



Critical National Infrastructure myGov User Audit

January 2023

Volume 2: Detailed analysis

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Introduction

Volume 2 of the report contains the detailed analysis and evidence underpinning the Panel's findings and recommendations. It can be read as a companion piece to Volume 1, providing a deeper dive into the Panel's assessment of the usability, functions and performance of myGov.

As outlined in Volume 1, the Panel's assessment was informed by existing user research, analysis and data as well as extensive engagement with users, industry, peak bodies and government through surveys, submissions, roundtables, and focus groups. Anchoring the Panel's assessment are principles focused on both citizen and societal value – that myGov should be simple, beneficial, fair, trustworthy, efficient and leading.

Volume 2 consists of 5 chapters, with detailed analysis focused on:

- delivering intuitive, tailored services through myGov (Chapter 1)
- ensuring no one is left behind in digital service delivery (Chapter 2)
- keeping people and their information safe (Chapter 3)
- the requirements for myGov to operate on a modern technology platform (Chapter 4)
- the governance, accountability and funding arrangements to deliver the future myGov (Chapter 5).

Each chapter contains a series of subchapters broken down into the following sections.

Features of a desired future state

This section outlines the elements or 'features' of the potential future state for myGov to meet the needs and expectations of Australians. It paints an aspirational picture of the features of a great service experience for myGov. The language used throughout this section should not be inferred to mean this exact experience will be the future of myGov. The objective is to provide a vision for what myGov could be if it were to deliver on its potential.

Current state

While significant improvements have already been made to myGov, the Panel has heard there are still numerous challenges with the platform. In contrast to the future state, this section outlines the existing user experience of the usability, functions and performance of myGov – both the good and the bad.

Gaps and actions

This section highlights the gaps between the current state and the future state and potential actions to bridge the gap and deliver the ideal experience for myGov – both for Australians and society as a whole. Actions are intended as additional guidance. The panel's formal recommendations are outlined in Volume 1.

Chapter 1:

myGov is intuitive, seamless and tailored

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1.1 YOU CAN RELY ON MYGOV TO FIND WHAT YOU NEED

It is not always easy for Australians who need to interact with governments to find the information and services they need. The extensive range of government services available and information spread across multiple sources can leave people confused and unsure about what is available to them and what they need to do to access different services.

The recent investment in myGov introduced simple information about services based on life events and how to access them easily. Whilst a good start, more is needed to make myGov the straightforward, central and reliable way for Australians to access services, payments and support to help them at different stages in their lives.

Features of a desired future state

Being able to easily discover and access entitlements and services based on a person's circumstances creates a fair and equitable way to interact with government. Eighty per cent of users want services that are connected across departments, brought together in a single place that allows them to conduct their business with government efficiently.¹

When people are not sure how to find or access a particular government service, an improved myGov serves as the reliable place they go. Australians get information and navigate to services without needing to know which department or agency they need to go to. In some cases, these services are also be offered within myGov as a complete transaction, without needing to go to separate government websites.

Case study: Australian Data and Digital Council² Initiative – Birth of a child³

The Australian Capital Territory Government and Services Australia are leading a pilot of linked up services related to the birth of a child. The pilot delivers a better experience for parents to engage with state, territory and Australian Government services about their new baby and enable easier access to health and other services from birth. Through data collection and information exchanges with trusted sources, it offers a seamless, digital end-to-end pathway for parents to register a newborn child with minimal interaction.

The birth of a child triggers a range of required activities, including registering the birth with Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM), obtaining a birth certificate, enrolling in Medicare and relevant social welfare services. In many cases, this requires new parents to provide the same information to multiple agencies at both state and territory and federal government levels. The birth of a child pilot proposes a 'tell us once' approach, aimed at reducing the burden of form filling and government interactions for new parents by re-using information that governments already hold.

Using myGov, parents can provide information about the newborn which is shared with state and territory and Australian Government agencies. The task appears on the user's myGov home page and asks for the name of the newborn. With consent, this information is shared with Medicare to get a new Medicare card, to Centrelink to commence parenting payments and myHealth Record to establish a digital health record for the newborn.

1 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

2 Now called Data and Digital Ministers Meeting

3 Australian Data and Digital Council, *State of the Data and Digital Nation Report – September 2020*, 2020, accessed via <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/state-data-digital-nation.pdf>
Services Australia, Birth of a Child Project [internal intranet], accessed December 2022

The life events approach, now commonly used internationally and within Australia by state jurisdictions, arranges information and services around important events, stages or periods in a person's life, rather than government structures. myGov includes raising kids, ageing, work, education and health and disability as information pages that are organised in a way that leads users to what they need by the user choosing the next step that is relevant to them. It also includes new life stages and events making it the place where people find what they need and offering services as well as static information.

Users who know where they need to go for a service are able to navigate to them directly, alternatively, they are able to go to myGov and find what they need based on the life event category (e.g. health, tax, work). Both avenues give Australians the same information and experience.

myGov is the centre of better integration between parts of government, using the life event framework to easily get to an outcome. For example, for those getting married and seeking a name change, myGov is able to guide people through all the things they need to do to make this change. There is also the ability to notify other linked member services of your update at the same time (refer to Volume 2, subchapter 1.5).

High volume services or information that individuals use regularly, such as Medicare Safety Net, Income Reporting or Income Tax Returns, can be accessed from the personalised homepage, reducing the time and effort to navigate to the service provider. Users can see their regularly used services available for ease of access.

Checklists help people manage tasks that involve multiple steps with different agencies. State and territory government and non-government services can also be included in these checklists to provide holistic support to the specific needs of the user.

Search and digital assistant functions further assist Australians to find information across all government services accessed through myGov and when used in authenticated sessions, optimise results based on the person's account and needs.

International Example: Denmark

Borger.dk is the Danish public sector's single-point-of-access portal for government and public authority information and online services. It integrates information, communication and transactions for easy navigation with services structured around life events. The portal has achieved over 90% user satisfaction and was ranked first overall in the 2022 UN e-government survey.⁴

Australia's federation, and specifically the fact that our federal, state and territory governments each exercise sovereign but sometimes-overlapping authority, creates some challenges in taking such a unified approach to government service delivery. While Australia's system is not unique, some other jurisdictions do not share this constitutional arrangement, an effective solution in another jurisdiction may not necessarily be perfectly replicable in Australia. Nevertheless, the high satisfaction achieved through Denmark's model of life events and a single point of access to government shows a potential way to deliver citizen-centric services.

⁴ Boston Consulting Group, *myGov User Audit Research Comprehensive Report, 2022* (unpublished)

Current state

COVID-19 dramatically accelerated digital adoption. In 2020-21, there were 1.4 billion online interactions across all government websites, an increase of 126 million on the previous year.⁵

Insights from the myGov program demonstrates consistent pain points people experience when using myGov and government websites, preventing them from finding what they need.⁶ These include:

- Not knowing where to go to find information.
- Not knowing how to find what they are eligible for.
- Information is spread across multiple sites.
- It is hard to find all the relevant information on a service or topic.
- Information is organised around government structures which users do not understand, and navigation of information is different across sites.
- Information is expressed in different and complex language.

Such difficulties can be time consuming, overwhelming and frustrating, and likely result in some Australians not being able to access services that they are entitled to. myGov needs to be smarter in driving people to the right agencies and services to find what they need.

While myGov provides a way to navigate to various parts of government, it still relies on the user to know what services are available online, which agency or department delivers which service and how to navigate the digital offering of each agency.

To address this, myGov has introduced life event content with direct links to complete a transaction where applicable. However, its success has been limited. Historically, myGov has been well known amongst Australians as an authentication portal to get to the agency a person needs to access, rather than as a discrete service provider.⁷ Also, people commonly use search engines to find what they need, which results in them being taken to a specific part of government and potentially missing other relevant information.

Gaps and actions

The recent upgrades to myGov and launch of the myGov app are good steps towards creating a primary front door for Australians to find, access and transact with government. Building on key life events will further help Australians to easily access the services they need.

Providing life event services involves increased collaboration and coordination among departments and agencies, but delivers significant benefits, improving the experience of users.⁸ Over time, this is likely to deliver value to government in policy design, providing a way to understand the impact of measures.

In the absence of an agreed life event framework, myGov has been using DTA's earlier GovX work as a guiding principle and learning from Services Australia's application of the life event framework information.⁹

5 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Digital Economy Strategy 2022 Update*, 2022

6 Services Australia, *Connected Services Current state Insights Map.v2.0*, 2021 (unpublished)

7 WhereTo, *myGov User Audit Research Report*, 2022 (unpublished)

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

9 Digital Transformation Agency, *5.20 GovX Common Pain Points*, 2021 (unpublished)

The earlier case to government highlighted 3 important or common journeys Australians experience, to trial a better connection to government: Looking for work; recovering from a disaster and supporting a family. Whilst myGov has made steps to connect the information related to these events, significant work is required to bring together digital services in the same way.

ACTION: DTA to lead agreement on life events governments should work together on, including states and territories. This should be prioritised based on the highest impact life events a person may experience.

ACTION: Identify high-volume interactions that Australians would like to access with a single click.

myGov should provide Australians with tools such as checklists to give users confidence they have considered all the information and services in relation to a life event. This could include information from Australian or state and territory government agencies that are not yet onboarded to myGov.

ACTION: Develop checklists with links to all the services/information that can assist in common life events.

ACTION: Incorporate information and links to state and territory government and community sector services (e.g., not-for-profit services for those affected by natural disasters).

1.2 THERE'S A FAMILIAR AND INTUITIVE EXPERIENCE OF GOVERNMENT

Accessing government services that differ in their look, feel and function creates difficulties for Australians. This often requires time and effort to work out how to navigate, interpret and take actions depending on the part of government people are dealing with. A consistent experience across myGov and member services is an important ingredient to make government services easier to understand and navigate.

Features of a desired future state

Ease of use across multiple digital services starts with consistency. All government service delivery accessed through myGov has a consistent look, feel, language and pattern of interaction to help reduce the 'seams' of government – the jarring shifts between services during a transaction. Through making experiences familiar, predictable and easy, myGov reduces complexity and cognitive load for people accessing digital services.¹⁰

A familiar and intuitive myGov experience includes:

- Services that simply work, in a recognisable and predictable way.
- Standardised capabilities that are available to all member services to meet their needs. This includes appointments, document upload function, and updating basic details that enable a user to have a consistent experience across agencies (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.4).
- A consistent design, with a branding framework for government service delivery. This gives Australians confidence they are securely within myGov, but also communicates which agency they are dealing with, especially when they are engaging with an agency that has unique powers or roles, like the ATO or ABS.

For Australians, this:

- **Simplifies**
 - using myGov and shortens the amount of time and effort they need to spend on their task, as they do not need to learn a new way of interacting online for each service.
- **Makes**
 - Make digital services more accessible, allowing more people to use them.
- **Provides**
 - Provide familiarity, even when engaging with new agencies, reducing frustration and confusion when interacting with government.
- **Offers**
 - Offer a recognised government identity, building confidence that different parts of government are working together to support them.

An open-source government design system, as part of the Australian Government Architecture, provides the building blocks for member services to deliver sensible and common user experiences. It guides the stylistic approach and product design, has reusable patterns and components for common tasks, and uses shared technology capabilities (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

¹⁰ Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA), *myGov User Audit advisory paper*, 2022 (unpublished)

'Accessibility by design', 'safety by design' and 'privacy by design' is inbuilt into the design system and the system continually improves as services are designed and tested with people that have diverse needs and priority populations. The Design System uses best practice user experience principles making it useful for Australians, accessible, and credible in comparison to public and private sectors. All agencies and departments are able to innovate within and contribute to the Design System, with all of government being able to benefit from new and improved ways of delivering for Australians.

Case study – Service NSW

For Service NSW, unified branding across interactions gives people the impression of interacting with government, not individual departments. This consistent look and feel spans within and outside of the Service NSW application so that when accessing other web pages after log-in, a user does not feel like they are in a completely new environment.¹¹

Service NSW have developed an open-source design system with an easy to integrate code base enabling a common style, look and feel. A comprehensive digital service toolkit provides a single, authoritative, source for all designers developing content or digital products and services for NSW government.

Current state

Although the look, feel and function for myGov has been recently revamped, with a new myGov smartphone app launched in early December 2022, the user experience when navigating between myGov and the member services is inconsistent. During round table meetings with health, civil Society and disability peak bodies, participants outlined the particular need for services to be consistent for people experiencing vulnerability, particularly during times of crisis or acute events where they are experiencing high cognitive load.

Over 70% of myGov users currently engage with more than one Government agency and at times they need to interact with multiple agencies at the same time.¹² Inconsistencies between different digital services often leaves people feeling confused and frustrated due to each federal agency controlling their own identity, design, channels, information and ways of communicating.

Many government agencies require Australians to undertake or complete the same type of action in different ways to access services. For example, people are asked to provide documents, complete a form, do an activity or book an appointment with many agencies. However, there is limited use of standard patterns or capabilities across government agencies, so agencies design and develop their own isolated product to meet their needs.

This is not only costly to government, but it also creates inconsistencies and confusion for users and leads to a disparity in the quality of service offered across government services.

The DTA established the Australian Government Design System in 2018 providing an opensource library for delivery agencies to reuse. The design system met web standards and aligned to the Digital Service Standard.¹³ However it was later decommissioned as various issues, including lack of authority and insufficient incentives to adopt meant it was not utilised by federal agencies and many continued to build out their own design system.¹⁴

11 Boston Consulting Group, *myGov User Audit Research Comprehensive Report, 2022* (unpublished)

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

13 Digital Transformation Agency, About the Digital Service Standard [website], accessed November 2022, <[https:// www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/about-digital-service-standard](https://www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/about-digital-service-standard)>

14 Department of Health, Design System [website], accessed November 2022, <www.designsystem.health.gov.au>
Digital.NSW, Design System [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/delivery/digital-service-toolkit/design-system>>

Gaps and actions

Australians are becoming overwhelmed with the volume of digital channels and service offers. A 2022 PWC Citizen survey found 46% of respondents believe the increased range of channels makes the process of accessing government services more confusing than ever before.¹⁵ It found that there is a need to consolidate channels, information, brands, messaging, operations and sources of truth.

myGov is well positioned to be the point of consolidation, as it is recognised as a central access point to government services.¹⁶ The audit's engagement through focus groups indicated that for many people myGov is performing well functionally and is recognised as being well laid out (calm, not overwhelming), relatively clear with simple language.¹⁷ There is an early indication that the myGov experience could mature to a primary identity for government service delivery.

The current bespoke design model is costly to government as there is a duplication in effort to design the same types of interactions. However, to move away from this model, there is also a cost to government which increases as fragmentation in design grows, making alignment in design a priority. Investment from government and standardisation of capabilities is necessary to provide an improved and familiar experience for users and realise long-term efficiencies in government service delivery.

ACTION: Government to provide authority and incentives for a common service delivery design with a framework for member services to specialise based on user needs, by 2024.

With many thinking that myGov also includes all the services accessed through myGov, it is important to uplift each service, so the experience of government is similar and predictable. A Design System that sets the standard for member service is an essential tool to achieve this. As well as providing the desired consolidation in design for Australians, by creating once and reusing common capabilities, the government will also see cost and effort savings through reduced development effort. This would particularly help agencies that have not invested in their own system.

ACTION: DTA and Services Australia to build 'Accessibility by design', 'Safety by design' and 'Privacy by design' into the myGov Design System.

ACTION: DTA and Services Australia to ensure the myGov Design System is expanded and made available for all member services to adopt a common style, pattern of interaction and capabilities.

ACTION: Government to provide authority and incentives for the Design System to be applied by all federal government agencies (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.5).

ACTION: DTA to use the design authority to support the reuse and creation of new capabilities (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

15 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

16 WhereTo, *myGov User Audit Research Report*, 2022 (unpublished)

17 *ibid.*

1.3 MAKING SERVICES EASIER TO ACCESS BY REDUCING THE BURDEN OF PROVING YOURSELF REPEATEDLY

There is a need to simplify myGov account management for Australians. Two significant sources of pain people experience with their myGov account are: linking to individual member services and, when things change or go wrong, the inability to recover their account. A combination of digital identity and standardisation of processes can reduce the burden placed on Australians to easily get access to and transact with various parts of government.

