, privacy and other human rights violations. Establishing these legislative foundations, supported by a robust and effective governance and accountability framework, is now urgent.

Some states and territories which have been ready and waiting for a legislated national system for several years have gone it alone. There is a publicly stated aspiration to align, but the risk of national fragmentation inches ever higher as some states and territories look to imminently introduce their own legislative frameworks.

In the 7 years since the first work began on the TDIF, many jurisdictions have released digital driver licences, and some have gone further, such as digital occupational licences and working with children checks. myGov is making a digital Medicare card available in early 2023. These digital credentials can be easier to use and offer more privacy for users, as they can be verified by a wide range of providers without the use of a central exchange.

Digital credentials won't fully replace the use of digital identity for signing in, but they will play a significant role in reducing the need for identity documents and numbers to be retained by businesses all over Australia and defend against forgery of plastic licences. However, without a national standard for digital credentials, a new series of 'digital rail gauges' will emerge, where a credential issued by one jurisdiction won't be accepted in another.

As it stands, the responsibilities for digital identity are spread across four different ministerial portfolios in the Australian Government: the DTA and the Department of Home Affairs each own slices of identity policy, whilst Services Australia and the ATO each lead aspects of delivery. Each of these 4 agencies have core day-to-day priorities, and digital identity represents a small proportion of each agency's role.

As a result, decision-making is slow and engagement is complex for those outside the Australian Government. The Panel considers the current arrangements lack the clarity to deliver on the national priority for a more robust digital identity and credential ecosystem.

28 Australian Passport Office, "*Passports facts 2020-21",* 2021, accessed via <https://www.passports.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Passports%20facts%202020-21.pdf>

29 Pathfinders, *Pathfinders and Unicef Australia partnership to pave the way towards universal birth registration*, 2022, accessed via <https://www.pathfinders.ngo/pathfinders-and-unicef-australia-partnership-to-pave-the-way-towards-universal-birth-registration/>

## FINDING 8

**The quality of the myGov platform needs to be matched by world-class service and support for government agencies utilising it.**

The new IT platform delivered through the Enhanced myGov program establishes a much stronger basis for connecting new services to myGov. Transitioning 25 million myGov accounts seamlessly from the old platform to the new platform was a major achievement, which deserves recognition. It shows what can be done when government agencies work together.

While the success in transitioning existing services is clear, the arrangements for bringing new services into the new myGov platform (a process known as 'onboarding') need strengthening. Potential member agencies describe the process for onboarding new services as overly burdensome, with high project overhead costs and a history of delays.[30]

Agencies also argue it is often difficult to know who to engage with in Services Australia (the host of myGov). They see value in establishing a dedicated relationship manager to assist agencies navigate the onboarding process (and potentially beyond).

Moving closer to best practice would involve providing a high-quality support to agencies seeking to join myGov. It would involve operating myGov 'as a service' for agencies designed for easy adoption, backed by an operating model to build trust in agencies who rely on myGov as a critical service delivery enabler.

In partnership with the DTA, the myGov team in Services Australia can also play a leading role in building the overall digital capability of the APS. Like other global counterparts, such as Government Digital Service in the UK,[31] or 18F in the United States,[32] the myGov team could share examples of delivery practice in action and make available design patterns and source code (in line with cyber security considerations). Through the APS Digital Profession, the myGov team can support growth of the community of digital practitioners across Australian and state and territory governments to exchange leading practice and collaborate around shared design and technology challenges.

## FINDING 9

**Continued investment in myGov will yield strong benefits for Australians, government, and the economy.**

The ultimate promise of myGov is better services at lower cost. Government has emphasised the goal of better services, and not delivery of savings for government. The Panel applauds this citizen-centred view and strongly recommends it continue.

The overall societal and economy-wide benefits of investing in myGov are potentially enormous. For people, benefits include saving time while discovering, accessing and managing government services. For government, key benefits come through the reduction in direct costs such as printing, correspondence, technology savings through reuse and enabling increased agility and responsiveness. Ultimately, it is in everyone's interest that people who can, and want to, engage with government digitally are able to do so.

30 Australian Government agency submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

31 Government of the United Kingdom, GOV.UK Service Toolkit [website], accessed November 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/service-toolkit>

32 United States Government, 18F [website], accessed November 2022, <https://18f.gsa.gov/>

Although not all transactions with government are the same, on average it takes 45 minutes for a person to complete a face-to-face service transaction. This reduces to 15 minutes to complete a transaction over telephone, while online transactions are completed in 3 minutes.[33]

Independent economic analysis commissioned by Services Australia while considering potential improvements as part of the Enhanced myGov program (with elements including the new platform and myGov app now delivered), estimated the benefits of implementation to exceed $3.2 billion in net present terms over 10 years.[34] This was largely driven by significant time savings for myGov users. In addition to these direct benefits, the analysis also points to significant indirect benefits where people secure timely access the right services, such as earlier return to work.

Continuing to invest in saving peoples' time and improving their experience of government services just makes sense. Further improvements to the platform, such as adding new government services to myGov, enhancing functionality such as nominee arrangements, and making it easier to find information through life events, could generate up to $6.20 in gross benefits for every dollar invested.

For government, the potential benefits are smaller but still impressive. For the set of investments assessed by the Services Australia commissioned analysis, reduced administration costs (such as printing and postage) and technology sustainment for government agencies resulted in expected direct savings of $158 million over 10 years.

It is important to note that these figures relate to a particular set of initiatives – some of which have now been implemented. Gross benefits generated will not be consistent for every investment, and as the platform improves, the return on new improvements may be lower than on initial enhancements. But the Panel is confident they illustrate the type and scale of benefits a good long-term development program for myGov could bring.

There are broader benefits of tailored digital services. There is significant potential for social and also economic benefits through better connecting Australians with policy interventions across portfolios. Tailored messaging, tasks and appointments would not only see better take-up of individual policy measures (as it would be easier to find them) but also to connect otherwise separate interventions to provide more holistic support. For example, there is immediate potential in the disability and aged care sectors to better connect people with the range of supports available across the NDIS, social services system, health and aged care systems and other services.

A number of potential new services and features carry with them significant benefits for Australians and government. In particular, the ability for people to execute documents such as statutory declarations, deeds and agreements through myGov presents significant value. The current direct costs of executing documents to business and individuals is over $400 million each year. Further, Commonwealth Statutory Declarations comprise an estimated 146 Australian Government processes across 29 agencies, each bearing delivery cost. Work to accelerate bringing services such as document execution into myGov has significant economic value to Australia and should be pursued.

33 Services Australia commissioned independent economic analysis, 2021 (unpublished)

34 ibid.

### FINDING 10

**Past failures to adequately address three systemic issues have undermined delivery of high quality, citizen-centric services:**

**a. the structures and responsibilities of government do not encourage agencies to join up services for Australians**

**b. myGov has been funded, planned and governed as a standard IT project, instead of essential national infrastructure**

**c. 'Fixing myGov' means also fixing things beyond myGov, including the quality of broader government digital, telephone and face-to-face services.**

The improvements needed for myGov to fulfil its potential are clear. It is also clear that we've been here before and fallen short. The promise of myGov has been promoted by government many times. The failure has not been in articulating myGov's promise. It has been a failure to address underlying issues.

Firstly, even if each minister, department or agency designs and delivers services that meet Australians' needs in their portfolio, no-one is responsible for, or prioritises, the overall experience of Australians interacting with government. There is no incentive to join things up for Australians. Instead ministers and agencies compete for focus and resources for their separate priorities.