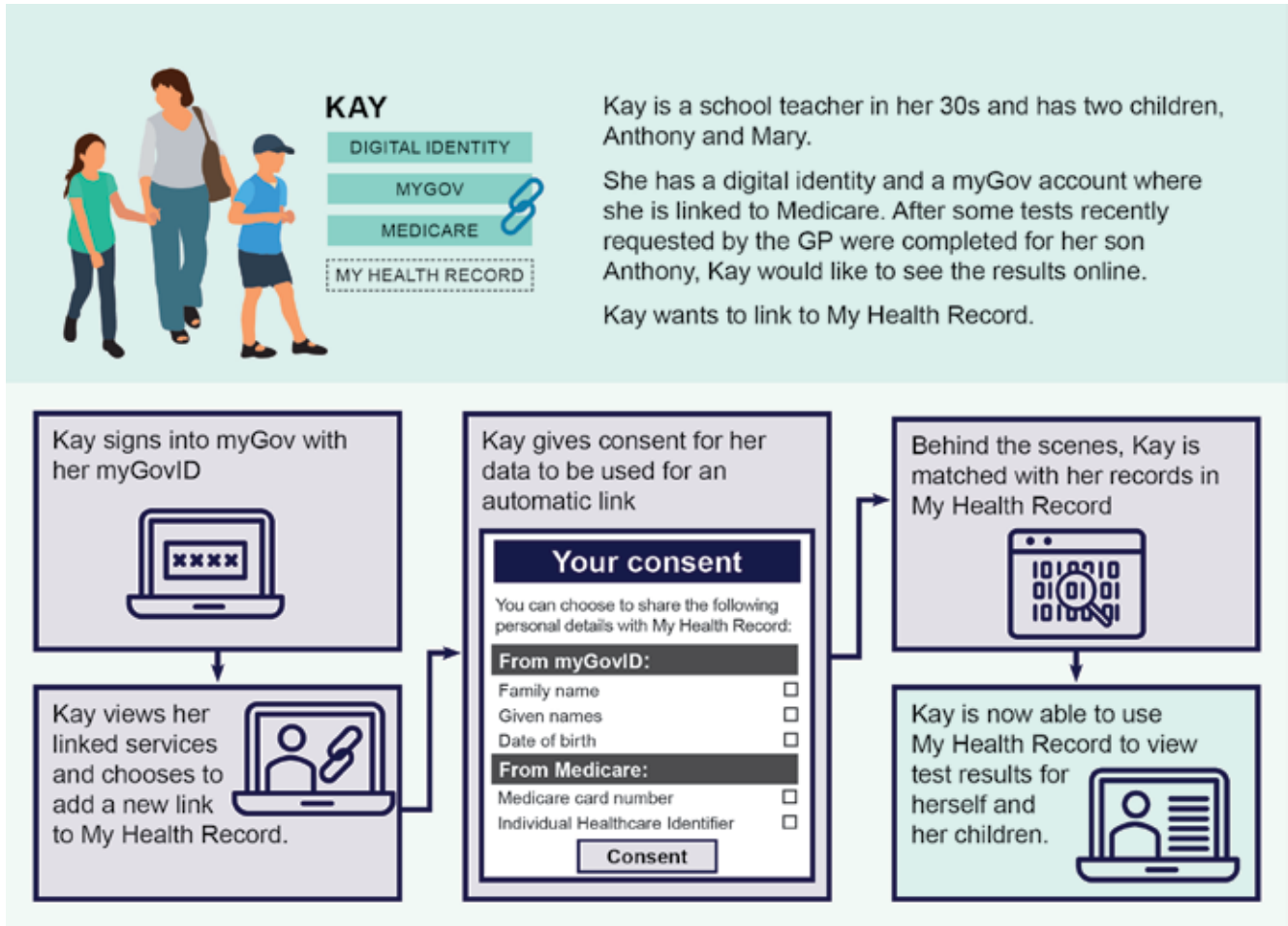
Features of a desired future state

There is an excellent, secure technical solution that is underpinned by a strong, human rights protective system of legal and broader governance (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4). A simpler model of signing into myGov based on digital identity (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.1) removes important pain points for Australians accessing government services. Digital identity streamlines the process of linking to services for users. By verifying eligibility credentials, users participating in a government-accredited digital identity system can automatically access the services they are entitled to through myGov, without having to know which member services they need to link to.

When digital identity alone is not sufficient for Proof of Record Ownership, the benchmark Australians must meet to be linked to their data in a member service, a user's myGov profile is able to draw on a list of personal attributes from their linked services, such as known TFN, Customer Reference Number, bank account or superannuation fund details. Users can choose to add or remove attributes, and these can be used to assist with linking to the service people want to connect to.

If there is still not enough information to link the person to their service, the process of proving they have a right to access their information is similar in pattern across all agencies. This gives Australians a known process that is easy to replicate, asking for the sort of details they have a good chance of being able to source. In addition, the myGov Helpdesk is able to support the linking process with any of the member services for those Australians that require extra assistance. Digital identity is standard for Australians from their earliest interactions with government. Fewer people need to rely on anything beyond their digital identity to access all services they are entitled to in myGov.

FIGURE 1: A NEW WAY OF LINKING THROUGH DIGITAL IDENTITY



Current state

Step 1 of myGov is create an account. Step 2 is knowing which agency or agencies you need to interact with. Step 3 is to link to those agencies by proving who you are and matching something unique about your relationship with that agency to prove that you own that record. All of this needs to happen before you can do anything.

Each member service then has their own way of doing this because of their Proof of Record Ownership requirements, creating a confusing, time consuming and inconsistent experience with each member service.

These processes are in place because each member service needs to be satisfied that the person has the right to access the records held by the agency, and the information within those records, before a link can be made to their myGov account (this is Proof of Record Ownership).

The member service needs to ask about information only they and the person would know, meaning their requests are for specific, precise information (such as a last GP visit) which may be difficult for the person to source and provide. The narrow margin for error in the linking process often becomes an impossible task for Australians, creating barriers to access, frustration and reducing confidence in the myGov platform, especially when the user is giving correct information that the agency providing the member service does not accept. If the agency has a different naming pattern or is expecting a value that is out of date, the link cannot be made, and the user is forced to call the contact centre. Whatever the reason for failure to link, Australians may have difficulty accessing services they are entitled to because of it, including needing to make phone calls, when their goal was straightforward self-service online.

Managing the calls of these users is a large cost to member services. At the ATO during the first week of tax time, myGov issues are the biggest driver of calls, and over the whole year it remains in the top 3. In Tax Time 22, there were 332,443 myGov calls and over half a million for all of 2022, out of an estimated annual total of 7.8 million calls to the ATO.¹⁸ In addition to large call volumes, the average time to resolve linking code requests is over 17 minutes as users are required to answer many Proof of Record Ownership questions before being provided a linking code – a poor experience for Australians.¹⁹ In 2022, the cost of managing these calls to the ATO Contact Centre has been estimated at \$10.9 million.²⁰

Name matching is a universal issue across member services, myGov and myGovID. Because different naming and name recording conventions are in place across member services, myGov and myGovID, name mismatches are common for first time registration or the linking of member services.²¹ For myGov users who have changed their name, use shortened versions of their name (e.g. Rob/Robert) or whose name does not conform to Australian name conventions (first name as preferred name, middle name, surname), a mismatch between details leads to the inability to create a link. Staff often recommend account deletion to resolve the issue which is an unapproved workaround.²² Those who use this workaround then have to create a new account and re-link all their member services, after correcting names across member services.²³

18 Advice from the ATO to the myGov User Audit, 15 December 2022

19 *ibid.*

20 *ibid.*

21 Services Australia, *myGov Operations pain points v3.0* (unpublished)

22 *ibid.*

23 *ibid.*

FIGURE 2: ATTRIBUTES ASKED OF AUSTRALIANS WHEN THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO LINK TO MEMBER SERVICES THROUGH MYGOV

Australian JobSearch	First Name	Surname	DOB (calendar)	Centrelink CRN	Linking Code or Pin				
Australian Taxation Office	Questions	TFN	Notice of Assessment/PAYG Summary/Bank Account/Superannuation account						★
Centrelink	Have CRN?	Linking Code	Centrelink CRN	Given Name	Family Name	DOB	Address	★	
	Don't have CRN?								
Child Support	Have/Don't have online account	Csupport RN	Given Name	Family Name	DOB	Address		★	
	Linking Code	ID documents/Digi ID							
Department of Health	myGov DID/VANGuard FAS/myGov		Relationship Authorisation Manager (RAM)						
Department of Veterans' Affairs	Activation code	DOB	ID documents	DVA Client Number					
HousingVIC	No verification code	First Name	Family Name	DOB	Country of Birth				
	Verification code								
Medicare	Medicare Card No.	Individual RN	Given Name	Family Name	DOB	Address		★	
	Linking Code or Pin								
My Aged Care	Account ID	Aged Care ID							
My Health Record	Medicare Card No.	Individual RN	Given Name	Family Name	DOB				
	Access Code								
National Cancer Screening Register	Medicare Card	Family Name	Given Name	DOB	Gender	Medicare Card No.	Individual RN	Card details	
	DVA Number/IHI								
National Disability Insurance Scheme	Activation code	Last name	DOB						
National Redress Scheme	Security Question set up	Privacy Notice							
State Revenue Office Victoria	Land Tax assessment number								
myGovID	Email address	Create Password	Given Name	Family Name	DOB	ID documents			

★ Back Channel Linking currently in place for member service

Initially managed by the DTA, a standardised name matching model across the government has stalled. The 15 current member services of myGov have different naming conventions and inconsistent name matching policy across identity data holdings. In order to resolve the root cause, a whole of government criteria for matching must be progressed.

The enhanced myGov program has commenced work on a credential framework to review and define the use of credentials and digital identity within myGov, to optimise the future use of both account creation and member service linking. As part of this, an analysis of current Proof of Record Ownership questions and linking experiences across member services was developed. It identifies common questions that could be utilised to streamline the myGov account creation and the linking experience.

Gaps and actions

Digital identity is currently not required to create a myGov account or to link services. There is an opportunity to increase the uptake and awareness of digital identity to streamline the account creation and linking processes in myGov (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.1).

For Australians, the value of myGov increases with each linked service a user has which emphasises the importance of a streamlined Proof of Record Ownership process across member services, focusing on consistency and simplicity.

Users who link with multiple agencies often need to provide the same information more than once. Agencies should only be asking for information that supplements what they cannot source themselves, from what has previously been provided by the user. This requires agencies to share user data more than they currently do.

As each agency controls the linking process without a view of what other agencies are doing, the user is the victim of bureaucratic inefficiencies, costing them time and effort. Shifting the burden of linking from the person to the agency will remove barriers to reaching their services and enable them to get on with their business with government.

ACTION: Audit Proof of Record Ownership requirements across agencies to understand the most useful attributes that aid with linking by 2023, and prompt people to add them to their myGov profile to allow (with consent) reuse by 2025.

ACTION: Services Australia to work with member services to establish a simpler approach to service linking by 2025, including asking for information once upfront.

When Australians have trouble linking, it is not clear who they need to call for assistance, meaning they may spend long periods of time in help queues of different agencies trying to find the right person to speak to.

ACTION: By 2025, member services to give access to tools and information that are required to manage linking requests to the myGov help desk.

ACTION: Make linking a process that happens within myGov and not on member service websites by 2026, so that the help desk can support users with all linking enquiries.

1.4 MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT IS EASY – INBOX, NOTIFICATIONS, TASKS AND APPOINTMENTS

Australians lose valuable time traversing their linked member services in myGov to see and access their government interactions. myGov will deliver significant value to Australians by bringing all messages, tasks and appointments from across government into collected views, reducing the effort required and keeping them on the path to achieving the outcome they came to myGov for.

Features of a desired future state

Notifications

Notifications alert users to important information and provide a fast and secure avenue to everything they need. Australians receive meaningful notifications that convey the content, level of urgency and next steps expected of the individual, while maintaining privacy, to help them organise their business with government and to make the best decisions about how to proceed. People are also able to control where they are notified for each member service, choosing between the myGov app, email or SMS. Past notifications, received in all channels, are found in a notifications centre, rather than being mingled in the myGov Inbox with content messages.

The common capabilities: inbox, tasks and appointments

Australians can look at one authoritative source to know what is required of them and what they need to do to receive their entitlements, reducing confusion and administrative effort to keep track of government interactions. Starting at their personalised homepage, a user has easy access to the myGov Inbox, is able to see their tasks, book and view their appointments and track upcoming payments in a single place. The most important tasks appear first, ensuring that Australians do not miss important actions but also offering sorting options to the user.

There is meaningful information for Australians 'at a glance', with detail available only one click away and without needing to download files. The information in myGov itself is consistent with what the user sees in the individual member services. There are ways of interacting or responding to member services from the aggregated views, starting with simple responses such as 'Accept' or 'Decline' or replying to information requests.

All member services use Inbox, Tasks and Appointments. It is made clear to users which member services are not using the common capabilities.

Digital signatures for documents

Australians are able to easily and securely sign official documents such as statutory declarations, deeds and agreements when signed into myGov with their digital identity. A copy of their signed documents is kept in their myGov Inbox. The effort savings available to Australians through this feature is immense, as people no longer need to physically be in front of an official to have a witness to the document's execution.²⁴

²⁴ IBM, *Modernising document execution digital projects*, Report to the Deregulation Taskforce, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022 (unpublished)

Current state

Notifications

myGov notifies Australians through their preferred choice of either email or SMS, incurring a cost to Services Australia of \$0.066 for SMS notifications. Notifications are the cause of several pain points for myGov users:²⁵

- Lack of context and content in message
- Urgency of message is unclear
- Next steps are not made explicit
- Many non-urgent messages perceived as spam

Services Australia has created a Notifications Framework, a new model for notifications that addresses some of the pain points in people's experience which it aims to implement in 2023 with some member services.

The new myGov mobile app, released in December 2022, enables push notifications, a modern and alternate way for government to send messages to users. Currently, the app is testing the use of push notifications as an alternative to the SMS notifying people they have a message in their Inbox. Member services do not get good engagement from people as a result of a notification.²⁶ Recently, myGov has introduced the ability for users to show a service name when they receive a notification about a new inbox message. This is a good step toward assisting Australians to understand which agency is contacting them, however, this alone is unlikely to significantly shift user follow-through because the context and urgency of the message is still often missing.

The common capabilities: inbox, tasks and appointments

myGov offers optional common capabilities to member services when they onboard. When people use the capabilities to help them manage their day-to-day business with government it is an inconsistent experience because different member services use different capabilities. Australians can currently receive, view, print and save messages from their myGov Inbox. Messages can include letters, statements and other types of important information. Customers will automatically be signed up to letters online when they create a myGov account and link to Medicare, Centrelink or Child Support.

User experience with the myGov Inbox is disjointed as not all member services have onboarded and there is inconsistency in the headings and contents of messages. While Australians expect to be able to access inbox content swiftly, currently it takes several clicks to see their important correspondence. There are frequent issues experienced by users being able to access their myGov Inbox or messages within.²⁷

The technical capability for Tasks is only used by Centrelink. Other member services can technologically use the capability, but they have not incorporated it into their business processes for various reasons. Minor technical challenges with the Tasks capability are on track to be overcome (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5).

If Australians wish to make appointments with government, they must go through multiple disconnected systems and service providers. The process differs for each appointment and there is limited ability to schedule in a way and time that suits the person. Staff interacting with Australians have no visibility of their overall appointments and limited ability to schedule appointments. This leads to difficulty managing demand. A trial of Appointments is currently underway with My Aged Care, which offers a user and staff view of appointments for easier self-service. There is currently no data available about the success of this trial.

25 Services Australia, *Connected Services Current state Insights Map.v2.0*, 2021 (unpublished)

26 *ibid.*

27 Services Australia, *myGov Operations pain points v3.0* (unpublished)

Digital signatures for documents

Documents, such as statutory declarations, deeds and agreements, are used every day by Australians. These documents require 'wet-ink' signatures and physical witnessing by an authorised witness. Research has found that there are over 4.5 million deeds and 3.8 million statutory declarations executed by small and medium sized business and consumers in Australia each year. This is costing these businesses and consumers over \$400 million in direct costs and time each year. There are currently 146 government processes across 29 agencies that utilise Commonwealth Statutory Declarations. Just by digitalising Commonwealth Statutory Declarations, government could save up to \$63 million per year.²⁸

To complete a statutory declaration, Australians are required to print off a template from the AGD website and then find an eligible witness to make the declaration in front of. Both the individual and the witness are required to sign the declaration in 'wet ink'. A statutory declaration currently must be completed on paper to be valid. However, AGD has temporarily allowed the digital execution of Commonwealth Statutory Declarations, but they are still required to be witnessed.²⁹

Gaps and actions

Notifications do not contain the required information to elicit the desired response from Australians. Agencies are not getting engagement from people through the current use of notifications, meaning users are not getting connected to the vital information that could impact their situation.

ACTION: Services Australia to deliver the model of notifications they have created to increase engagement by 2024.

ACTION: Member services to onboard or seek exceptions to the notifications model by 2026.

ACTION: myGov to allow users the option to tailor their notification preferences between each member service and for distinct types of correspondence.

The common myGov capabilities are not being widely utilised by member services. This is an unrealised benefit for Australians to have all their government activities grouped and viewable in a single place, so they do not have to swap between agency websites to get the information they need.

ACTION: Services Australia to design whole of government appointment management capability to be integrated with agencies' workload management systems.

ACTION: Services Australia to collect timeline commitments or exemptions from agencies to onboard high value/highly used services to myGov common capabilities: myGov Inbox, appointments, tasks and the personalised dashboard by 2024.

ACTION: Member services to agree to hierarchy of tasks to appear on the personalised homepage by 2024.

ACTION: Services Australia to improve the user experience of the common capabilities in myGov so that people are connected to their information in a more streamlined way, making them an attractive feature for member services by 2025.

A streamlined and secure way of signing documents that does not rely on 'wet ink' signatures is a digital service that myGov should offer, reducing effort required of Australians.

ACTION: Start implementation of a Document Execution function in myGov by 2024.

28 IBM, *Modernising document execution digital projects*, Report to the Deregulation Taskforce, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2022 (unpublished)

29 *ibid.*

1.5 UPDATING YOUR DETAILS IS SEAMLESS AND FORMS PREFILL

By leveraging advances in digitisation and data myGov can transform the way Australians manage and interact with government. By using the Tell Us Once capability to update their details, people can reuse their information without needing to repeatedly enter the same details across government services.

Features of a desired future state

myGov uses the Tell Us Once capability to give people confidence their information is up to date and eliminate the need for them to re-input their information or retell their story to different member services. People:

- Find it efficient, smooth, easy and intuitive to view and update their contact details in myGov.
- Have autonomy in myGov to share their updated circumstances across levels of government.
- Have updates completed and confirmed in a timely manner, therefore trusting that their information is up to date.

International Example: Estonia's 'ask me once' principle³⁰

In Estonia, the government is only allowed to ask people for the same information once. This drove government agencies to communicate with each other and make services more efficient. To relieve mass surveillance and security risk concerns, Estonia stores data in several smaller databases that can be cross-checked instead of one large central database.

Australians are able to opt-in for pre-filling of their information provided through linked member services, which reduces the steps needed to complete regular actions such as completing forms and delivers a more seamless user experience.

Australians can view and update previously shared information that may help them complete a task. Documents provided through myGov for an interaction with a member service are available for re-use across services. People are able to manage how their data flows in and out of myGov and they are informed of the benefits to be gained by sharing their data (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.6).

Reuse and sharing of data between member services through Tell Us Once and pre-fill capabilities helps Australians by reducing duplication of effort and increases the accuracy of their information.

30 Boston Consulting Group, *myGov User Audit Research Comprehensive Report*, 2022 (unpublished)

Case study: ATO designing a tax system that makes it easier for taxpayers to comply³¹

The ATO is making the most of digitisation and data advancements to ensure that, for most Australians who want to do the right thing, their interactions with the tax and super system are as simple and painless as possible. A key contributing factor to Australia's high compliance rate is third-party data, which is used to pre-fill information in a client's tax return.

Outcomes:

- 180 million records enter the system via pre-fill services every year. This provides assurance in relation to \$564 billion of individuals' income.
- 1.1 million report data used for pre-filling.
- Ongoing engagement with key third party data reporters facilitates opportunities for earlier lodgement of pre-fill data, whilst ensuring quality and integrity are maintained.

Clients who lodge before their pre-fill information is available have a 20% chance of not reporting accurately compared to 5% of those who wait.

Current state

myGov currently has Tell Us Once and pre-fill capabilities, but they rely on member services' adoption and data collection provisions that differ between government agencies (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5). Realising a true 'tell us once' experience would require significant changes to current use and disclosure of personal information rules.

Currently, myGov's Tell Us Once and pre-fill capabilities are not keeping pace with Australia's expectations. A key point of frustration is the fragmented nature of government services, where people are expected to repeatedly share information or prove their identity across departments and agencies.³²

Updating details using the Tell Us Once capability

The Tell Us Once capability is one of 5 optional capabilities that member services can sign up for. Australians can update residential address, postal address, email address, home phone, work phone and mobile phone. Currently, it is designed as one-way communication, as changes made at the member service cannot be transmitted to myGov. Limited data is stored within myGov.

Only 7 out of 15 member services utilise the Tell Us Once capability (June 2022). Barriers to member services fully adopting the functionality include:³³

- Legislative differences in how data is captured and used
- Data quality concerns
- Misalignment of data fields (such as types of phone number and address formats)
- Lack of communication to users of the consequences of their updates in myGov.

It is not mandatory for a member service to accept Tell Us Once updates from a user and return a successful response. Often an update does not contain enough detail for member services to accept and requires additional contact with the user for more information. In January 2022, only 34% of all personal detail updates using the Tell Us Once capability were successfully accepted by member services, with 38% requiring further staff intervention.³⁴ When making updates via the Tell Us Once capability, Australians are not advised of an outcome, so may incorrectly assume their information has been updated across member services.

31 Department of Finance, Using data to support compliance and better client experiences [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.regulatoryreform.gov.au/priorities/regulator-best-practice-and-performance/library/using-data-support-compliance-and-better-client-experiences>>

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

33 *ibid.*

34 *ibid.*

Pre-filling known information and reducing duplication

myGov has only recently adopted pre-fill functionality in limited situations. The Birth of a Child service is based on a Tell Us Once capability, aimed at reducing the burden of form filling and government interactions for new parents by re-using information that governments already hold.

There has been greater adoption of pre-fill across federal government departments, which has saved Australians time and effort to manage their affairs with government:

- The ATO is recognised as a world leader in its implementation of the myTax experience. It imports validated data from institutions such as banks, universities, and other agencies to pre-fill individual's tax returns to assist with lodgement. This results in more accurate information and less effort required from Australians to complete their tax returns.
- Single Touch Payroll is an initiative that reduces employer reporting burdens to government agencies. Service Australia uses a data exchange between the ATO Centrelink and Child Support to reduce the steps required for claims and income reporting. This initiative reduces red tape and effort, improving experiences for Australians.

There is an opportunity to reduce the burden on Australians repeatedly providing the same information across government services, by reusing data captured during Tell Us Once updates. Over time, as Tell Us Once capability can be expanded to capture more user information, the value of pre-fill will be unlocked.

Gaps and actions

To enable myGov to reuse data and reduce duplication in the user experience, it must move from being a front door to government services to better connecting users across agencies. Transparency, a robust consent process, and higher levels of trust and comfort will be important enablers of uptake for Australians and member services. Currently, only 36% of Australians are comfortable with government agencies sharing their personal information with other government agencies.³⁵ However, this percentage is increasing (compared to 30% in 2017).

Enhancing the current myGov Tell Us Once capability to improve information sharing across government, member services and auxiliary organisations will simplify user experience and build trust. This is also likely to result in less strain on service levels as people do not have to engage with different government departments for every change of circumstance. Member services must also be incentivised to adopt the Tell Us Once capability to the benefit of Australians as well as their own data integrity.

ACTION: Leverage the Enhanced myGov Data Framework as a blueprint for how myGov stores, shares, and governs the use of data in relation to the Tell Us Once capability. Implement data interoperability standards between government agencies, businesses and third parties to better share information to enhance service delivery (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5).

ACTION: Implement a consent model, so that users have autonomy over what details are shared across linked or non-linked services or prepopulated into tasks they may be completing (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.6).

ACTION: Expand the activities that Tell Us Once applies to as the capability matures. Look to focus on meeting the evolving needs and requirements of customers and member services.

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

Australians need clear and responsive communication/notifications about what is happening with their information.

ACTION: Expand the current Tell Us Once capability to ensure that users are confident their updates have been made.

- Undertake a feasibility study to understand the scope of an uplift in Tell Us Once, considering the technical, legal and governance steps that would be necessary and the likely cost to government.
- Explore remediation opportunities across existing fragmented profile data across departments.
- Enable automatic generation of tasks/next steps if a Tell Us Once update requires more information to be processed by a Member Service.

ACTION: Implement a notification strategy for member services to advise when and how Tell Us Once updates have been used. This should include:

- the ability to store notification history to allow users to keep track of previous details, when they were updated and who they were shared with.
- clear explanations of what has changed, if the change has been applied or not and the ramifications of the change.

An improved tell-us-once service will require an increase in data sharing between member services. Through user consent, data can be used by agencies for pre-filling of information and reduce effort. A data strategy will set out the role of myGov and agencies in joining up data (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5).

ACTION: Member services to use available data to pre-fill details for users, giving them the option to confirm or update, to simplify a claim or other activity.

1.6 TAILORED INFORMATION AND SERVICES ANTICIPATE YOUR NEEDS WITH CHOICE AND TRANSPARENCY

When underpinned by user autonomy and transparency, Australians are comfortable with degrees of tailoring to help find and access services they need. Using information drawn directly from users and their interactions with myGov coupled with transparent default settings and the ability to tailor user preferences is key to doing this well.

Features of a desired future state

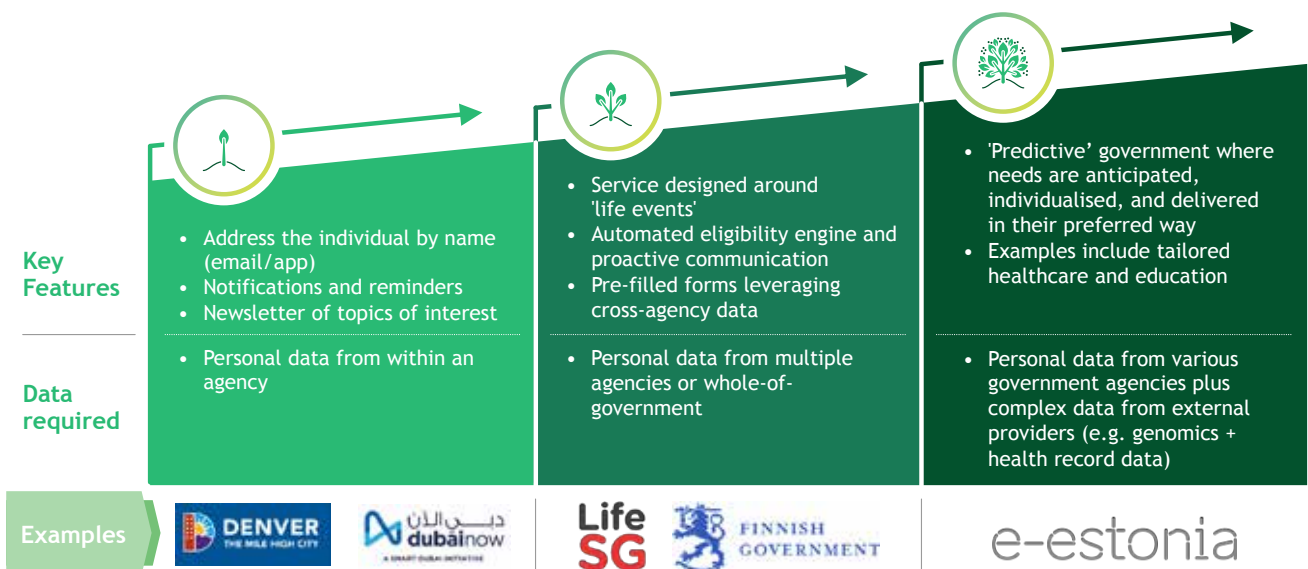
Tailoring to the user

Tailored information and service offerings reduce the complexity of accessing government services and the effort required from Australians to get things done. This is of particular benefit to those who have trouble navigating government services, those who do not know what they are entitled to, and to some people for whom access to digital services better meets their needs (such as some people with a disability). Proactive measures to improve the uptake of services through tailoring increase people's trust that government is delivering for them.

Three levels of tailoring are offered to users through the myGov platform where strong value for Australians is identified:

- **Tailoring** information to individual users
- **Notifying users of a service or entitlement** that they may be able to receive and directing them to find more information
- **Services** are completed on behalf of the user, where government knows they are eligible and where there is no impact to their other entitlements.

FIGURE 3: INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES OF TAILORING³⁶



Source: BCG research and analysis

68

36 Boston Consulting Group, *myGov User Audit Research Comprehensive Report, 2022* (unpublished)

For Australians, this:

- Reduces the need to sift through considerable amounts of often complex information to find to what is relevant and useful to them
- Reduces the overall effort and capability required to complete a task in myGov
- Organises their services in a way that makes sense to them
- Improves the discoverability of services and entitlements
- Removes unnecessary effort of applying for something they are eligible for.

Setting a default that considers everyone

A default level of tailoring is offered to all users with the ability for them to increase or decrease tailoring according to their data sharing preferences. At each level of data sharing, people are made aware of the tailoring functionality that is unlocked. People are also advised that choosing the minimum level of tailoring and data sharing preferences does not negatively impact their entitlements or ability to access services. The default setting upholds basic legal requirements, including anti-discrimination and other human rights law, and is informed by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet principles on setting defaults: Appropriateness, Transparency, Optimality, Identifying trade-offs, Type of default and Ethics.³⁷ Using these criteria, the Ethics and Inclusion Committee, with a mandate to advise on design considerations affecting Australians, gives regular input as to whether the default level of tailoring is suitable (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1).

Consent Model

Australians should be afforded a high level of autonomy 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. More specifically, implementing a framework of security and consent is vital in maintaining transparency with the user, an important quality in a relationship of trust³⁸ (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5).

It should be acknowledged that many companies and even some government agencies have offered the illusion of autonomy, by adopting mechanisms whereby individuals may appear to give consent in circumstances where that consent is not 'real'. The Enhanced myGov Program's research into consent models understands consent needs to be voluntary, informed, within the user's capacity and prior to handling of an individual's personal data. Underpinned by these principles, the model for implementation contains these features:

- Seeking consent on the terms of use and linking agreements
- Controls for the user to choose how their data flows in and out of myGov (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.5)
- Changes in terms or privacy settings are shown to the user for further consent
- The user's history of consent is available to them.

37 Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA), *Guidance Note: Harnessing the power of defaults*, accessed November 2022, via <<https://behaviouraleconomics.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resources/harnessing-power-defaults.pdf>>

38 BETA, *myGov User Audit advisory paper*, 2022 (unpublished)

Current state

Services Australia has invested in a digital platform which has the capability to provide quality tailoring, but this function is not currently utilised. For the Enhanced myGov program, Services Australia recently developed strategies as to how tailoring could be achieved. This, along with their work on Consent Models means that the technical and internal policy considerations are in place to deliver significant benefit for Australians with the right skills, collaboration and funding.

There are legislative allowances for limited cases of data collection and use by government agencies. To offer more robust tailoring, some legislative changes will be required to allow for greater data sharing between agencies (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.5).

Gaps and actions

The underlying data sharing requirements from member agencies need to be identified and based on examples that provide clear value to Australians. This type of data sharing is not currently widespread practice and is one of the first steps to implementing tailoring.

Deloitte Digital Research has found that 3 in 4 Australians reported to be 'equally or more likely' to use government websites if they are personalised.³⁹ Australians expect the government to proactively inform them of potential services, resources, and support that might improve their current situation.⁴⁰ However, currently, they find it challenging to understand eligibility requirements or the extent of financial support they may receive, and this can deter them from accessing support or fulfilling obligations. There have been instances where Australians impacted by natural disasters were unaware of support available to them, only to find out through friends or neighbours.⁴¹

The strategies and models for tailoring and consent, are at this stage limited to myGov. There needs to be input from member services on how they can best contribute to improve what myGov could offer to Australians.