Secondly, the temporary boost to myGov funding has made a difference. However, it will leave myGov well short of the ambitious vision successive governments have articulated. Short-term opportunistic funding boosts will not meet the future digital service needs of a changing Australia. Achieving myGov's potential also requires articulation of, and commitment to, a long-term plan.

Thirdly, having a great 'front door' will count for little if what lies beyond the lobby falls short. Discipline and resourcing are needed to ensure the overall experience for Australians across the digital services beyond myGov, and the telephony and face-to-face services for those that need them, just work.

# The Panel's vision for myGov

From the Panel's findings it is clear the time has come to design, fund and govern myGov as critical service delivery infrastructure. Some big shifts are needed (further detail on the shifts for users and government agencies are included at Attachment B).

## MYGOV IS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AUSTRALIA

| **From** (current myGov) | | **To** (future myGov) |
|---|---|---|
| Multiple ways for you to prove who you are, with personal information stored many times across the economy | | Simple, secure and privacy preserving ways to prove who you are and other things about you, without your information being retained |
| No shared commitment to consistent experience across digital services | | Adoption of common UX building blocks |
| Limited joining up of services, with people being left to navigate across agencies and channels to access services | | Tailored information and services proactively help people get what they need |
| Fractured, sporadic funding for specific projects across portfolios | | Ongoing funding to stabilise and improve the core of government digital services |
| Limited cross-agency visibility, prioritisation and decision making for the end-to-end digital experience | | Revitalised, modern governance arrangements that are designed to drive connected services for Australians |

This path would lead to myGov delivering on its promise.

Imagine if…

- there was a single place to find the government services you need and keep track of your affairs with government
- the same place sent you reminders of things you needed to do, or let you know if there was support you might be entitled to
- when something big happened in your life such as starting a job, having a baby or retiring, you received clear advice on all the things you need to do
- when your circumstances changed (eg. you moved house, changed your name or your email address) you could easily check and update the details held by government
- you could keep your cards, licences and qualifications securely in a digital wallet, and did not need to provide copies of them to government agencies or private firms
- when digital was not working for you, it was easy to switch to a phone call or schedule a face-to-face meeting and you didn't have to start what you were doing again or re-tell your story
- you were impacted by a natural disaster, the Government reached out to let you know the services and support available to you and allowed you to apply in one place without having to re-tell your story multiple times.

This vision is achievable. The prize is worth it.

To get there will take time, commitment to a plan and to ongoing resourcing, and collaboration and discipline across government.

The panel's blueprint for getting there is set out in 10 recommendations.

# Recommendations

## UNLOCKING THE VALUE FOR AUSTRALIANS

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**Confirm myGov as the 'go to' place for people to access services online from the Australian Government and communicate with all Australians.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

- confirm myGov as the default, primary front door where people can easily, safely and securely
  - find the information they need and access services, including organising information and services around common life events
  - see and manage their dealings with government, including seeing their financial obligations, tasks and appointments
  - update their details
  - receive notifications, messages and other communications from government, including advice about services that's relevant to them
- prioritise broadening the range of services accessible through myGov, including passport renewals, enrolling and updating the electoral role, accessing government surveys and electronic document execution.
- reduce the difficulties of moving between myGov and other services by adopting over time common look, feel and functionality through recommitment to a Design System and Digital Service Standard within the Australian Government Architecture
- permit alternative 'doors' when this will make things faster and easier, including prescribing when separate mobile apps are permissible, with a view to greater consolidation
- steward a broader service ecosystem, so high quality telephone support and face-to-face channels are also available when people need them without having to 'start again'.

Related findings: 3, 5, 6

Further expanded in Volume 2:

Chapter 1 – myGov is intuitive, seamless and tailored:

- You can rely on myGov to find what you need
- There's a familiar and intuitive experience of government
- Making services easier to access by reducing the burden of proving yourself repeatedly
- Managing your business with government is easy – inbox, notifications, tasks and appointments

Chapter 2 – myGov is for everyone

- Help is there when you need it

## RECOMMENDATION 2

### Ensure myGov leaves no one behind and upholds Australians' human rights.

To achieve this, the Government should:

- ensure accessibility, safety, security and privacy 'by design' inform how myGov is built, and services are designed with the active involvement of priority populations, not just tested with them
- ensure people can easily use or switch to another channel (telephone or shopfront) if myGov doesn't work for them
- implement a security and genuine consent framework, based on the principles of choice, control and transparency including terms of use, linking, data usage, visibility and control of privacy settings and a history of consent
- build a new capability for people to securely and safely nominate someone else they trust to help them or act on their behalf, with the ability to have different arrangements for different services
- increase support to improve the digital literacy of all Australians
- ensure a focus on inclusion in the roadmap (recommendation 5), legislated commitments and performance metrics (recommendation 3), and governance arrangements (recommendation 7).

Related findings: 4, 6

Further expanded in Volume 2:

Chapter 2 – myGov is for everyone:

- Information and services are accessible and safe
- Someone else can easily act on your behalf
- Help is there when you need it

Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- Legislation outlines commitments to Australians
- A roadmap
- Central governance expanded across digital services

Unlocking the full value of myGov for Australians requires further development of its userfriendly interface and encompassing a broader range of services over time.

Best practice across the globe is for government services delivered via a consistent user experience. In Australia, NSW has been leading the way via the development of Service NSW. It is time for the Australian government to follow this lead.

Recent improvements in the myGov platform and user-interface have not been coupled with a commitment to spread this consistent user experience to other agencies. This is a missed opportunity, which is hampering the delivery of value to Australians.

While it is sometimes important for people to know which department they are interacting with, it is more important that they can navigate through government quickly and easily. Agencies should not be allowed to simply 'opt out' of creating a consistent user experience across government. The discipline of a 'design system' as part of a re-enlivened Australian Government Architecture (see Recommendation 9) is needed to set out the 'rules of racing' for digital services across government. It should be easy for designers and developers to build using a common set of 'building blocks' which delivers a consistent user experience.

As the primary front door to government, it is critical that myGov provide a high-value basic service for its users. This service needs to be based around the extra value created by having a central place to conduct business. myGov needs to be a place where things 'come together' for people, rather than another stop for them on a journey through government.

A number of the new services and features being considered for myGov should be urgently progressed to rapidly increase the day-to-day value provided by myGov to Australians. These include document execution, passport renewals, election enrolments and potentially accessing and completing the census.

Development of myGov's full capability as a place 'where things come together' will take time and a sequenced approach will be needed. Government should not let pursuit of the perfect get in the way of the better.

myGov is already developing in popularity and use. This will only increase with time and the development of better services. This effort should have a special focus on ensuring myGov works for those who most need support, either because they are particularly vulnerable or in crisis. Accessibility 'by design' and design 'with', rather than 'for' these Australians will be critical in ensuring equity of access to government services.

Supporting improved digital literacy for all Australians will also help. The Australian Curriculum[35] sets the country's education approach for digital technologies from foundation through to senior secondary. While this is an important investment in future generations of digital natives, there are others who need help to understand how to safely and securely navigate the digital world. The government announced $6.0 million in funding over 3 years from 2023–24 for the national rollout of the eSmart Digital Licence+, Media Literacy Lab and a new Junior Digital Licence+ to improve media and digital literacy and online safety awareness for primary and secondary school students. More is needed.

**Be Connected**

Be Connected is a joint initiative between the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the eSafety Commissioner that aims to increase the confidence, digital skills and online safety of older Australians. The Be Connected website is a one-stop shop with more than 150 free online courses made up of over 500 engaging learning activities including translated resources, interactive practice areas, webinars, podcasts and quick reads.