ACTION: Within the bounds of current legislation, myGov to immediately progress tailoring strategies that have been developed.

ACTION: Ensure legislative environment is appropriate to protect Australians and enable greater tailoring through shared data by 2024.

ACTION: Offer tailored, proactive engagement on services to Australians based on their circumstances by 2026.

Australians need to be given autonomy over their data so they know what is being used and shared between government agencies.

ACTION: Adopt an approach that maximises users' autonomy in interacting with myGov by implementing a consent and privacy management system, accessed from myGov, to give people autonomy and transparency over their experience.

ACTION: The Ethics and Inclusion Committee to review and assess the use of data and technology to enable appropriately tailored services (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1).

39 Deloitte., *A blueprint for enhanced citizen experiences*, 2021, accessed November 2022, <<https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/technology/articles/blueprint-for-enhanced-citizen-experiences.html>>

40 Services Australia, *Age Pension Experience (APEX)*, 2018 (unpublished)

41 Digital Transformation Agency, *5.20 GovX Common Pain Points*, 2021 (unpublished)

Chapter 2: myGov is for everyone

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2.1 INFORMATION AND SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE

Everyone should have the opportunity to access and benefit from the services they are entitled to. There are strong social benefits that can be realised through inclusive design and complementary efforts to enhance digital literacy.

As well as supporting access to government services, increasing uptake of online services can support more Australians to manage their health, access education and organise their finances. So that the highest number of Australians can benefit from myGov, addressing accessibility barriers must be an explicit consideration to support priority populations, people with disability, older Australians and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Features of a desired future state

Australians want technology that is safe, fair and reliable.⁴² Accessibility and safety by design are fundamental principles in the refreshed Design System as well as the Digital Service Standard as part of the Australian Government Architecture.

myGov supports all Australians but especially those experiencing accessibility barriers due to low literacy and low digital literacy, by providing information, making it easy to find and understand what is needed to access services. Content on the personalised homepage uses 'easy read' principles,⁴³ with the option to go into deeper detail. Tools like graphics are used to simplify complex information and actions. How-to videos are available for the most common tasks.

People with a disability are able to use myGov with their familiar accessibility supports. myGov works with technology they already use such as screen readers, translators or text magnifiers, and accessibility features are also built in to myGov, giving people a choice on the supports they can use. Information on how myGov complies with recognised accessibility standards such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG), and its successors, are made available. Easy English information is available for fundamental content that needs to be understood by all users.⁴⁴

Videos with Auslan and Audio Description communicate important information. To support people who are blind or have a vision impairment, all forms are available to be completed online, using a screen reader, rather than having to be printed, completed and then uploaded to member services.

Culturally and linguistically diverse people are able to access help in myGov and accessibility supports in their preferred language.

For Australians that remain unable to use or access services online, alternative service channels continue to be available. The resources released by having people use myGov, enable in-person service channels to provide a higher service level to those that need inperson, rather than digital, assistance.

Through the myGov app, signing in without an SMS and an offline view is offered to support those in remote locations facing low internet connectivity and phone reception.

myGov is also an exemplar for safe online experiences, with designers having a deep understanding of the risks technology-facilitated abuse poses for vulnerable members of society. myGov connects all users to information about safety.

42 Australian Human Rights Commission, *Human Rights and Technology Final Report 2021*, 2021

43 Australian Government, *Style Guide – Easy Read* [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/content-types/easy-read>>

44 Centre for Inclusive Design, *Easy English versus Plain English guide* [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://centreforinclusivedesign.org.au/index.php/services/guides/2021/12/10/easy-english-versus-plain-english-guide/>>

To guard against fraud, scams and misuse of government services, myGov uses safety by design principles to assess, address and mitigate potential harms before they occur.

Services delivered through myGov commit to inclusive design by considering people of diverse needs as part of the design process and as part of the continuous improvement process. This includes paid experts to co-design end-to-end processes (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

Current state

Australians requiring extra assistance to access online services often have a poorer experience, compared to those that do not face accessibility barriers. For example, people with a disability are less likely to get what they need from government services than people without a disability, while 63% of people with a disability agree that the websites or applications they use to access services work well, compared to 75% of people without a disability.⁴⁵

The enhanced myGov platform has an improved framework for meeting the needs of diverse and disadvantaged Australians, however many complexities lie within the member services. The myGov platform was extensively tested with users of adaptive technology and users with low levels of digital confidence. It has been assessed against the WCAG to make online content more accessible to people with disabilities.

A Heuristic Review conducted for the audit by the Centre for Inclusive Design found that the reading level on myGov was around the Year 8-9 level which aligns with WCAG 2.1 recommendations.⁴⁶ This level is suitable for most people and can reduce time spent on each page when accessing services.

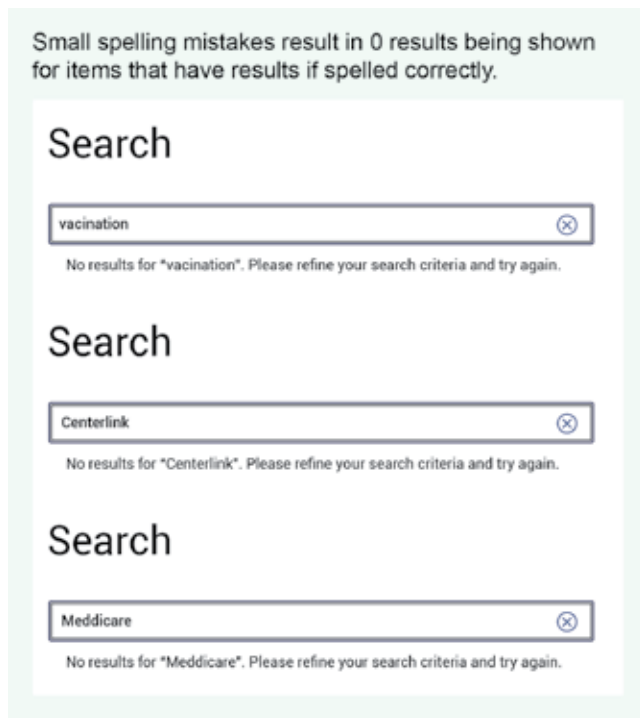
The review also observed other positive features. For example, colour contrast levels were within recommended levels and Help pages did not require users to navigate away from the website. The “work” section was identified as a standout for its structure with deeper personalisation through questions.

The review also identified minor improvements that would help more users access myGov successfully. For example, currently there is no leniency for spelling errors when searching in myGov. Error leniency removes dead ends.

45 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Trust in Australian public services: Annual Report 2022*, 2022

46 Centre for Inclusive Design, *Heuristic Review Report: myGov*, 2022 (unpublished)

FIGURE 4: MYGOV SEARCH TEST EXTRACT FROM THE MYGOV AUDIT HEURISTIC REVIEW⁴⁷



myGov has been liberating for some Australians who are blind or have a vision impairment when compared to receiving information in letters they could not read and having to get help to fill in paper forms.⁴⁸ However, myGov does not yet have some best practice accessibility features, available on other government websites, such as the ability to listen to information and adjust font sizes.

While Services Australia provided over 740,000 interpreter interactions and over 5,000 document translations in 2021, myGov content itself does not have multi-lingual help. Work is continuing to improve accessibility to information and services in myGov. A Translation Proof of Concept has considered the best way to provide information in other languages.

The Government's Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia is funding initiatives to address digital connectivity issues for people living remotely, and the new myGov app offers an authentication solution for those in low bandwidth areas where access to SMS is limited.

The eSafety Commissioner's website provides resources for all Australians who want to maximise the benefits of online services and to learn how to minimise their risks. The eSafety Commissioner's guidance is audience-based so that Australians can access digital literacy tools appropriate to their needs.⁴⁹

For women and their children experiencing technology facilitated abuse as an extension of family and domestic violence, there are extensive evidence-based resources designed to help them manage their online experiences more safely, including through the development of online safety plans. Extensive webinars, in-person training and learning management system are available for frontline workers to help them identify technology facilitated abuse and guide their clients to safer outcomes.

The Services Australia website also provides information on safety for different audiences. myGov has safety information for people experiencing family and domestic violence. A quick exit button is provided on myGov content that at risk people may use when researching sources of help.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ ThinkPlace, *myGov User Audit Research Report, 2022* (unpublished)

⁴⁹ eSafety Commissioner [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>>

Gaps and actions

Accessibility is critically important to support a wide range of Australians that may face barriers to access digital services. Close to half of Australians agree the Government's digitisation of services and processes have made services more accessible for all.⁵⁰

Enhancing user experience as the myGov ecosystem expands requires a continued focus on accessibility and safety for priority groups.

This includes support for the 14% of Australians aged between 15 and 74 that have very low literacy levels. Another 30% have literacy levels which would make it difficult to complete the majority of the top ten forms, such as creating a Centrelink account.⁵¹

Including videos in the Help section would assist a wide range of users become more confident with myGov.

ACTION: Content is developed to meet WCAG 2.1AA accessibility requirements. Essential government services information is available in the Easy English format.

ACTION: Provide the Be Connected digital literacy resources for senior Australians including videos on how to use myGov in the help section of myGov.⁵² Expand these resources for other priority groups.

There are an estimated 4.4 million Australians who have a disability, with 38% of those aged between 15-64 years relying on a government pension or allowance as their main source of personal income.⁵³ Being able to find information about and access services is critical to support the livelihoods of millions of Australians living with disability. Inclusively designed products and services that have end users in mind, can reach and benefit up to 4 times the size of the intended audience.⁵⁴

ACTION: Accessibility by design is built into the Design System and services are designed with diverse potential users (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.2).

There are significant benefits to be gained for people who do not have a high level of English by providing myGov help content in languages other than English. The myGov Assistant does not recognise other languages.

50 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

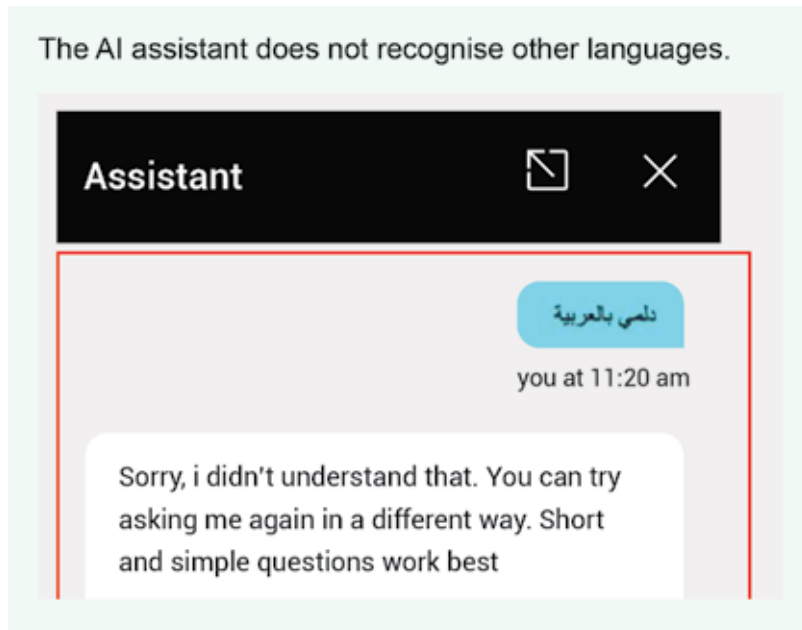
51 Reading Writing Hotline & NSW Council of Social Service, *2020 Helping Clients Fill in Forms Report*, 2020

52 eSafety Commissioner, Be Connected resources: Introduction to myGov [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/topic-library/introduction-to-mygov/>>

53 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, People with disability in Australia [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-people-with-disability>>

54 Centre for Inclusive Design, *The Benefits of Designing for Everyone Report*, 2019

FIGURE 5: MYGOV DIGITAL ASSISTANT TEST EXTRACT FROM THE MYGOV AUDIT HEURISTIC REVIEW⁵⁵



The ATO Digital Assistant was identified by the Centre for Inclusive Design as an example of how responses in languages other than English can be connected to information on how to get help in that language.⁵⁶

ACTION: Provide translated help content in myGov for the most in demand languages and implement enhancements such as spelling leniency in the search function.⁵⁷

The number of Australians who are highly excluded from digital society has declined, however 11% of the population continues to face digital exclusion. This includes people aged over 75, people who did not complete secondary school and people on lower incomes.⁵⁸ Seven per cent (around 700,000) Australian households do not have an in-home internet connection,⁵⁹ and quality, reliable internet connectivity is unaffordable for 14% of Australian households.⁶⁰ Digital uptake in regional and remote Australia remains slower than in metropolitan areas.⁶¹

ACTION: Increase funding for access to personal devices and internet connection to support digital inclusion.

While online services such as myGov provide many benefits they also present safety risks. People with access to another person's devices, accounts and personal information may leverage this relational knowledge to gain digital access to personal accounts and personal information. This may allow perpetrators of abuse to track, control or harass victims, or fraudulently take financial advantage of vulnerable targets.

55 Centre for Inclusive Design, *Heuristic Review Report: myGov*, 2022 (unpublished)

56 *ibid.*

57 In 2021 the most widely requested translated languages were Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Greek and Cantonese.

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

59 Australian Communications and Media Authority, How we use the internet [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2022-12/report/communications-and-media-australia-how-we-use-internet>> and Australian Bureau of Statistics, Housing: Census 2021, accessed via <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/housing-census/latest-release>>

60 Australian Digital Inclusion Index, Key findings 2021 [website], accessed November 2022

61 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

Safety by design principles acknowledge the need to make digital spaces safer to protect those most at risk. Online harms should be understood, assessed and addressed in the design and provision of online services.⁶² Privacy settings and the consent model are discussed in Volume 2 subchapter 1.6.

ACTION: Leverage safety by design principles to help prevent misuse of myGov technologies and in government service delivery. Develop a risk management strategy, including resourcing for reviews and audits.

ACTION: Use myGov to communicate safety, privacy and security tips and connect people to trusted information on scams, where to report online abuse or cyber-crime, and how to flag risk of serious harm and data or privacy breaches.

Seventy per cent of Australians want to engage in the development of government services. One in 5 wants to be personally informed of service development plans and progress.⁶³

Inclusiveness is more than compliance with WCAG standards; users need to have their individual needs met to feel comfortable participating.⁶⁴ As myGov becomes the main place to discover government services it should have differentiated content that meets the needs of First Nations and other culturally diverse groups in the same way that the Services Australia website does. By tailoring services and information for important community considerations such as kinship, First Nations users will feel more confident that myGov recognises their cultural needs.

All new myGov features have been user-tested with a range of users. There is an opportunity to encourage more user input into setting priorities and addressing barriers to adoption (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1).

62 eSafety Commissioner [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>>

63 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

64 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>>

2.2 SOMEONE ELSE CAN EASILY ACT ON YOUR BEHALF

Not every Australian can easily access digital services when and where they need them. The myGov experience needs to be available to everyone who wants to access relevant government services through an online channel. Making it easier for people to have trusted representatives to help manage digital services on their behalf is an important factor to support those who have ongoing barriers to accessing government services.⁶⁵ This is not without risk, so accompanying safeguards are important.

Features of a desired future state

myGov provides a secure option for people to get help to digitally access the services they need.

myGov users can nominate others to act on their behalf, such as a trusted friend or family member, paid professional, or community assistance provider. Trusted representatives have the same access to digital transactions that a user does.

People can make arrangements that apply across different member services in myGov.

The account holder is able to set controls to limit access to information or transactions that they do not want to share. They are able to withdraw access quickly and easily if required, for example if their relationship with their representative changes or ends.

There is a trade-off between protection, convenience and autonomy for those who want assistance to interact with government online. Government is actively alert to potential misuse of an account by a trusted person. Safeguards are in place to protect account holders from people acting on their behalf against their best interests. Services use technology to monitor for unusual activity potentially related to financial abuse, using insights from financial services providers.

Audits or reviews may be undertaken and the nominated representatives are provided with clear instructions about their obligations and responsibilities.

Banks and other institutions have been developing stronger processes to identify misuse, such as in the area of elder abuse. myGov is an exemplar for private and public services.