But myGov is not, and will not, be for everyone. Other service channels – such as telephone and face to face – will remain critical and need to be funded and supported accordingly.

Every Australian, regardless of whoever and wherever they are, deserve high quality support in engaging with government. They also deserve to engage with government knowing that their rights and interests are being protected.

Privacy, accessibility and human rights should be at the heart of myGov design. myGov should lead the way for the Australian Government in meeting accessibility standards and in protecting peoples' personal data. But myGov needs to be more. myGov needs to actively assist people to 'switch channel' if that is what is needed to help them. It also needs to make it easy for people to safely nominate another to act on their behalf.

Australians should have choice in how they interact with government digital services, and in whether, when and how they choose to share their personal information. Strong security, privacy and other protections are important in achieving that aim. A framework of security and consent is vital in maintaining transparency with the user, an important quality in a relationship of trust[36].

35 Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies (Version 8.4) [website], accessed December 2022, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/technologies/digital-technologies/>

36 Behavioural Economics Team of Australia, myGov User Audit advisory paper, 2022 (unpublished)

# MYGOV AS CRITICAL NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning and funding for myGov needs to reflect its role as a critical piece of national infrastructure. Current approaches, which treat myGov as a 'normal' IT project, are clearly not sufficient for such an important service delivery vehicle.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**Legislate myGov as national service delivery infrastructure.**

The legislation should include:

- myGov's purpose, scope and high-level commitments to citizens
- a requirement to publish a long-term road map (recommendation 8 refers)
- a requirement to publish a citizen charter, including a performance framework and commitments for the design and operation of myGov and related Government services
- a requirement to publish performance data against standards set for myGov and related Government services
- a requirement to establish an independently chaired advisory board and related governance arrangements (see Recommendation 7)
- an annual report to Parliament on performance against the road map and the charter

The Government could also consider establishing a broader legislative mandate for Services Australia (similar to the model adopted in NSW).

Related findings: 1

Further expanded in Volume 2: Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- Legislation outlines commitments to Australians
- A roadmap
- Central governance and authority expanded across digital services
- myGov is a leaning system

To protect and uphold its status as national infrastructure, and to provide a basis for better planning and accountability, legislation is needed. Without it, there is a risk that the sharp focus on delivering better digital services for Australians will dissipate into bureaucratic inertia or be overtaken by competing ministerial priorities.

Legislation for myGov should be simple and create a clear vision for myGov, as well as high level planning and accountability obligations on government. These should include the publication of a 5-year development road map and a citizen charter. Responsibility for the legislation should rest with the government services minister (the Hon Bill Shorten MP) and the minister responsible for digital and data (Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher), who should be supported by an independently chaired advisory committee.

Development of the road map, charter, advisory committee and performance standards should not await passage of legislation. These are all stand-alone activities that should be given priority as the legislative process is taking place. But if needed, they should be revised to ensure compliance with the legislation once established.

The way NSW has organised relevant departmental functions is worthy of consideration. In 2019, NSW established the Department of Customer Service (DCS) as a service provider, regulator and central agency of government. The core of the DCS role is to establish the customer at the centre of all programs and initiatives across the NSW Government, deliver a more consistent and efficient digital experience with government, use data and behavioural insights to drive customer service improvements, and engage more effectively with the people of NSW.

Service NSW is an executive agency within the DCS portfolio and is the main contact point for customers to access the NSW Government. Service NSW aims to make it easy for people, businesses and communities to find the support and services they need in NSW. Service NSW is made up of Service NSW Service Centres, mobile service centres, contact centres, a website and the Service NSW app and works with a range of "partner agencies" across the state. Service NSW's performance dashboard[37] demonstrates high levels of customer satisfaction (97% as at December 2022) and a large number of Service NSW personal accounts (8.83 million as at December 2022).

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**Provide ongoing annual funding of myGov at the same level as sustainment funding in 2021–22 and the Enhanced myGov program and establish a 'myGov development fund' to resource onboarding of new services and improvement of existing linked services.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

- instead of one-off project funding, provide ongoing funding for myGov sustainment and enhancements, with annual confirmation of a prioritised list of potential improvements, the proposed quarterly improvements for the next 12 months, and forecast improvements for the following 12 months
- continue the pause on agency charging, to allow the platform to mature and expand with new services for an investment phase of at least four years
- establish a 'myGov development fund' (modelled on the NSW Digital Restart Fund) funded from the federal budget or through a levy on departments and agencies, or a combination of both, to support connection of new services and the uplift of existing services to compliance with the Australian Government Architecture
- extend previous modelling to assess the economic, social and fiscal benefits of improved policy delivery through myGov (e.g. better connecting people with a disability to services which increase their ability to participate in paid work)
- have regard to the panel's recommended funding priorities (Attachment C)
- ensure funding for other service pathways (e.g. telephone and face-to-face services) maintains a high level of service quality for citizens who are unable (or unwilling) to use myGov.

Related findings: 1, 2, 9, 10

Further expanded in Volume 2: Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- A long-term funding commitment to operate and improve myGov and uplift member services
- Central governance and authority expanded across digital services

Funding arrangements for myGov are in flux and new long-term arrangements need to be settled as a matter of priority. Current arrangements simply do not provide the certainty or flexibility needed to create and maintain a world-class digital service for Australians.

37 ServiceNSW, Performance Dashboard [website], 2022, <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/performance-dashboard>

Temporary arrangements, established in 2021–22, made a significant investment in new capabilities through two years of funding in addition to the operation and sustainment of myGov. This was welcome. But the need to re-engage with the budget process every two years hinders long-term planning and involves high levels of wasted bureaucratic time and effort.

One positive aspect of the temporary model was the lifting of 'charge-back' arrangements. These arrangements saw myGov funded via charging member agencies based on transaction volumes. There should be no return to this model in the short-term. Agencies should be encouraged, not punished, for delivering content and services via myGov.

Future arrangements also need to more clearly separate on-going and development funding. Long term funding should be provided automatically for ongoing operations and improvements, consistent with myGov's role as a critical piece of national infrastructure.

Development funding should be provided via a separate major new fund (modelled on the NSW Digital Restart Fund) to support the connection of new services and uplift of existing services. Priorities for funding should be developed for ministers via a cross-portfolio design authority, endorsed by the independently chaired board, and be based on an assessment of the value each initiative will create for myGov users.

The NSW Digital Restart Fund is a dedicated Special Deposit Account established in NSW legislation. This allows for the funding process to take place outside the annual budget cycle, with investment decisions considered 4 times per year. Compared to the existing Two-Pass Business Case process, this better supports agile delivery: agencies can seek smaller increments of money through a lean business case and assurance process, and easily come back to government to seek further investment with a working prototype or scaling service.

The Government's digital and ICT investment has ranged between $1.0 billion and $3.3 billion per financial year since 2010–11, with a long-term average of approximately $1.7 billion per financial year. In 2021–22, the investment of $3.2 billion reflected 5 per cent of total Australian Government agency departmental appropriations. Assuming investment at the rate of the long-term average, the Australian Government could be expected to invest in the order of $15 billion in ICT initiatives over the next decade.

In the recent past, 78 per cent of ICT funding went towards running costs rather than growing or transforming capabilities.[38] This is not the approach taken for other significant capability such as military platforms. There is an opportunity for government to pool funding for activities related to myGov and member service delivery and drive high citizen value initiatives through refreshed prioritisation and governance.

Upfront digital transformation investment can bring significant cost savings across government in the long run.[39] Sustained development funding for myGov reduces the need for individual investment by agencies and reducing whole-of-government cost. Given the timeframe and focus of the User Audit, the Panel did not fully explore or quantify the potential for intuitive and tailored services to increase the efficacy of government policy. The Panel would encourage this analysis to be undertaken and a framework developed to better inform future government investment (for myGov and beyond) and notes a similar type of independent economic analysis was done in the context of myGov in the recent past.

By considering investment proposals for user-facing digital services through a coordinated fund, common needs from agencies can be identified and funded once as a myGov platform capability, saving costs from multiple agencies building the same capability in different parts of government.

38 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Our Public Service, Our Future: Independent Review of the Australian Public Service, 2019, pg. 265.

39 Department of Home Affairs. 2018. *Submission to the Independent Review of the APS*.

As many nations (and some states and territories have recognised) now is an important time to be investing in the development of digital services. Recent analysis suggests the pay-off for Australians from additional investment would be significant. In the contest for funding, myGov should be seen for what it is, an investment in creating value for the Australian people, rather than a cost centre to be managed.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

**Publish during 2023 a rolling 5-year roadmap for developing myGov, updated annually.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

- confirm a set of transparent, citizen-value focused, criteria to guide selecting and prioritising initiatives informed by performance data
- include in the roadmap: new myGov features; onboarding of new member services; significant improvements to existing member services; and enhancements to the technology platform for myGov
- have regard to the Panel's recommended funding priorities (Attachment C).

Related findings: 1, 10

Further expanded in Volume 2: Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery: A roadmap

myGov needs a clear and publicly transparent development plan. The current approach, of grand visions supported by ad-hoc, opportunistic initiatives, is no basis for developing such an important piece of national infrastructure.

A clear lesson from best practice across the globe is the need for a strong vision of national value to be backed by concerted development planning and execution. Some state and territory governments, notably NSW and WA, both publish rolling digital roadmaps. myGov needs to shift closer to best practice to provide transparency and confidence. Australians deserve to know what is being planned for myGov in the future and when they can expect changes to occur.

A published 5-year rolling roadmap will address this. The roadmap should include a timetable for introducing new services and new features on myGov, as well as changes to existing services and features. Priorities for the road map should be set through the same process as used to develop budget priorities. These priorities should give particular attention to three core criteria:

- volume – how many people will benefit?
- readiness – how quickly will benefits be delivered to people?
- value – how much will people benefit? Does it address a known pain point for people?

The first roadmap should incorporate relevant recommendations from this report, especially the priorities outlined at Attachment C.

An important focus for investment should be broadening the range of services available through myGov. This will create additional value for users and government, and will properly embed myGov as a whole of government platform. The prime candidates for this are document execution, passport renewals, electoral enrolment services and the census. Further detail on these opportunities is provided in Volume 2 subchapter 5.3.

# BETTER SECURITY AND PRIVACY FOR MYGOV AND ACROSS THE ECONOMY

## RECOMMENDATION 6

**Accelerate development of Australia's national digital identity ecosystem, prioritising the protection of security, privacy, safety and other human rights with a view to government digital identity being safe, easy to use and secure.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

By mid-2023:

- rapidly progress legislation for a national digital identity system, the safe use of biometric matching, and a regulator with independent oversight, to put strong privacy, human rights and security safeguards in place for Australians and to allow states and territories to participate in the national system, including as an identity provider if they choose
- improve the user experience and inclusivity of myGovID, simplify the process of signing in with digital identity, and either merge the front ends of the myGovID and myGov mobile apps or rebrand myGovID
- confirm charging and liability models for the Australian Government identity exchange, incentivising government agencies (including states and territories) to make full use of digital identity
- simplify the roles and responsibilities for digital identity across the Australian Government, offering a single point of engagement for external participants and considering whether agency roles for policy and delivery could be consolidated

By end-2023:

- begin transition to using digital identity to sign into government services, moving the management of the 'links' between a user and member services out of myGov and into the digital identity exchange
- ensure that anyone who wants a myGovID can get one, including people without a passport, and offer alternative methods to verify people without sufficient identity documentation
- deliver a national framework for the interoperability of credentials across jurisdictions and the economy and introduce legislation to progressively prohibit unnecessary collection and storage of personal information and identity documents across Australia
- require all federal government digital services to use the Australian Government identity exchange, so Australians can be assured their government-issued digital identity will be accepted for a service

By mid-2024:

- with user consent, use digital identity 'attribute providers' to make linking to services easier and give users the choice to store extra attributes in myGov.

Related findings: 5, 7

Further expanded in Volume 2: Chapter 3 – You and your information are safe.

Following significant cyber security breaches in Australia in late-2022, the Minister for Government Services requested the Panel look closely at digital identity. Throughout the audit, the Panel have also noted the increasing inseparability between digital government services and the need for secure ways for Australians to prove who they are online.

Government should prioritise digital identity as the primary way to sign into government digital services. This will address the problem of sometimes duplicate myGov accounts. It should also move the 'links' between users and government services out of myGov and into the digital identity exchange. Adopting a single authentication ecosystem for government will lay solid foundations to deliver secure and simple government services over the coming decades.

This will be a complex and lengthy change to make: the transition will require great care to ensure Australians are not left behind and to ensure Australians' privacy, security and other human rights are protected. However, investing further in myGov without acting on this issue will lead to further fragmentation, leaving it to Australians to do the hard work to bridge the gap.

Several actions are needed to achieve this goal. First, government must do more to give all Australians the choice to obtain a 'strong' digital identity, including using alternative verification methods like community referees, so users without enough documentation can still get a myGovID.

Second, government needs to urgently legislate for the digital identity framework and the safe use of one-to-one facial biometric matching. This will provide enduring privacy and security safeguards for Australians, establish independent regulatory oversight, and pave the way for Australians to use driver licences to set up a 'strong' digital identity. Once legislation is in place, any state or territory with an accredited identity provider should be permitted to join the national identity exchange, providing choice for users.

Third, government should drastically improve the experience of setting up and using digital identity. Significant uplift to the user experience of myGovID will fix common user frustrations and remove dead ends where people get stuck. Streamlining the sign in and consent process into a reusable 'widget' (for example, a pop-up window within myGov) will help users sign in faster without leaving the service they are trying to use.

Government should consider merging the front ends of myGov and myGovID into a single mobile app. Whilst this would resolve widely aired confusion between the two apps, we understand this would be a costly exercise, and may cause added confusion for business users. An alternative to this could be to rebrand myGovID, positioning it as a distinctly separate government offering to myGov.

myGov should expand its role as an attribute provider, so people can choose to store personal details in myGov and use these to streamline the process of linking to new services with their digital identity. Uplifting existing services, such as Medicare, to become attribute providers will allow people to choose to bring together data from multiple government agencies to streamline services without storing it in one central place.

A national interoperability framework for digital credentials should be quickly progressed with states and territories and the private sector, setting standards for the issuance, content and verification of digital credentials. Once this has been established, government should pass legislation to progressively prohibit the storage of Australians' personal identity details by government and non-government organisations.