Policy simplification harmonises the different legislative requirements each service has for representatives to be appointed.

International Example: Singapore and United Kingdom

Singapore: Singpass app users requiring assistance can send two-factor authentication SMS messages to a trusted Singpass user's mobile phone.⁶⁶

United Kingdom: HM Revenue and Customs provide a "trusted helper" mechanism where individuals can nominate family or friends to assist with tax activities. Helpers are verified using the UK Verify gateway and can act on behalf of up to 5 different individuals.⁶⁷

65 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>>

66 Singapore Government, Singpass [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.singpass.gov.sg>>

67 Government of the United Kingdom, GOV.UK [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.gov.uk>>

Current state

There is no ability for a representative or helper to log in to myGov on behalf of another person. Consultation has confirmed that in the absence of this, some users share passwords or log in and give control of myGov to helpers.⁶⁸ Such unsecure practices leave users needing assistance vulnerable to misuse of personal information, through to fraud or theft of benefits. It is also not possible for agencies to determine whether a transaction was performed by the customer or by someone they provided their details to.

Outside of digital, over 10.7 million nominee-like arrangements currently exist across the main Australian Government services. Each service has different rules and procedures as the legislation and online processes vary. For example, for Centrelink services individual nominees must first create their own Centrelink online account and then register for nominee online services.

Services Australia and other agencies have some functionality for authorised representatives to enquire, update, act or get payments. Service providers acknowledge that people may need a little or a lot of help to deal with government, so different arrangements can be made depending on need. Nominating an authorised representative does not prevent the user from personally interacting with service agencies or accessing their own details.

Setting up an arrangement to enquire on behalf of someone else in person or over the phone is often straightforward but processes for performing digital transactions on their behalf vary across services and within parts of the service.

Not all transactions within services can be performed by nominees online. Individuals or their representative must establish different relationships with different agencies in different ways, at times even within a single service agency.⁶⁹ This creates friction, stress and barriers to access, especially for those lacking capacity to interact with government. It is difficult for agencies to manage. Authorised representative arrangements can also carry risks for Australians in vulnerable situations. Coercive control abuse is an important design consideration. Perpetrators may try to use services such as Centrelink and Child Support to constrain victims' financial resources and wellbeing. Services Australia provides information on keeping information safe when leaving a relationship and notes that if someone has access to deal with an agency on someone else's behalf, they can see updates made to personal details until the arrangement is ended.

Gaps and actions

Improving authorised representative processes is a key change needed to address equity and inclusion. Even as the accessibility of services is improved, there will be a need to support Australians to access all their entitlements.

Clients of community service organisations often require support to fill in both hardcopy and digital forms. The need for support is considerable, ranging from one to 100 clients per week depending on the size of the service and the volumes of clients seen. All respondents to a NSW study reported that literacy and digital literacy was a barrier to access to services for some, if not all, of their clients.⁷⁰

People expect to be able to set up authorised representative arrangements to apply across government, they don't want to establish arrangements with individual agencies and programs unless there is a specific need for a limited arrangement. Cancelling or changing arrangements is also difficult with the current fragmentation. Providing an efficient and transparent way for customers to get help is important because it can reduce the cost of supporting Australians to access government services.

68 WhereTo, *myGov User Audit Research Report, 2022* (unpublished)

69 Services Australia, *Someone to deal with us on your behalf* [website], accessed November 2022, shows that arrangements are service- and payment-dependent <<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/someone-to-deal-with-us-your-behalf>>

70 Reading Writing Hotline & NSW Council of Social Service, *2020 Helping Clients Fill in Forms Report, 2020*

ACTION: Services Australia to establish a simple, whole of myGov (app and platform) solution for authorising others to act on a person’s behalf by 2025.

ACTION: Show all representative arrangements in one place so that users can review and alter them as necessary to retain control.

ACTION: Simplify policy and legislation to enable myGov to deliver a cross agency solution.

However, Australians who need help with managing their affairs may be vulnerable to abuse of power. Safeguards need to be in place to protect someone who needs help managing their affairs from harm. The financial services industry has increased monitoring by using technology such as machine learning to detect suspicious transactions in ways that do not compromise individual privacy. Australians are accustomed to “fraud alerts” that come from their banks when there is unusual activity. These financial abuse detection tools could become more broadly accepted for government services.

Financial literacy can reduce the risk of abuse, so government initiatives are important to improve financial literacy.⁷¹

ACTION: myGov and member services to develop a comprehensive monitoring regime for suspicious transactions using contemporary tools such as data analytics.

ACTION: Targeted education and support for customers who use nominees or representatives so they understand the safeguards they can use to monitor actions done on their behalf. This could include financial literacy messages and providing opt-in features such as letters to keep the principal customer informed of critical claims done on their behalf.

ACTION: Develop stronger, more robust ‘early-warning’ systems, including a system for periodic renewals of authorisations and other risk-based measures.

71 Australian Law Reform Commission, *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response (ALRC Report 131)*, 2017

2.3 HELP IS THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT

The role of myGov is to be the interface of government to help Australians. This means finding what they need and getting support and services easily. However, people may not always be able to find what they need, may require help from a person, and many face barriers to accessing digital services.

There are 3 main reasons why people may have barriers to using digital services:

- **access** – the availability of the internet and connected devices;
- **affordability** – the financial means to get online; and
- **digital ability** – skills and confidence to use digital services.

To deliver government services for all Australians, myGov needs to overcome these barriers offering face-to-face and phone support and help to connect to community-based support.

Features of a desired future state

The myGov website and app help content assists users to resolve their queries online without needing to leave the site. Live chat is offered where people need help with using the system.

The digital assistant supports people to access help online when and where they need it, recognising the value of support being available even when call centres are closed.

However, Australians can continue to access phone and face-to-face help when needed. The transition from online help to phone or face-to-face assistance does not require people to start all over again or retell their stories.

Staff have the tools to allow them to understand the person's circumstances, see what they are trying to do and help them stay in the digital channel if appropriate. Australians are able to get help to learn how to use myGov but they are not directed to self-service if it is not the best solution for them.

Training is provided to all person-to-person support staff so they can tailor the best solutions for each person, increase their capacity to use digital products and understand how diverse groups use adaptive technologies.

Where a call transfer is necessary or otherwise appropriate, callers are handed over with an introduction to the supporting staff member, so that they do not have to retell their story, saving time and effort.

Digital literacy is resourced as a priority to improve inclusion across the Australian community. Without digital skills, a person cannot access and use online services effectively. As new technology emerges, maintaining up-to-date digital skills requires ongoing investment. Digital ability is not static, it requires ongoing development and maintenance.

Current state

Submissions to the Panel indicated that while some people experience difficulty online with myGov, they also experience difficulties when seeking help using other channels. For example, the Panel heard about long call waiting times, drops out and frustration with lining up at Services Australia only to be referred online then getting back in line for help.

Help services across myGov and member services are fragmented. There is not a single point of assistance and transfers between agencies are often needed.

Many people do not differentiate between myGov and the linked member services. So, if they have trouble finding information about a payment or filling in a claim, they may see it as a myGov issue, as distinct from an issue that rests with the relevant member service. People then face frustrations when myGov help channels are unable to resolve their issue.

The myGov Help Desk is only responsible for account management such as signing in and creating an account. The member services are responsible for supporting their myGov users and the arrangements vary between agencies.

This means that people need to know which member service to contact to assist them, and they often must retell their story to different agencies or when swapping channels. Warm transfers (where the customer's details and an explanation of the inquiry are provided by the operator to the person receiving the transferred call) are not used consistently between agencies.

The myGov digital assistant only covers myGov website content. Member services have their own digital assistants that are not integrated with each other. Live chat is currently offered in a limited capacity by some services.

The myGov User Audit public consultation process indicated a desire for more live chat services, with many preferring this over phone interactions.⁷²

Best practice: Australian Taxation Office

The ATO has web chat and screen share capabilities for assistance with myTax. This promotes the 'Show me how' approach to support.

There is no single view of user for whole of government interactions. This limits the information staff can use to understand the circumstances of people when providing help.

The 2022-23 Budget provided funding for a range of initiatives to improve digital inclusion. They include the Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia, a First Nations digital advisory group, online learning tools for children, a free NBN service for families with no home internet and a National Study on Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy skills.

Australian Government initiatives with community organisations⁷³

National: Be Connected is a joint initiative between the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the eSafety Commissioner to increase the confidence, digital skills and online safety of older Australians. The Be Connected website has translated resources, interactive practice areas, webinars, podcasts and quick reads.

National: The Good Things Foundation manage grants to community organisations to deliver free one-on-one and group sessions, and loan digital devices to older Australians. There are over 3,700 Be Connected network partners across Australia which include a wide range of community organisations, aged care providers, libraries, cultural diversity groups, disability support organisations and men's sheds.

Queensland: The Deadly Digital Communities Program is an initiative of the State Library of Queensland and Telstra in partnership with local government through their Indigenous Knowledge Centres and public library services. The program tailors content to specific communities and their ways of being, knowing and doing, teaching basic digital skills like emailing, using social media to stay connected, accessing government services online and utilising technology to record oral histories and significant cultural events.

⁷² WhereTo, *myGov User Audit Research Report*, 2022 (unpublished)

⁷³ Australian Data and Digital Ministerial Council, *Government digital inclusion programs*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-11/Digital-Inclusion-Paper.pdf>>

Gaps and actions

People seek out face-to-face and phone help with another human for many reasons. One reason is where the digital experience can be difficult, but people also seek out assistance where they feel that their needs are better understood by a person who can tailor a response and help navigate complexities.

Whilst the use of digital services has significantly increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.⁷⁴

The Centre for Inclusive Design has recently completed a heuristic review of myGov and found that existing help content is comprehensive and accessible. It made some recommendations to improve effectiveness, reflected in the actions below.⁷⁵

ACTION: Make help content contextual. The help link at the top of the screen should automatically link to a suitable topic based on where it was actioned from.

ACTION: Make the Digital Assistant able to understand when a query is made in a language other than English and provide links to help information in other languages.

Help resources across channels and services need coordination to design and deliver end-to-end services to ensure a seamless experience. Member services should regularly monitor feedback on the help offered across myGov and linked services with the following actions to be progressed initially:

ACTION: Make consistent cross-agency hand off and escalation processes.

ACTION: Extend the myGov staff-assisted tool to allow staff to see what the caller is seeing.

Investment in skilling of staff and myGov users will increase capability and confidence. The front-line service staff of the future need to be skilled in promoting myGov but also troubleshooting common technical issues. People who encounter barriers when they attempt to use digital services may not try again.⁷⁶ A myGov capability development plan for staff will help to ensure the right capabilities exist across myGov and its member services (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.7).

Improving digital literacy across the Australian community will increase the proportion of the population who can access myGov. There are a range of programs operating to improve the skills of priority groups (examples in Current State). There are also programs to assist with technology and internet access issues. Digital inclusion programs are essential to support access to government services.

ACTION: Resource digital literacy programs for all Australians with barriers to accessing government services.

ACTION: Use and expand the series of Be Connected videos to demonstrate to Australians what they can use myGov for.

ACTION: Use the Australian Public Service Academy to improve digital literacy for all service delivery staff.

The Government has committed to maintaining Service and Telephony Centres. Staff need to be supported to identify which people should be offered encouragement and assistance to continue to use digital services, and those for which self-service is not appropriate. Feedback from consultative groups is that sometimes staff promote digital self-service to those who are unable to use it.⁷⁷

74 PwC Australia, *Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

75 Centre for Inclusive Design, *Heuristic Review Report: myGov*, November 2022 (unpublished)

76 Services Australia, *Definition of Digital v1 Report* (unpublished)

77 ThinkPlace, *myGov User Audit Research Report*, 2022 (unpublished)

ACTION: Enhance staff training about the accessibility supports available to people with disability and language needs such as translation services and screen reading programs.

Longer term, consideration should be given to the role of Services Australia to provide a greater level of support to users of member services that are integrated in myGov.

ACTION: Develop a target state operating model that extends Services Australia to support myGov services including general enquiries, updating details, booking appointments and assisting with digital transactions.

Chapter 3:

You and your information are safe

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3.1 SIGNING IN AND PROVING WHO YOU ARE IS SIMPLE AND EASY

To access digital government services, users need to be able to sign in and prove who they are. myGov was designed to allow Australians to use a single account to sign into multiple services. Adopting a modern, well-designed and regulated system of digital identification can be a more secure and convenient alternative to conventional forms of identity verification, such as the use of passwords. Applying a system of digital identity, as the primary way of verifying an individual's identity for myGov will address the difficulty of remembering multiple passwords, streamline access for Australians and government.

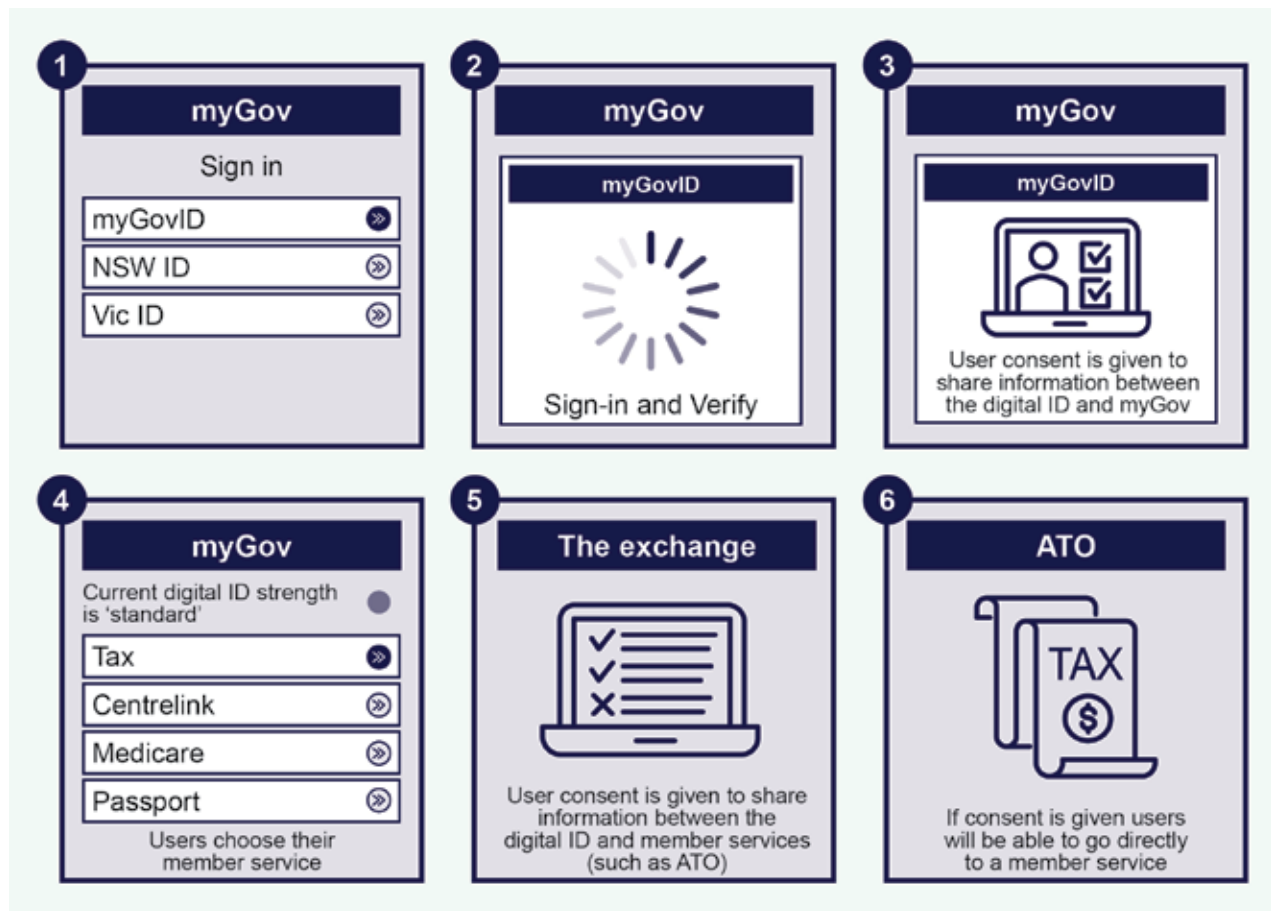
Features of a desired future state

People sign into myGov and government services using a digital identity provider, such as myGovID, rather than a dedicated myGov username and password. This offers a simpler experience and saves time in accessing government services, removing many common pain points previously experienced in signing into myGov accounts, such as forgotten passwords, login loops, user IDs and being locked out of two-factor authentication processes.