# MODERN GOVERNANCE PUTTING AUSTRALIANS FIRST

## RECOMMENDATION 7

**Introduce by mid-2023 citizen-centred governance and operational arrangements for myGov and myGovID to overcome government siloes and drive inclusion and performance.**

The governance arrangements for myGov and myGovID (separate to the government's broader digital identity system governance), should include:

- A **joint ministerial committee** comprising the Minister for Government Services and Minister for Finance, and relevant policy Ministers to make funding investment decisions and prioritise the services and capabilities to be onboarded to myGov
- An **independently chaired Advisory Board** comprising government and non-government members, to provide formal advice to the ministerial group, and oversight and assurance of myGov against its commitments to citizens.
- A **myGov Design Authority** to prioritise new capabilities and services for myGov, through a backlog of features, governing use and application of the Design System and ensuring a consistent experience and architecture is maintained across the myGov ecosystem.
- An **Ethics and Inclusion Committee** comprising external experts and government representatives to review inclusion, safety, privacy, and transparency of myGov, including performance, risk assessments and design of features.

The operational arrangements for myGov and myGovID should include:

- A **myGov Policy Owner**, accountable for the overall myGov product and ecosystem. As a separate entity to the delivery owner, the policy owner will oversee the myGov strategy, and monitor and regulate the myGov system, ensuring myGov and member services are compliant with the service charter and legislation. They will also chair the myGov Design Authority.
- **myGov and myGovID Delivery Owners**, responsible for the delivery and operation of the myGov and myGovID platforms, implementing priorities set by the Ministers and Design Authority, and ensuring technical requirements are delivered and operated as needed. They will also be members of the myGov Design Authority.
- **Member Service Owners**, each accountable for the experience and integration of their services linked to myGov, ensuring their obligations are met and contributing to the priorities of myGov. They will also be members of the Design Authority.

In the medium-term, the Government could also consider similar organisational arrangements to those in NSW with a central department responsible for strategy, policy and regulatory requirements across all government services, complemented by an agency delivering services on behalf of Government.

Related findings: 10

Further expanded in Volume 2: Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- Central governance is expanded across digital services

Governance arrangements for myGov do not place users at the centre of planning, development and implementation. Each individual agency brings a focus on their users but fails to recognise the collective impact of government on Australians. This failure to 'reverse the lens' is a major impediment to myGov delivering better value.

Financing arrangements are part of the problem (see Recommendation 5). But better checks and balances are also needed at a governance level to ensure that the 'citizen' view is not lost.

At the heart of these arrangements, lies establishment of an independently chaired advisory board, new design authority and ethics and inclusion committee. These bodies will be charged taking a 'user-centric' view of myGov's development and its performance and will feed into ministerial decision-making at both a technical and strategic level. Importantly, involvement of First Nations people will be approached in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.[40] More detail on the proposed arrangements, including the rationale and membership of the groups can be found at Chapter 5 of Volume 2.

In relation to the operational arrangements, it will be critical for the Policy, Delivery and Member Service owners work collaboratively. Policy measures contemplated by Departments need to be designed to work within a carefully stewarded service delivery system, for example, where a policy initiative is related to a life event the policy design should factor in how it will be experienced in the broader life event service model.

There is a risk, of course, of creating too much governance that will just get in the way. However, these arrangements recognise the importance of working against the natural tendency to focus on individual portfolio interests and that myGov delivers services to more than 20 million Australians. Each body has a unique role, and brings unique value, to governing myGov as a national piece of infrastructure. In most cases, the arrangements build on existing mechanisms (for example, Services Australia already has an internal ethics committee).

As in many areas to do with service delivery, NSW has taken a bold lead which others are now seeking to emulate. Down-the-track there would be merit in the Australian Government considering whether similar arrangements should be adopted for the Australian Government. For now, however, Government should move quickly to establish new governance arrangements for myGov.

40 National Agreement on Closing the Gap, July 2020, accessed December 2022 via <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>

# WORKING WITH STATES AND TERRITORIES

## RECOMMENDATION 8

**Partner with the states and territories on a five-year plan to make it easy for people to find and do what they need to across all levels of government.**

To achieve this, the Government should prioritise:

- myGov providing comprehensive information and checklists for life events, incorporating state and territory services (starting with recovering from a disaster, death of loved one and birth of a child)
- urgent implementation of a national approach to digital identity, the key enabler of joined-up services (see Recommendation 6)
- along with the states and territories, agree a set of relevant standards to facilitate the interoperability
  of digital services across the Federation
- sharing interoperable verifiable credentials between the online services and apps of different jurisdictions (e.g. Drivers' license, Medicare Card, Seniors Card, Occupational Licenses held in the wallet of app people choose)
- a roadmap of states and territories who wish to onboard services directly to myGov
- Proofs of Concept for joined-up life event services.

Related findings: 10

Further expanded in Volume 2:

Chapter 1 – myGov is intuitive, seamless and tailored:

- You can reply on myGov to find what you need
- Tailored information and services anticipate your needs with choice and transparency

Chapter 3 – You and your information are safe

Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- All three levels of government working together on a national asset

The ultimate promise of myGov relies on all jurisdictions coming together on the design and delivery of services for Australians. This is easier said, than done.

Life event analysis quickly shows that in many, if not all major life events, Australians need to deal with more than one level of government. The pursuit of services designed for people should not stop simply because of lines drawn on a political map more than 100 years ago. However, states and territories are at different stages of digital maturity and have diverse priorities and resourcing levels. In the same way as the Australian Government, the priorities, strategy and funding of state and territory governments can also change. All of this means that a pragmatic approach is needed to collaboration with other jurisdictions on the development of myGov.

Government should seek to work with the states and territories to develop a 5-year plan to make it easier for people to find and do what they need to across levels of government. This plan should be pragmatic and action oriented – focusing on areas of high national priority (e.g. digital identity, recognition of digital credentials) or where progress can be made quickly without major cost (e.g. checklists for life events).

# WORLD CLASS TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPORT FOR AGENCIES

## RECOMMENDATION 9

**Design and build myGov in alignment with a refreshed and enforced Australian Government Architecture, incorporating the Design System and the Service Standard.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

- by mid-2023, refresh and enforce the Australian Government Architecture (including through the governance arrangements in recommendation 7)
- implement a cross agency monitoring framework within the AGA to capture user experience and performance outcomes for data-driven decision making
- move more quickly to a standardised interoperable technology architecture for myGov which is reusable by other government agencies
- with advice from the Australian Cyber Security Centre, design and build myGov 'in the open' with a published design system, technology principles and integration standards, including by ensuring that code is open source
- implement a holistic approach to assessing and maintaining the cyber security and resilience of myGov and its member services; and managing and responding to cyber security incidents should they occur (consistent with existing national crisis management arrangements)
- work towards myGov technology being securely interoperable with non-government services that citizens already use (e.g. wallets and calendars).

Related findings: 8

Further expanded in Volume 2:

Chapter 1 – myGov is intuitive, seamless and tailored

- There's a familiar and intuitive experience of government

Chapter 4 – A modern delivery engine:

- Standards support 'plug and play' and reusability

Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- Central governance and authority expanded across digital services
- Government has the skills and capability to delivery world leading digital services
- myGov is a learning system

Executing on the vision for an expanded myGov connected with great government digital services requires a step-change in the collective digital delivery capability across government.

To guide this change, government should dust off the Australian Government Architecture and give it teeth. This includes an updated Service Standard to set the quality bar high for government services. The Design System should be revived and funded to help all agencies deliver services with a high standard of usability and accessibility.

**The Australian Government Architecture, Design System and Design Standard**

The DTA's Australian Government Architecture (AGA) is a "decision-making and policy framework that helps agencies develop scalable, secure, and resilient digital capabilities." It provides a structure for agencies to access the various strategies, policies and standards available to align their design and delivery practices to deliver more consistent and connected government services.

The Digital Service Standard provides guidance on best practice principles to help agencies design and build digital services that are simple, clear and fast for Australians. Launched in 2016, the Digital Service Standard (DSS) published a set of 13 criteria for Government delivery agencies to follow to deliver services that are "simple, clear and fast". Criteria 6 of the DSS covers the need to "build the service with responsive design methods using common design patterns and the style guide."

In 2018, the DTA released the Australian Government Design System (AGDS) which provided the fundamental design elements of a government website – designed, developed and ready for agencies to use. Rather than 'reinventing the wheel', a new website can be delivered in a fraction of the time, and for a joined-up system like myGov it would deliver consistent user experience. However, with no mandate, uptake was limited with only 48 Government website adoptions (at August 2020), and many agencies across Government continued to use their own in-house design systems, including Services Australia.

The DTA decommissioned the AGDS in 2021 (designsystem.gov.au), but many of the patterns live on in other places. For example, Design System AU (designsystemau.org) have established an "open community of developers, designers, accessibility experts and others" to support the codebase.

Collaboration between myGov and the rest of government will become easier with more working in the open, cutting through the natural communication barriers within government and across jurisdictions. myGov should routinely publish its roadmaps, backlogs, documentation and research in public. Wherever possible, this should also include most of its source code. This is a path well-trodden by other leading digital governments worldwide.

As myGov's role expands, a strong security posture becomes even more critical. A single point of accountability should be established for the overarching security and resilience of government services. This would recognise that increased connectivity of government services will present unique risks that cannot be observed or managed by any one agency alone. myGov should be the first Australian Government platform to offer bug bounties, drawing upon the expertise of external security experts to keep myGov secure.

The delivery machine should make greater use of data and insights to improve and better manage digital services. An overarching monitoring framework is required to enable a full understanding of performance and benefits, and for longitudinal analysis across the total experience of Australians. This should include management of performance, benefits and social indicators, and consider broader contextual research to ensure against inequality or bias, safeguarding diverse Australian communities from harm.

## RECOMMENDATION 10

**Services Australia develop and adopt a new world-class approach to service and support to government agencies utilising myGov.**

To achieve this, the Government should:

- by the end of 2023, implement a platform operating model around the needs of government agencies, including:
  - helping government agencies easily prototype, test integrations, and go live with platform capabilities using self-service tools
  - a dedicated government support team for onboarding and throughout operational use
  - high quality public documentation and integration libraries for each platform capability
  - a real-time online website for platform status and uptime
  - service standards for both the myGov Service Owner and Member Service Owners
- once this operating model is settled, consider incorporating the approach into the Australian Government Architecture to facilitate broader adoption
- prioritise the reuse and uplift of existing whole-of-government technology capabilities as part of myGov's platform offering
- increase the speed-to-market of new features and improvements through the adoption of leading product management approaches and improvements to software release processes to support continuous delivery
- support and grow the community of government users of myGov to build greater understanding of myGov's capabilities across government, and for myGov to lead by example for this community in the design and delivery of digital service.

Related findings: 8, 9, 10

Further expanded in Volume 2:

Chapter 4 – A modern delivery engine:

- Standards support 'plug and play' and reusability
- A high quality onboarding experience for agencies
- The most agile and responsive part of the service delivery chain

Chapter 5 – Enabling future delivery:

- Government has the skills and capability to delivery world leading digital services
- myGov is a learning system

myGov's primary value lies in what it can deliver for individual Australians. But if implemented well, myGov can deliver major benefits for government too.

Agencies should want to choose to engage with myGov based on the value it delivers to them. Removing the financial barriers to engaging with myGov would be a good start. But other changes are needed too. As it stands, myGov is a long way from being seen as the digital delivery partner of choice it needs to be by other agencies. Government needs to chart a delicate course between insisting agencies engage with myGov more actively (to deliver value to Australians) and ensuring myGov provides the support needed to encourage them to do so. An ineffective monopoly within government is the last thing Australians need.

Three major changes are needed. First, myGov's platform operating model needs to be built around the needs of government agencies. Second, myGov needs to increase the 'speed-to-market' of new features and improvements to avoid being seen as 'second in class'. Third, and most importantly, myGov needs to step up the support they give other agencies to engage with and onboard to myGov. myGov needs to reduce the costs agencies face in becoming 'members' of myGov and work with them as clients and partners, rather than applicants.

# Implementation

The Panel acknowledges implementing these recommendations is a significant body of work. Some opportunities identified in the recommendations are easier to address and could be implemented more quickly than others, and some should be prioritised for earlier implementation due to their potential to deliver broad improvements for all Australians.

The Panel has identified four funding priorities for implementation (refer to Attachment C):

1. **Improve myGov for Australians** – essential upgrades to the myGov platform to enhance the usability, functions, and performance of myGov.
2. **Accelerate digital identity and credentials** – urgently progress a national approach to the interoperability and use of digital identity and sharing of credentials.
3. **Add new government services** – to manifest service expansion and cement myGov as the primary front door for digital services.
4. **Deliver the future foundations** – for ongoing, world-class digital services through funding, governance and operational arrangements.

*myGov User Audit – Volume 2: Detailed Analysis* includes potential actions that could assist government to implement the Panel's recommendations. These actions are intended as guidance and are not exhaustive.

Given the importance of myGov to all Australians, and the issues and opportunities we have highlighted, the Panel also recommends the Government demonstrate its practical commitment by publishing its response to the audit and an implementation plan by 1 July 2023.

# Attachments


A Terms of Reference

B Evolving the user experience

Delivering for government

C Immediate funding priorities

D Illustrative myGov performance framework

## ATTACHMENT A

# Terms of Reference

> *An Albanese Labor Government will launch a user audit of the myGov government services digital portal.*
>
> *The user audit will help identify what changes and improvements are needed and assist an Albanese Government in strengthening the portal. Labor will also guarantee myGov user data is retained within Australia.*
>
> − myGov User Audit election commitment[1]

myGov is the Australian Government's primary digital services platform. With over 25 million accounts, it has been instrumental in supporting Australians to access nationally critical government services online through a central secure portal.

The platform was introduced in 2013 and now connects users with 15 services across federal and state governments. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital services, heightened expectations of being able to transact with governments digitally, and dramatically increased the use of myGov.

### AIM OF THE AUDIT

The myGov User Audit will consider the user experience, functions and performance of myGov. It will do this in the context of a large and complex whole-of-government services ecosystem, with the aim of shaping the future direction of myGov and its connection with government services.

The User Audit will deliver findings and recommendations to inform the future design of myGov as an enduring capability that provides proactive intuitive services for people interacting with government.

### REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

The User Audit will be overseen by the following expert panel and supported by an APS Senior Executive and Secretariat:

- Chair: David Thodey
- Panel Members: Professor Edward Santow, Professor Emily Banks, Amit Singh, Julie Inman Grant

The panel Chair will regularly consult with the Minister for Government and the Minister for Finance.

Minister Shorten will attend key panel meetings.

### TIMEFRAME AND APPROACH

The User Audit will commence in September 2022 and conclude by December 2022.

The panel will consider:

1. current and potential future customer needs and expectations of government services, including across jurisdictions
2. barriers to providing a consistent whole-of-government(s) user experience which enables citizens to access services quickly and easily without needing to understand how government is structured or having to provide the same information multiple times

1 https://www.alp.org.au/policies/mygov-user-audit

3. how myGov has performed to date, including usability and availability, and the improvements delivered and planned through the Enhanced myGov program
4. existing analysis and research completed on myGov and wider digital delivery of government services, including the findings of the Independent Review of the Australian Public Service and Australia's digital government strategies
5. how myGov operates within the whole-of-government digital and service delivery ecosystem, including Digital Identity and other government apps and online services, and what services, capabilities or customer experiences that could integrate with myGov in future
6. global best practice in digital service delivery in the private and public sectors.