A well-designed and regulated system of digital identification can be more resistant to fraud and other risks than the previous system which relied on passwords and had multiple myGov accounts per person. However, there remain inherent risks associated with digital identification, and these need to be anticipated and managed in any digital identification system that applies to myGov.

The "links" between a myGov account and the member service transitioned into the digital identity exchange, so that users can manage the use of their digital identity and consent for personal attributes within one place.

FIGURE 6: HOW USERS WILL BE ABLE TO USE DIGITAL IDENTITY TO SIGN INTO MYGOV AND A GOVERNMENT SERVICE



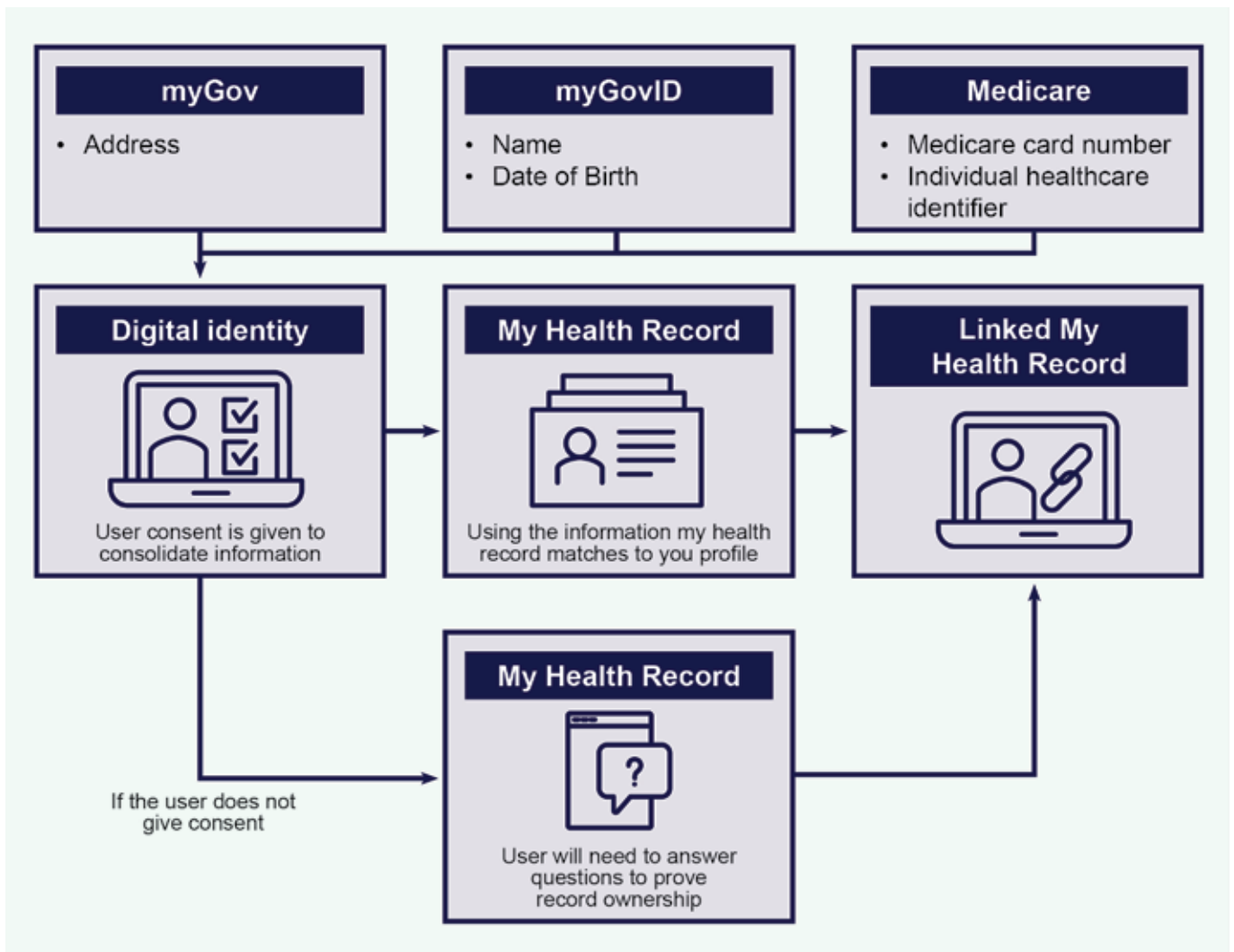
1. Users signing into myGov can choose which digital identity provider to sign in with, such as myGovID or a state and territory provider.
2. The steps to sign in with a digital identity, using the identity exchange and an identity provider such as myGovID, is embedded directly into the myGov journey so that users are not taken away to another website.
3. If a user is signing into myGov for the first time, they can give (or remove) consent for myGov to use their personal details.
4. Once signed into myGov, a user can choose which member service to access, in the same way that myGov works today.
5. If a user is accessing a government service, such as the ATO, for the first time, they can consent which personal details from their digital identity, or other linked government services, to share with the service.
6. The user can access the government service.

It is easy and quick for people to set up and use a digital identity, and in an ideal state, users will only need to install a single app on their mobile device to set up a digital identity and sign into government services with it. If possible, the front ends for myGovID and myGov will be brought together into one mobile app. Alternatively, government could keep myGovID as a separate app, but rebrand it to make it clearer to users that it is a different service to myGov.

Users are able to sign in using digital identity directly inside the service they are trying to use through a widget or a pop-up window, rather than being sent outside the service to a series of different websites. This replicates existing widely used patterns online for signing in with third party providers. This reduces user confusion when signing in and reduces the likelihood of dead ends when something goes wrong.

Australians have the choice to store additional personal attributes, such as address history and gender, in their myGov profile. With a person’s consent, these profile attributes can be brought together with attributes held by other services, such as Centrelink or Medicare, to connect a person more easily with their data records in an agency’s system. This consent can be given or removed through the digital identity exchange. Volume 2 subchapter 3.5 provides more detail on the use of and protections for personal data in myGov.

FIGURE 7: HOW USERS WILL BE ABLE TO MORE EASILY LINK DIGITAL IDENTITY TO A GOVERNMENT SERVICE THROUGH A MYGOV PROFILE



International example: SingPass

In Singapore, the SingPass platform allows users to sign into more than 244 government and 710 private sector transactions. The Myinfo feature lets users consent to have personal data retrieved from government agencies into a profile which can then be used to pre-fill forms in future.⁷⁸

People have the choice to sign in with myGovID or another accredited identity provider, such as a state or territory government digital identity, provided it meets equivalent privacy, human rights, and security requirements to keep myGov safe and secure. Volume 2 subchapter 3.3 details the steps needed to support the digital identity ecosystem.

International example: My Service Canada Account

In Canada, users signing into a *My Service Canada Account* are presented with multiple choices for signing in: using a government ID, signing in with their bank, or signing in with a digital ID issued by their province.⁷⁹

All Australians are able to easily set up an IP3 ‘strong’ digital identity. Volume 2 subchapter 3.2 provides further details on this. For a transitional period, people who cannot set up an IP2 (‘standard’) or IP3 (‘strong’) digital identity are able to transact with government agencies using an IP1 (‘basic’) digital identity. This is more secure than using a myGov account today, but government agencies need to make risk-based assessments on whether added security checks are needed to verify identity for a service.

It is easy for people to increase the ‘strength’ of a digital identity when needed. This includes a straightforward transition between the service, the identity exchange, and the identity provider to complete the process. Users have easy access to support if they get stuck in the process.

Government agencies have a single consistent way to authenticate and verify the identity of people applying for their service. There is a single framework to support sign in and identity verification, incorporating accreditation, data standards, liability, and charging.

Current state

When myGov was first released, myGov accounts did not hold any personally identifiable information about the user, such as a name or date of birth, because they were only used as a way for people to link other government services for the purpose of signing in. Over time, myGov accounts have become more unique, as linking to a ‘profile member service’ such as the ATO would automatically populate the myGov account with the person’s name and date of birth.

Currently, people have multiple options to sign in to a myGov account. Every account has a username and password. As an added security measure, users must set up secret questions, receive a code over SMS, or use the myGov Code Generator app. If access to the second-factor device is lost, the myGov account cannot be recovered, and people are asked to start over with another account, which means every member service requires linking again.

78 Singapore Government, Singpass – FAQ [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://www.singpass.gov.sg/main/html/faq.html>>

79 Government of Canada, My Service Canada Account [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/my-account.html>>

By design, many different myGov accounts can be created for someone and linked again to the same member services, even if they have been linked to a different myGov account before. Government agencies have expressed concern that fraudsters are “creating new accounts and abusing agency [proof of record ownership processes] to gain online access” for an individual, bypassing the sign in process for any existing myGov accounts.⁸⁰ For example, the ABC reported in December 2022 on how the myGov linking processes were abused by a criminal to lodge fraudulent tax returns totalling \$25,000.⁸¹

Since 2020, Australians have been able to link a digital identity to an existing myGov account. Once linked, digital identity can be used as an alternative to a username and password when signing in, which reduces the likelihood of a user becoming permanently locked out of their account. Whilst 2.4 million myGov accounts have been linked to a digital identity, actual usage is low: on average less than 8,000 users choose digital identity to sign in each day, which equates to around 1% of total sign-ins.⁸²

After setting up a digital identity, the experience of using it to sign in can be cumbersome and routinely take 3 to 5 minutes to complete. It involves multiple handoffs between the service, the exchange, and the identity provider – and back again. Each handoff includes an intentional 3-second delay to make clear the separation between each entity in the process.

Currently, myGovID, which is run by the ATO, is the only identity provider available on the government identity exchange. There are several pain points with the current user experience of myGovID, including:

- where individuals’ names do not match across identity documents.
- during set up, personal details must be repeated for every identity document.
- moving to a new mobile device requires all identity documents to be provided again.
- when signing into a mobile service with myGovID, rather than being returned to the signed in service, users are left on the myGovID home screen without instructions.
- some error messages only include an error code, which must be looked up online to find out what went wrong.

The similarities in branding between myGov and myGovID cause confusion. People have told the audit that navigating between the services is “too difficult to understand”, the process is “circular” and “self-referencing”, and the overall usability is “dreadful”.⁸³

Government agencies have told the panel the existence of 2 separate authentication methods – myGov and digital identity – creates “additional complexity and cost” through the need to onboard to both, with a strong preference for a “universal approach to authentication”.⁸⁴

80 Commonwealth agency submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

81 ABC News, *Fake myGov profiles are being used to hack ATO accounts. Sue found this out the hard way*, accessed 18 December 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-18/ato-tax-hacked-via-mygov-services-australia-exploit/101781656>>

82 myGov User Audit, Analysis of Services Australia data on digital identity sign-ins between 1 October and 31 October 2022 (unpublished)

83 myGov user submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

84 Commonwealth Agency submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

Gaps and actions

Government should shift to use digital identity as the primary way to sign into all government services, including myGov. This will be a complex transition for Australia, particularly in cleaning up many duplicate myGov accounts, and supporting Australians who cannot currently get a strong-enough digital identity. It will require a high level of coordination across government agencies and with states and territories.

Clear communication and trust will be critical to bringing Australians along the journey, but with a considered approach to privacy, security, and user experience, this will put in place strong national digital foundations for the future, and a much better experience for Australians.

ACTION: Transition to a safe and secure system of digital identity as the primary means of authenticating to government services.

ACTION: Develop a coordinated plan for the digital identity transition, including clear communications and commitments to Australians on how digital identity will (and will not) be used, the clean-up of historical duplicate myGov accounts, and interim support for IP1 'basic' strength digital identities.

There are immediate improvements to be made to the current experience of using digital identity, in particular addressing shortcomings in myGovID. Without making these improvements, a transition to greater use of digital identity risks a slower and more complex experience for Australians to sign into government services than it does today.

ACTION: Make immediate improvements to the user experience of setting up and using myGovID, including:

- allowing personal details to be entered once and reused for multiple identity documents.
- supporting the quick transfer of an existing myGovID to another mobile device.
- a better user experience when signing into a mobile app or website with myGovID.
- making it easier for people to set up a myGovID when their names do not match across documents.
- ensuring users do not get stuck when encountering errors.

ACTION: Consolidate the front ends of the myGovID and myGov apps, or alternatively rebrand myGovID to make clearer the distinction from myGov.

ACTION: Allow government services to embed a digital identity sign in widget directly into the user experience of the service, so users do not need to navigate a separate series of websites to use digital identity.

3.2 EVERYONE CAN GET A USABLE DIGITAL IDENTITY

The Government should make it easy and painless for all Australians to get a digital identity. Australians who cannot set up a digital identity have a higher risk of exclusion from services in government and wider society. Yet, today, almost half the Australian population do not have the right documents to be able to get a 'strong' digital identity under the current operation of the Australian Government Identity System.

Government must do more to make sure everybody can get a digital identity if they choose to, and the digital identity system must be trustworthy and easy to understand so more Australians choose to get a digital identity. This will require the introduction of legislation to protect people's privacy in relation to facial recognition technology and for government to offer offline verification alternatives for people wishing to have a digital identity without sufficient identity documentation.

Features of a desired future state

Government has an obligation to make sure all Australians can get a IP3 ('strong') digital identity, the highest level of digital identity currently available, and be able to use it with all government and non-government digital services, so nobody is excluded from the convenience and security offered by a digital identity.

If users cannot get verified with their existing identity documents, the Government helps a user get a myGovID through other verification methods. This builds upon existing mechanisms in Services Australia to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as community referees. This means nobody is deprived of the choice to set up and use a digital identity.

Australians do not have to use a dedicated mobile device to be able to set up and use a digital identity. myGovID supports switching between multiple users on an existing mobile device, with security protections in place, and offers a web version for people to access without the need to install a mobile app.

Increased support for contemporary two- or multi-factor authentication patterns, such as hardware keys and passkeys, makes it easier and more secure for people to use their digital identity from any device of their choosing, so users who might move between multiple devices can easily and securely port their digital identity to a device of their choice.

Technology example: Passkeys

Passkeys are a digital credential mechanism to sign in online without using passwords. The standard, built upon public-key cryptography, has been backed by Apple, Google and Microsoft, with support already in place across iOS, Android, Mac and Windows.⁸⁵

Passkeys work by storing a private key on the user's device, specific to the app or website, sharing only the public key with the website itself. Users can protect the use of the passkey through their mobile device's built-in biometric verification, such as Face ID, and optionally sync their passkeys across multiple devices.

Passkeys are easier to use, because there is no password to remember, and more secure, because passkeys are resilient to phishing attacks and data breaches as there is no password to steal.