The panel will provide recommendations on:

1. the future user experience and functions of myGov as a trusted, secure and seamless experience for accessing government services for all Australians, including at key transitions in their lives
2. the technology and service delivery principles and direction to enable myGov to scale, integrate and interoperate across government(s)
3. supporting the delivery of the future state, including:
   - what commitments government should make to citizens about services provided through myGov, and
   - approaches to planning, prioritisation, standards, accountabilities, governance and funding
4. short, medium and long term priorities, including the scope of the Enhanced myGov Program.

## CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with users, jurisdictions, the Australian Public Service and peak bodies will inform the recommendations. The Digital Transformation Agency will form part of the secretariat and be consulted throughout the Audit.

## DELIVERABLES

A report will be provided to the Minister for Government Services and the Minister for Finance by December 2022.

## ATTACHMENT B

# Evolving the user experience

**LEN**

MYGOV

ATO

MEDICARE

INCOME SUPPORT

Len is a delivery driver in his 60s. He uses myGov to access the ATO to do his yearly tax return and Medicare after doctor appointments. Len injured his shoulder while gardening. His GP advises that he won't be able to work for 3 months. He needs to find out what income support is available while he is unable to work.

| **From** (current myGov) | | **To** (future myGov) |
|---|---|---|
| Len is looking for information on injury affecting his ability to work but has found it is overwhelming. What he needs is spread across many government websites and there are inconsistencies in advice. | EASY TO FIND | Len knows myGov is the place to go for information on government services and looks there when he gets injured. He finds a simple checklist to make sure he has considered everything he needs to. |
| Len has forgotten his password and needs to create a new account and link to ATO and Medicare again.<br>For his injury, Len needs to link to Centrelink for the first time. He is asked lots of questions which are hard to answer. | SIMPLE LINKING | Len uses digital identity to sign-in to myGov so he doesn't need to remember a password. He doesn't need to answer many questions to link to Centrelink because of the strength of his digital identity. |
| Len calls myGov Helpdesk for help with his new account but they tell him to call ATO and Services Australia. He has to go to the end of the queue each time. | HELP IS THERE WHEN I NEED IT | Len calls one number for help with everything to do with myGov. For higher level support he is offered a transfer to the right agency without needing to retell his story. |
| As Len navigates between myGov, ATO, Centrelink and Medicare he feels as though he is moving between different websites. | CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE | Although Len hasn't made a claim with Centrelink before, he finds it similar to his tax return process and easy to do. |
| Len can see his name and linked services on his homepage. | TAILORED TO MY NEEDS | Len is offered relevant services based on the data he shares with myGov. |
| Len has trouble finding a letter he needs so he gives his daughter his login details so that she can help him. | SOMEONE CAN ACT ON MY BEHALF | Len can set his daughter as a nominee to support his application process without compromising the security of his account. |

| **From** (current myGov) | | **To** (future myGov) |
|---|---|---|
| Len can find his messages in his inbox but they look different depending on who they are from.<br>Len has to swap between member services to see all his tasks and appointments. | **EASY TO MANAGE** | Len's messages appear in the same format and style. He can book appointments in one place and generate a reminder in his personal calendar.<br>Len can see his tasks from all member services in one view and knows he isn't missing anything. |
| Len chooses to receive notifications by email and wants to see who the message is from.<br>Len does not get much information from the email notification except that he should log into myGov which makes him worry that he has done something wrong. | **TIMELY AND RELEVANT NOTIFICATIONS** | Len can see in his email notification that he has a message from Centrelink regarding his application. He can see that it was successful and there is nothing he needs to do. He can log into myGov if he would like more information. |
| Len updates his new address because he can't see which address is currently on file and he moved house last year. He does not know if all the member services are aware of this update now | **SIMPLE TO UPDATE MY INFORMATION** | Len can see what address is on file and when he updates it, he gets confirmation about whether it was successful.<br>When Len fills out an application with Centrelink, he is asked if he would like to use this address. |
| Len accepted the terms and conditions when he created his myGov account. He doesn't know what data of his is shared with what agencies, if any. | **CHOICE AND CONTROL OF MY DATA** | Len can set his preference for data sharing. He is nervous about data sharing so opts for a lower level and can see what tailoring he can still expect. |

# ATTACHMENT B

# Delivering for government

**LAUREN**

MYGOV

ACCESSIBLE SERVICE

THROUGH LIFE EVENTS

GOVERNANCE

Lauren is a Chief Information Officer (CIO) in a medium-sized Australian Government agency. Lauren is responsible for service delivery and is interested in making the agency's services easily accessible to her customers and available through life events in myGov. Lauren is interested in connecting services to myGov to reuse its capabilities and make discoverable to more people.

| **From** (current myGov) | | **To** (future myGov) |
|---|---|---|
| Lauren cannot find which services and capabilities are planned for myGov in current or future years to assess suitability for services she wants to connect. | **A PUBLISHED 5-YEAR ROADMAP** | Lauren has access to the online 5-year strategic myGov roadmap of upcoming capabilities, services and milestones so she can analyse against her services. |
| Lauren's services are delivered through her own agency's technical architecture to the myGov system, making it difficult for her services to connect to myGov. | **CONSISTENT INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT ONBOARDING SERVICES** | Lauren offers services based on whole of Government Architecture, Digital Service Standard and Design System to enable a government-wide approach to digital service delivery.<br>Lauren and her agency are supported by myGov capability teams to help her staff make the required technical changes to connect their services to myGov. |
| Lauren seeks internal funding to uplift her services to architecture that aligns to myGov, and pay onboarding costs to connect her services to myGov.<br>She is concerned about other funding pressures across her portfolio and her inability to find offsets for new services to connect to myGov. | **FUNDING SUPPORT FOR SERVICES** | Lauren will bid for funding through the myGov Development Fund to uplift her services and undertake the onboarding process, without needing to find offsets. |
| Lauren is concerned that she will lose control over service delivery when she connects her services to myGov.<br>She is concerned that the services her customers need, and the capabilities they are dependent on will not be prioritised, causing pain to her customer's digital experience. | **CROSS AGENCY GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING** | Lauren takes accountability as a member service owner and becomes a member of the design authority. She is involved in the decision-making process for myGov, and will have visibility of the prioritisation process for onboarding services and capabilities. |

| **From** (current myGov) | | **To** (future myGov) |
|---|---|---|
| Lauren measures the performance and satisfaction of her services through her agency performance framework.<br>Lauren finds that there are fragmented approaches to measuring performance across services and the ability to assess her services with myGov against others is limited. | **PERFORMANCE METRICS AND DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS** | Lauren measures success of her services through a consistent whole of Government measurements framework.<br>Lauren is able to gather data across the myGov system, and her services to provide timely advice and prioritise service improvements. |
| Lauren is concerned her customers won't understand what myGov is, or how it is used to access her agency's services, so she invests in a communications plan to articulate. | **A PUBLISHED COMMITMENT TO AUSTRALIANS** | Lauren accesses and nudges others towards the myGov customer service charter that sets out myGov's commitment to Australians and what it will and won't do to communicate its offering. |
| Lauren is charged and invoiced from myGov for each of her member service transactions. Lauren is concerned about the high fees endured and needs to budget expenses to cover the ongoing transaction-based charges while budgeting to process services and continue to provide operational support. | **CENTRALLY FUNDED WITH 4-YEAR AGENCY CHARGING PAUSE** | Lauren is not charged by myGov, as transaction-based fees are paused for at least 4 years, as myGov is operated under a central sustainment funding model. |

## ATTACHMENT C

# Immediate funding priorities

It is not enough for government to describe its intention for myGov.