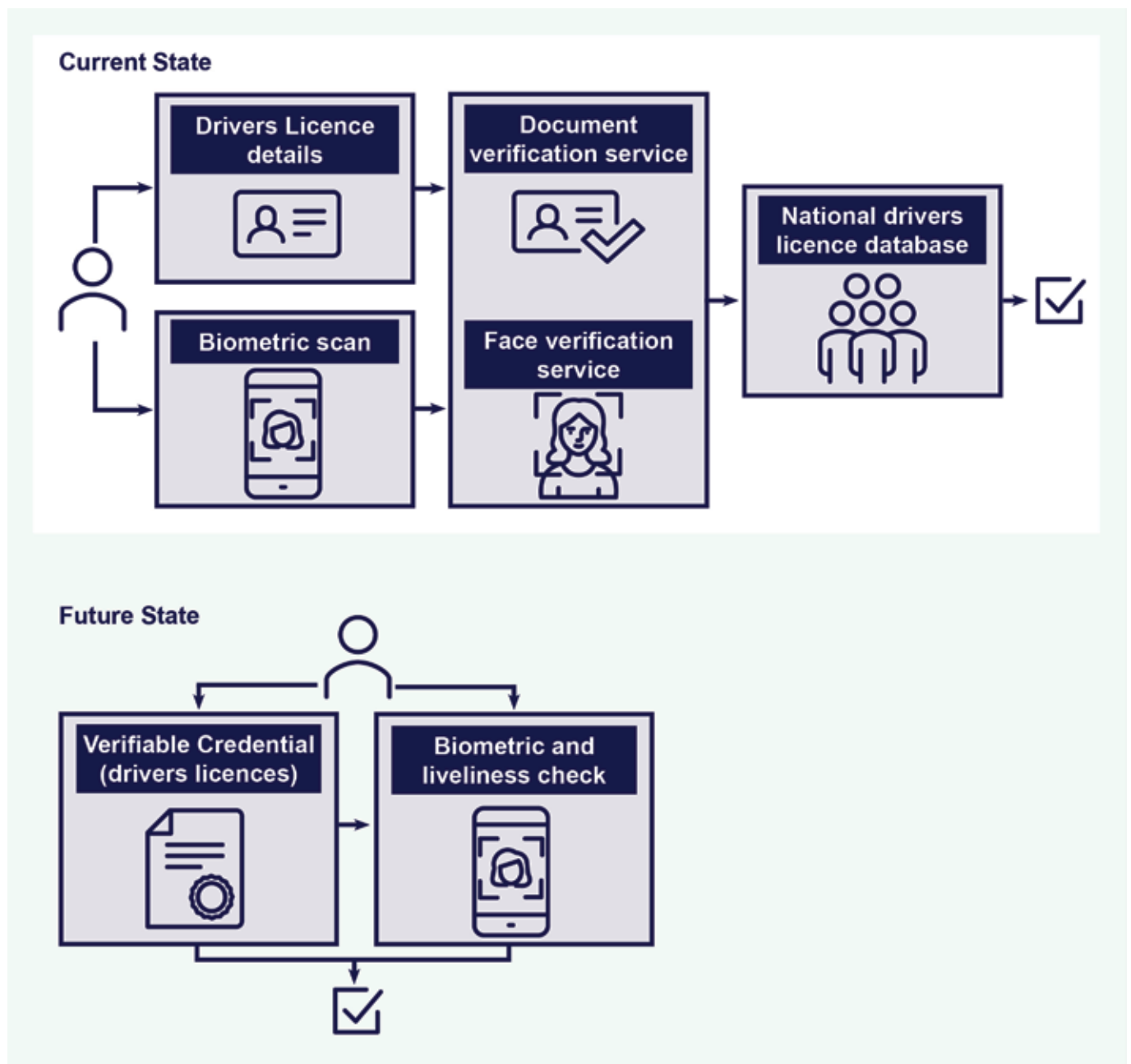
There could be future opportunities to use passkeys with digital identity, further strengthening security for people whilst simplifying the experience of signing in.

⁸⁵ FIDO Alliance, Passkeys [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://fidoalliance.org/passkeys/>>

Australians are able to trust the protections in the identity ecosystem to keep data safe and protect their privacy. Government provides clear communications around digital identity, explaining its limits and how user of digital identity is protected from government overreach. This transparency supports the widespread adoption and use of digital identity in the community.

This includes exploring alternative ways to offer facial verification without establishing a national store of biometric information. For example, future issuance of digital credentials by state and territory governments (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.4) could allow an individual to verify themselves against the photo provided in their digital driver licence, rather than retrieving the photo from a national database.

FIGURE 8: HOW A PERSON WILL BE ABLE TO VERIFY BIOMETRICS USING THE PHOTO CONTAINED IN A DIGITAL DRIVER LICENCE, RATHER THAN PULLING FROM A NATIONAL DATABASE.



Current state

The lack of digital identity providers onboarded to the Australian Government Identity System limits who can get a 'strong' (IP3) digital identity. Currently 4 million people have a 'Standard' (IP2) and 3 million have a 'Strong' digital identity. The only identity provider onboarded is myGovID, operated by the ATO, which requires an Australian Passport to be able to verify a user to IP3. Only 52% of Australians have a current passport,⁸⁶ which means 48% of Australians cannot get a strong myGovID.

Currently, an IP3 digital identity is needed for people to be able to use digital identity to apply for a tax file number or a Centrelink service. Alternative verification processes outside of digital identity do exist for these services but are less convenient for people. More services in future will require an IP3 digital identity. This will continue to widen the divide between those who can access services using strong digital identity, and those who cannot risk being left behind.

The Identity-matching Services Bill 2019

The use of biometric verification from driver licences to verify a user to IP3 through myGovID has been proposed through the Identity-matching Services Bill 2019. If it had passed, this Bill would have set out a legislative framework for the Face Verification Service (FVS), which can draw biometric data from existing government databases to verify an individual on a 'one-to-one' basis, and the establishment of a national database of driver licence photos.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) unanimously found that this Bill was inadequate, including in its privacy protections, and recommended that it be amended significantly before being reintroduced.⁸⁷ No amendments were introduced, and the Bill lapsed with the previous parliament.

The failure to address the PJCIS concerns about the Identity-matching Services Bill, and the failure to pass this or any other legislation to regulate Australia's digital identification framework, have resulted in significant problems. First, some of the elements provided for in the Bill, such as the FVS, have been implemented without any legislative foundation. Secondly, the privacy and other protections that the PJCIS recommended have not been introduced, leaving Australians vulnerable to human rights infringements.

Notwithstanding the failure to pass the Identity-matching Services Bill at the federal level, some other Australian jurisdictions have passed legislation to enable sharing, such as Queensland.⁸⁸ Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia have already uploaded driver licence images to the national database but, in the absence of Commonwealth legislation, use is limited to agencies of the originating jurisdiction.⁸⁹ Other jurisdictions, including NSW, are yet to upload data or bring forward enabling legislation.

There are also many people who do not have the required identity documentation, such as a birth certificate or citizenship certificate, to set up an IP2 (standard) digital identity under the TDIF. For example, a recent initiative by UNICEF Australia and Pathfinders estimated there to be more than 200,000 Aboriginal Australians without birth certificates.⁹⁰

86 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>>

87 Parliament of Australia, *Advisory report on the Identity-matching Services Bill 2019 and the Australian Passports Amendment (Identity-matching Services) Bill 2019*, October 2019

88 *Police and Other Legislation (Identity and Biometric Capability) Amendment Act 2018 (QLD)*

89 iTNews, *Three states complete national face matching database upload*, December 2019, accessed via <<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/three-states-complete-national-face-matching-database-upload-535352>>

90 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/>>

There is no process for undocumented people to obtain an IP2 or IP3 myGovID, despite the TDIF permitting the use of “alternative identity proofing processes” to verify identity.⁹¹ As a result, Australians without sufficient proof of identity documentation do not currently have the choice to set up a digital identity, with the convenience and security benefits it would bring.

Case study: Services Australia

Services Australia has long-standing processes to verify identity of individuals without proof of identity documentation. This includes working directly with communities and using ‘authorised referees’, such as doctors, school principals and religious leaders to vouch for an individual’s identity.⁹²

This process supports approximately 500,000 people to access social services, including obtaining the identifiers required to use Centrelink digital services.

myGovID currently does not support users who do not have access to a dedicated mobile device, as it only allows one user per device to set up a myGovID. It does not support use through a web browser alone or through a desktop app. ACMA estimates 6% of Australians do not own a smartphone.⁹³ These users would currently be excluded from setting up a digital identity.

Signing in to myGovID from a new mobile device requires a user to input all identity document details again, including any biometric checks. The time taken to bring together and input details of identity documents again can be time consuming and frustrating for people and prevent users who may have lost documentation (e.g. in a natural disaster or in leaving home) from easily retaining a digital identity.

Gaps and actions

If myGovID is to be an effective identity provider that can support all Australians, it needs a new capability to help people without sufficient proof of identity documents set up a digital ID, and make design changes to allow people without dedicated mobile devices to use digital identity easily and securely.

ACTION: Commit to offer all Australians the ability to set up an IP3 (strong) digital identity with myGovID, including through an in-person verification process with Services Australia where people do not have sufficient identity documentation.

ACTION: Make it easier to recover an existing myGovID identity from a new device without the need to provide all identity documents again.

ACTION: Pilot ways to use myGovID without a dedicated mobile device, including the use of cloud-based Passkeys and physical security keys.

If more Australians are to be able to get an IP3 ‘strong’ digital identity, the Australian Government Identity System will need to support safe, secure, and privacy-preserving biometric verification across more kinds of identity documents, including driver licences.

This must happen on a foundation of legislation that sets out clear accountabilities and safeguards to guarantee the privacy and human rights of Australians. In addition to re-introducing legislation to underpin identity matching, further work should be done to explore how face verification can be done securely without the need for a national database of driver licence photos.

91 Digital Transformation Agency, *TDIF Role Requirements v4.7*, June 2022, pp.14-16

92 Department of Social Services, *Social Security Guide: Persons experiencing difficulty with identity confirmation & verification* [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://guides.dss.gov.au/social-security-guide/2/2/1/40>>

93 Australian Communications and Media Authority, *Communications and media in Australia: Trends and developments in telecommunications 2020–21, 2021*, p.18

ACTION: Re-introduce identity matching legislation that addresses the concerns raised by the PJCIS about privacy and security.

ACTION: Invest in the development of privacy-preserving alternatives to face verification of driver licences, including matching against digital credentials issued by states and territories, and consider removal of the emerging national database of driver licence photos.

3.3 GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS AND CONNECTS WITH THE EVOLVING DIGITAL IDENTITY ECOSYSTEM

Digital identity is a key component of the broader digital economy. As more transactions move from physical, face-to-face interactions to online, and with the digital economy emerging as a key driver of economic growth in the post COVID-19 recovery, interoperability of digital identity with government service delivery becomes increasingly important.

Government should ensure that digital identity can seamlessly interact across systems, including state and territory digital identities, to drive better security, privacy and trust in government services.

Features of a desired future state

A strong national digital identity system delivers economy-wide benefits by providing Australians with a more efficient, secure, and privacy-preserving way of accessing services. Digital identity protects Australians against increasing levels of fraud and cybercrime and puts people in control of what personal information is shared.

For a national digital identity system to function effectively, it must be designed for interoperability while being able to address concerns of privacy, security and accuracy of data. As such, there is a regulatory oversight within government to ensure scrutinised and consistent accreditation of entities to participate in the national digital identity system and to ensure that privacy, security and the human rights of Australians are protected.

Research: Digital identity and economic growth

Digital identity can create economic value for countries primarily by enabling greater formalisation of economic flows, promoting higher inclusion of individuals in a range of services, and allowing incremental digitisation of sensitive interactions that require high levels of trust.

Analysis conducted by McKinsey Global Institute on Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States indicates that individual countries could unlock economic value equivalent to between 3 and 13% of GDP in 2030 from the implementation of a national digital identity ecosystem.⁹⁴

The hub of the national digital identity system is the exchange, which connects the service a person is trying to use (called the 'relying party') with the service a person is using to verify their identity (called the 'identity provider').

Federal government services are required to use the government-operated exchange, to make sure a digital identity established with one provider can be easily re-used across other government services. This also helps government services to converge on a consistent approach to charging, liability, and the use of non-government operated identity providers.

As is currently envisaged with the TDIF, Australians keep the choice to have a digital identity with more than one identity provider. This mitigates concerns around having a single database of citizen data. However, Boston Consulting Group research shows that 72% of Australians would prefer one or 2 digital identity solutions, with people likely to choose to use only one identity provider for government services and a separate digital identity for non-government services.⁹⁵

94 McKinsey Global Institute, *Digital identification: A key to inclusive growth*, 2019, accessed via <<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/digital-identification-a-key-to-inclusive-growth>>

95 Boston Consulting Group, *Digital Government Citizen Survey 2022*, 2022

Where a state or territory government offers their own identity provider that meets the national standard, people have the choice to use it through the federal government exchange. For example, a person could use a NSW Digital ID to sign into myGov or federal government services. To ensure trust between the parties within the identity system, ongoing security and privacy accreditation of all identity providers is required, including regular transparent reporting on compliance.

The “double-blind” principle of the government identity exchange is retained. This means an identity provider cannot see which service a user is signing into, and vice versa. This protects users’ privacy by preventing an identity provider forming a rich picture of someone’s digital identity activity.

The national government exchange is supported by a regulatory framework that outlines the governance and operation of the exchange, backed by legislation. There is independent oversight of the identity system, providing increased transparency and trustworthiness for Australians and other jurisdictions. There is also a robust model for charging and liability within the system.

The charging model for digital identity incentivises relying parties to make full use of digital identity. For example, if agencies are charged for each digital identity transaction, it provides a strong disincentive to use digital identity as the credential to sign into government services, as proposed in Volume 2 subchapter 3.1. Instead, agencies are likely to verify a users’ identity once, but perpetuate separate accounts for the day-to-day signing in. An alternative could be to charge a flat fee per active digital identity per agency or per jurisdiction. This will encourage wider uptake across government and state and territories.

Within the Australian Government, responsibilities for digital identity across agencies are clearly defined, with a single agency anointed with a leadership role to accelerate the implementation of a national digital identity ecosystem. This simplifies the engagement with other agencies, jurisdictions, and the private sector and establish strong accountability.

Current state

The Trusted Digital Identity Framework (TDIF) has been under development for 7 years, but there is still no operating identity ecosystem outside federal government. Legislation to enable wider participation has been delayed until late-2023. There is no agreed charging or liability model. Key assumptions, including if government agencies will trust non-myGovID identity providers, are not yet settled.

Responsibility for digital identity sits across 4 different portfolios in the Australian Government. No single portfolio has responsibility for the overarching digital identity system, with many decisions requiring consultation and agreement across 4 different agencies. The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for identity policy and operates the face and document verification services. The DTA is responsible for digital identity policy, including administration of the TDIF and digital identity legislation. Services Australia operates the digital identity exchange for the Australian Government and the Interim Oversight Authority. The ATO has delivery responsibility for myGovID, the government’s identity provider.

In lieu of a national digital identity system, jurisdictions are heading off in their own directions. For example, NSW intends to bring forward their own digital identity legislation in early-2023, pursuing a more decentralised approach to identity verification. Other jurisdictions have indicated appetite to introduce their own comparable legislation.⁹⁶

Whilst there is a stated willingness to align to the federal efforts, the first-mover advantage will drive quick uptake and result in a complex and fragmented ecosystem. It is likely that, in spite of best intentions, individual jurisdictions will not align with each other. The creation of a cohesive nationwide system may require the unpicking and realignment of each state and territories’ existing regulations. Smaller Australian jurisdictions have indicated they would consider retiring their own identity and account capability in future, should an established and reliable digital identity platform exist within the Australian Government.

96 NSW Government, NSW Government Identify strategy current initiatives [website], January 2021, accessed via <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/strategy/nsw-government-identity-strategy/current-initiatives>>

Under the previous government, an exposure draft of a Trusted Digital Identity Bill was published for public consultation but did not progress into Parliament.⁹⁷ The absence of legislation has limited the uptake of digital identity outside of the Australian Government, as states and territories have only been able to participate in the identity system as a trial, and its current operation operates without any dedicated legal and privacy safeguards for Australians.

Gaps and actions

If Australia has any chance at aligning around a common regulatory approach to digital identity and avoid a future of fragmentation where jurisdictions go it alone, urgent progress must be made to pass national legislation and establish a regulator for the digital identity ecosystem. Clear leadership across governments will be required to chart this course in a timely fashion.

ACTION: Accelerate the introduction of national digital identity legislation and a national regulator for the digital identity system to ensure effective security, privacy and other human rights protection and interoperability across jurisdictions and the private sector.

ACTION: Consider the roles of Australian Government agencies across digital identity policy, strategy and delivery, with a focus on simplifying the number of agencies involved and designating a lead agency for the digital identity ecosystem.

If the national digital identity exchange, operated by the Australian Government, is to expand across government and to states and territories, rapid progress is required to agree a charging framework and a liability model.

ACTION: Agree a charging and liability model for the government digital identity exchange, including a focus on a pricing model which incentivises regular day-to-day use of digital identity.

ACTION: Require all federal government services to use the federal government identity exchange for digital identity.

To ensure the federal government identity system is trustworthy for Australians, the key privacy principles in the design of the TDIF, including the double-blind exchange and the choice of identity provider, should be retained and enhanced.

ACTION: Allow any state and territory jurisdiction with an identity provider meeting the TDIF requirements to onboard to the federal government exchange.

ACTION: Recommit to the double-blind design principle of the federal government identity exchange.