The panel recognises the government will shortly consider proposals for the 23-24 Budget.

Given our recommendations relating to funding and a roadmap, the panel suggests four areas of focus as immediate funding priorities.

### 1 IMPROVE MYGOV FOR AUSTRALIANS

- Streamline the linking of services to a myGov account
- Make it is easy to update contact details across all member services and let people know the outcome of updates
- Give people choice to provide more information to get tailored offerings from government services
- Provide life event checklists to help connect services across commonwealth, state and territory and local government
- Allow people to see and manage their business with government including financial obligations, tasks and appointments in one place
- Make notifications, messages and other communications from government simple and consistent using myGov
- Offer a new capability for people to nominate someone else they trust to help them by acting on their behalf
- Offer language translation for information and services available through myGov

### 2 ACCELERATE DIGITAL ID AND CREDENTIALS

- Resolve myGovID usability issues
- Streamline verification by consolidating myGovID into the myGov app
- Provide alternate verification methods for Australians without sufficient documentation to get a digital ID
- Improve myGov account management including account recovery using digital ID
- Accelerate the use and interoperability of digital credentials
- Resolve sign in issues by making digital ID the universal way to access government services

### 3 ADD NEW SERVICES THAT BROADEN WHAT MYGOV IS USED FOR

- Renewing a passport
- Enrolling to vote and maintaining enrolment details
- Access the Census or other ABS surveys
- Provide a digital alternative for executing legal documents like statutory declaration and deeds

### 4 DELIVER THE FUTURE FOUNDATIONS

- Refresh Australian Government architecture, including developing and publish a Design System to accelerate common design standards, patterns and promote reuse
- Establish new governance and operational arrangements
- Develop legislation to enshrine myGov and digital ID as a national service delivery infrastructure
- Establish a myGov development fund for onboarding of new services and improvements to existing government services
- Establish and publish a myGov charter, roadmap and performance framework, and deliver a public dashboard
- Develop a world-class model to support government agencies utilising myGov

# ATTACHMENT D
# Illustrative myGov performance framework

## EXAMPLE: GOVERNMENT DIGITAL SERVICE DELIVERY MEASUREMENTS

These example measurements should be considered in the development of a government digital service delivery measurement framework, and incorporated into the Australian Government Architecture to apply consistently across all digital services.

The framework should be developed through the Design Authority and co-designed with the proposed ethics and inclusion committee (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.2) to ensure that the needs of Australians are being considered. The framework should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is still meeting the needs of all Australians.

### Indicator 1 – Australians can easily access the digital service

| Measurement | Indicative Target |
|---|---|
| 1.1 Proportion (number) of people who successfully complete the service they need* | 95% |
| 1.2 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/neutral that the online service is easy to use | 95% |
| 1.3 Compliance of myGov against Accessibility WCAG 2.1 AA | 100% |
| 1.4 Proportion of time the online service is available | 99% |
| 1.5 Average system responsiveness load time (the time it takes between pressing a button, and the page being loaded and ready for use) | 3 seconds |
| 1.6 Proportion (number) of people successfully linking their services | 95% |

### Indicator 2 – Australians are satisfied with the digital service and trust and feel confident using it

| Measurement | Indicative Target |
|---|---|
| 2.1 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/neutral that they are satisfied with the digital service* | |
| 2.2 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/neutral that the online service is trustworthy* | 80% |
| 2.3 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/neutral that they feel in control of their information* | 80% |
| 2.4 Proportion (number) of people who would choose to use the digital service again (over other options)* | 95% |
| 2.5 Proportion (number) of people who are unable to complete a service (dropout rates)* | <10% |

*Currently, each service measures its own services against a variety of different metrics and there is no consistency across the myGov ecosystem. Therefore, no existing measurements have been captured to date to include in the above table.*

* It is important to set individual targets for different sectors of the community, including according to demographic factors (e.g. age and gender), priority populations and needs, and track against each as well as the whole.

## EXAMPLE: MYGOV MEASUREMENTS

myGov should collect and analyse the measurements, aligned to and demonstrating progress against the commitments outlined in the proposed service charter (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1). Example measurements have been outlined below, however the indicators and measurements should be developed in close consultation with government and the ethics and inclusion committee to ensure that the needs of Australians are being appropriately captured.

### Indicator 1 – myGov is consistently available to Australians

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Proportion of time the myGov system is available | 99.95% availability (as per myGov architecture v4.0) | 100% |

### Indicator 2 – Australians can access myGov easily

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 System responsiveness load time (the time it takes between pressing a button, and the page being loaded and ready for use) | 3 seconds | 3 seconds |
| 2.2 Number of concurrent users the systems allows | 10% growth per year (as per myGov architecture v4.0) | 500,000 |
| 2.3 Proportion (number) of active myGov accounts | No target | 25.5 million |
| 2.4 Proportion (number) of successful logins to myGov | 100% | 94.5% |
| 2.5 Proportion (number) of users who need to reset their account | <1% | Not measured |

### Indicator 3 – All Australians can use myGov

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that they are satisfied with myGov* | 90% | Not measured |
| 3.2 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that they are satisfied with member service/s* | 90% | Not currently reported in the context of myGov |
| 3.3 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that myGov is easy to use* | 90% | 80% (595 of 744 surveyed) |
| 3.4 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that member service/s are easy to use* | 90% | Not currently reported in the context of myGov |
| 3.5 Compliance of myGov against Accessibility WCAG 2.1 AA | 100% | 82% |
| 3.6 Compliance of the myGov app against Accessibility WCAG2.1 AA | 100% | 89% |

### Indicator 4 – Australians can access the services they require

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 Proportion (number) of people with a 'standard' digital identity | No target | 4 million |
| 4.2 Proportion (number) of people with a 'strong' digital identity* | No target | 3.4 million |
| 4.3 Proportion (number) of people who have successfully linked their myGovID to their myGov account* | 100% | 10% (2.5 million) |
| 4.4 Number of myGov services available | No target | 15 |

### Indicator 5 – Australians are kept up to date on their dealings with Government

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 5.1 Proportion (number) of inbox messages read (broken down by member service) | 95% | Currently measured by each member service:<br>Centrelink 23% (9 million of 32 million)*<br>Child Support 65% (362,000 of 553,000)*<br>Medicare 96% (965,000 of 1 million)*<br>*Period between 3/9/22 to 6/12/22 |
| 5.2 Proportion (number) of notifications resulting in a click through to myGov (compared to those who ignored the notification)* | 95% | Feature not yet released |

### Indicator 6 – Australians trust myGov and feel confident using it

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 6.1 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that myGov is trustworthy* | 90% | Not measured |
| 6.2 Proportion (number) of people agreeing/strongly agreeing/ neutral that they feel in control of their myGov information* | 90% | Not measured |
| 6.3 Proportion (number) of user complaints received | <1% | Not measured |

### Indicator 7 – Australians can access support from myGov when they need it

| Measurement | Indicative Target | Current State |
|---|---|---|
| 7.1 Proportion (number) of queries related to myGov that are resolved at time of contact by other channels (phone, shopfront, digital assistant) | 90% | Not measured |

* It is important to set individual targets for different sectors of the community, including according to demographic factors (e.g. age and gender), priority populations and needs, and track against each as well as the whole.