⁹⁷ Australian Government, *Draft legislation has now been released for the Australian Government Digital Identity System*, October 2021, accessed via <<https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/news/draft-legislation-has-now-been-released-for-the-australian-government-digital-identity-system>>

3.4 PEOPLE CAN EASILY PROVE ELIGIBILITY WITHOUT SHARING ALL PERSONAL INFORMATION

Credentials are a part of our daily lives. Driver licences are used to assert that a person can operate a motor vehicle, university degrees can be used to assert a person's level of education, and government-issued passports enable people to travel between countries. Currently, organisations collect copies of these credentials to verify that a person's claim or eligibility is correct.

Digital credentials are in use today. Industry and governments are exploring the use of digital credentials as they offer a convenient, secure, and privacy-oriented alternative to current physical and digital identity management approaches.

Government should take an expanding role in the use and interoperability of digital credentials across Australia and prioritise the development of Australian Government documents as verifiable credentials in the myGov wallet. Over time, government should look to restrict the collection of identity data by private organisations where a digital credential could be reasonably accepted.

Features of a desired future state

Australians are able to use digital credentials to prove a wide range of permissions and attributes to government and third parties. This is fast to use and widely accepted by providers without the need to retain additional copies of identity data. This is accompanied by strong privacy protections when proving eligibility and people are able to clearly understand what data is being shared.

Compared with sharing physical credentials, such as a driver's licence, passport or Medicare card, using a digital credential offers people more control about the specific details shared. For example, a person is able to choose which specific details to share, such as sharing a name and date of birth, but not an address. Further, rather than sharing a person's date of birth, it is possible to share only the 'claim' that a person is over 18.

Digital credentials reduce the risk of fraud because it is easier to detect if a digital credential has been tampered with. Standards, such as verifiable credentials, set out secure and privacy-preserving ways that allow people to check if a credential is legitimate. In combination with digital identity, digital credentials can be more easily verified online, rather than requiring a licence to be presented in person. This has many opportunities for eligibility claims in occupational licenses, working with vulnerable people checks, insurance coverage, residential status and proof of age, allowing businesses to dedicate resources to more productive areas.

Digital credentials allow for easier interoperability across international borders. For example, an Australian driver licence could be easily verified overseas. An overseas graduate applying for an Australian visa could present their academic qualifications as digital credentials – allowing for easy verification in an environment rife with attempted fraud.

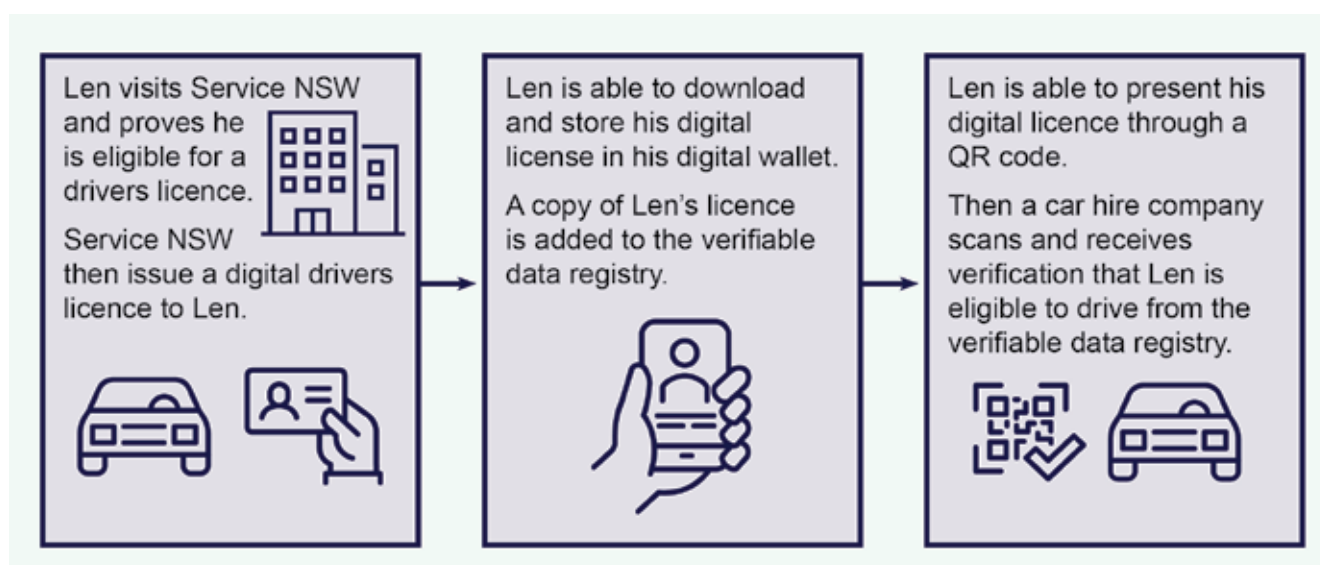
The myGov wallet is the home for a wide range of verifiable credentials issued by the Australian Government, and potentially other jurisdictions. This helps people to share the information needed to prove eligibility for a wide range of government and private sector services.

FIGURE 9: VERIFIABLE CREDENTIALS IN PRACTICE

Through using verifiable credentials, an issuer of credentials such as Service NSW could issue a digital driver licence to a person as a verifiable credential. The person could then add the credential to a digital wallet on their phone.

If the person was looking to hire a car, the hire company needs to be able to verify they hold a valid driver licence. From the digital wallet, the credential can be securely shared with the hire company. The hire company can look up the credential in the verifiable data registry and obtain a digital signature. This signature allows the hire company to independently check that the credential is legitimate.

In this scenario the company can confirm the credential in real time, without the need to hold onto identity documents.



Current state

Currently governments mandate organisations in industries such as telecommunications,⁹⁸ finance,⁹⁹ health,¹⁰⁰ and even hospitality¹⁰¹ verify who their customers are.

In many cases, this involves the scanning and storage of copies of physical identity documents and storing more personal information than is required, such as a full copy of a driver licence or passport. These physical checks rely on the security features of the physical documents, making it difficult to know if it has been fraudulently issued, tampered with, or cancelled.

98 Australian Communications and Media Authority, The ACMA's rules on ID checks for prepaid mobiles [website], accessed December 2022 via <<https://www.acma.gov.au/acmas-rules-id-checks-prepaid-mobiles>>

99 AUSTRAC, Customer identification: Know your customer (KYC) [website], accessed October 2022 via <<https://www.austrac.gov.au/business/how-comply-and-report-guidance-and-resources/customer-identification-and-verification/customer-identification-know-your-customer-kyc>>

100 Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Patient identification [website], accessed via <<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/communicating-safety/patient-identification>>

101 LegalVision, Legal Responsibilities When Collecting ID Documentation [website], May 2020, accessed via <<https://legalvision.com.au/collecting-id-documentation/>>

Since 2006, businesses have been able to check the validity of a range of identity documents, such as driver licences, Medicare cards and passports by using the Document Verification Service (DVS), operated by the Department of Home Affairs. This relies on the details of the document, such as a card number or date of birth, being entered by a user into the system. Therefore, anybody with access to the document's details can easily impersonate an individual.

As a result, when recent data breaches in Australia have exposed document details, the response has included blocking breached passports from DVS¹⁰² and issuing replacement driver licences,¹⁰³ preventing breached numbers from being reused by criminals. As long as verification processes rely on knowledge of the identity details alone, identity document data will come under continued attack.

A recent study conducted by the Australian National University Centre of Social Research and Methods found that around 77% of Australians are concerned about identity theft or being a victim of online banking or fraud. In addition, the study also found that Australians have a greater level of trust in government protecting their personal information than what they do with industries such as telecommunications, social media and companies that offer services online. In the case of telecommunications there was a 10.5% cent decline in the average trust in between August and October 2022.¹⁰⁴

The Australian Government, through the TDIF, provides a framework for digital identity services including credential providers and attribute providers, operating through a centralised digital identity exchange. However, there is no national framework for the use of digital credentials, including the operation of digital wallets. Despite this, the Australian Government and states and territories have already progressed their use, such as digital COVID-19 vaccination certificates and digital driver licences.

myGov is currently working on a digital Medicare card for release in early-2023, which will function as a verifiable credential for the myGov mobile app.¹⁰⁵ NSW is adopting the W3C verifiable credential standard, including for digital birth certificates, digital working with children checks, and education credentials. Legislation to support the use of digital identity and credentials in NSW is proposed for 2023.¹⁰⁶ Queensland is adopting a competing standard, ISO/IEC 18013-5, for its forthcoming digital driver licence.¹⁰⁷

If Australian jurisdictions adopt different data standards for digital credentials or establish different processes for how credentials are issued or revoked, Australians will have a fragmented experience when moving across jurisdictions, continuing the challenges already seen today with interstate acceptance of digital driver licences.

102 Australian Passport Office, Optus Data Breach – Frequently Asked Questions [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://www.passports.gov.au/optus-data-breach-frequently-asked-questions>>

103 ACT Government, *Canberrans most at risk to receive new, free driver licence*, September 2022, accessed via <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/act_government_media_releases/cheyne/2022/canberrans-most-at-risk-to-receive-new,-free-driver-licence>

104 Biddle, N., Gray, M. and McEachern, S., *Data trust and data privacy: A brake on the data and digital dividend?*, October 2022, accessed via <https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2022/10/Data_trust_and_data_privacy-_A_brake_on_the_data_and_digital_dividend.pdf>

105 Services Australia, *myGov Verifiable Credentials Strategy (Draft)*, 2022 (unpublished)

106 NSW Government submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

107 Queensland Government, About the Digital Licence app [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/projects/digital-licence/about>>

Gaps and actions

The digital credential ecosystem will grow regardless of the Australian Government's involvement, spurred on by state and territory governments investing in digitisation of existing paper credentials. However, if there is to be a national acceptance of digital credentials across Australia, national leadership is needed to bring all jurisdictions in the same direction before it is too late. This should not just involve alignment on standards, but actively progress pilots for inter-jurisdictional acceptance of high value digital credentials, such as digital driver licences.

Whilst digital identity is closely linked to digital credentials, there may be advantages for digital credential policy and, where applicable, legislation, to sit outside the scope of the TDIF. The ease at which a digital credential can be issued or verified, and the international nature of the standards, mean that the accreditation processes of the TDIF may not be best suited to a much larger ecosystem.

ACTION: With states and territories, develop a national framework for the issuing, storage and verification of digital credentials across Australia, including standards and interoperability of digital wallets, so that a credential issued by one jurisdiction can be easily verified in others.

ACTION: Identify and progress pilots for the acceptance of high value digital credentials, such as digital driver licences, across state and territory jurisdictions.

If Australia is to quickly transition away from holding copies of identity documents and other personal information in the many systems of the public and private sector, there needs to be widespread readiness to accept and trust digital credentials in the economy. Prioritising the onboarding of Australian Government-issued credentials and eligibility checks to the myGov app will lay the groundwork for others to start accepting credentials where physical documents are checked today.

ACTION: Accelerate the delivery of the top 10 most-used Australian Government permissions and eligibility checks as digital credentials in the newly released myGov app.

As the use of digital credentials increase, there will be legislative change required to restrict the storage of personal information and identity documents across Australia. Initially, the law may need to be changed to allow businesses to accept digital credentials where they are currently compelled to retain identity document details. Over time, legislation could prohibit the unreasonable collection and storage of personal data by private organisations.

ACTION: Undertake legislative reform to remove barriers to accepting digital credentials and digital identity where there is a statutory requirement to collect identity details about an individual (e.g. telecommunication providers).

ACTION: Introduce legislation to restrict the storage of copies of identity documents where acceptance of digital credentials, or digital identity verification, could be reasonably used instead.

3.5 YOUR DATA UNLOCKS BETTER SERVICES WITHOUT CREATING A CENTRAL DATA STORE

Sharing of personal data is integral to improved, personalised service delivery, but opportunities to make better use of data to tailor services require elevated levels of citizen trust that their data will be properly protected. To get there, government should avoid bringing data together in digital services by design and look to emerging global patterns for decentralised storage of personal data. Where personal data must be held centrally, people need autonomy, transparency, and legislated safeguards to remain in control of their personal information.

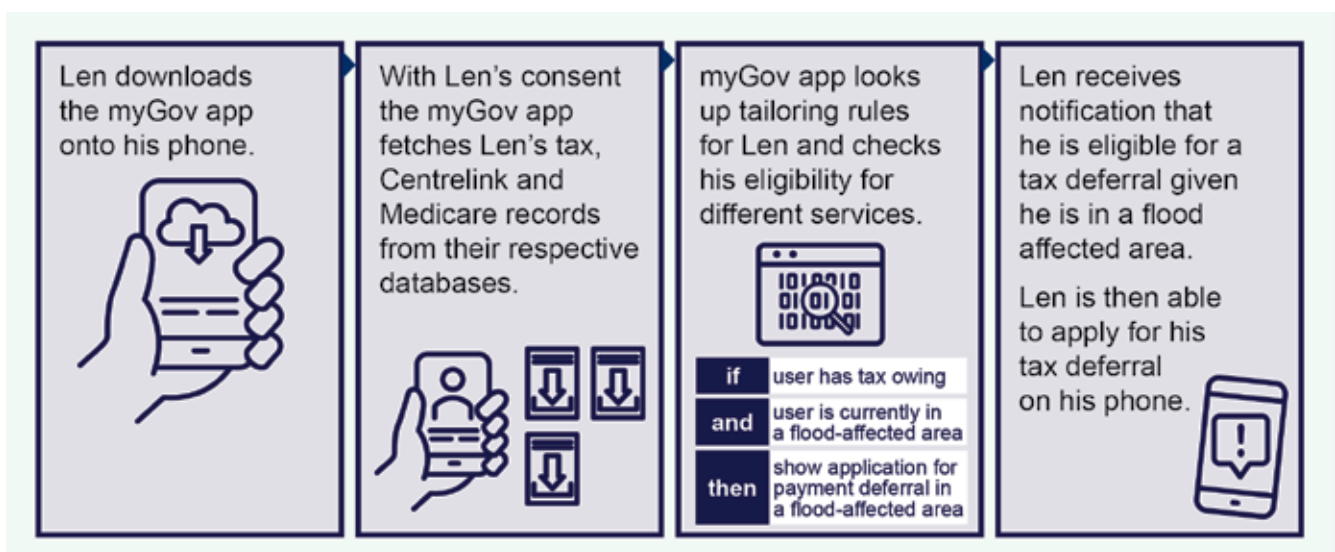
Features of a desired future state

Increased use of personal data in service delivery allows services to be better tailored to people's needs, such as automatically pre-filling forms, verifying eligibility, or proactively offering a service or benefit. The use cases and preconditions for tailoring services to people's needs are detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 1.6. Done right, this offers a faster and more seamless experience for Australians.

However, sharing of personal data for the purpose of improved digital services needs a strong social licence from Australians, requiring myGov to be a trustworthy steward of personal data. Civil society has raised concerns on the potential misuse of technology built today with legal and policy safeguards that could be removed in future.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, Australians will be able to trust that safeguards enacted today will be enduring and, by design, enshrine high thresholds for modification.

By design and consent, myGov allows services to bring together data for people from across government agencies for a specified purpose, without storing it in a single place. Over time, this will increasingly occur on a person's own device rather than on a government server. This will avoid creating a central honeypot of user data that could be an attractive target for cyberattack. When myGov does need to store data, it is underpinned by a clear legislative basis, offers strong safeguards, and keeps users informed about what data is being stored, how it is being used, and the choices available to users about its retention.

FIGURE 10: HOW A PERSON WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE A PERSONALISED MYGOV EXPERIENCE BY JOINING UP DATA FROM MULTIPLE AGENCIES WITHOUT CREATING A SINGLE DATA STORE ON A GOVERNMENT SERVER.



108 Interviews with privacy advocacy groups, myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

For example, a person who uses the myGov mobile app on their device is able to automatically request records from each government agency, such as the ATO, Medicare, or a state and territory government. Each record is stored securely on the mobile device, only accessible to the user. Using Verifiable Credentials (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.4), the user has the choice to securely share all or part of this data with others, in order to prove eligibility or pre-fill information.

The myGov app applies a series of automated rules against the data that has been downloaded. For example, if a person owes tax but currently lives in a disaster-affected area, the app sends a notification with an application to defer tax, pre-filled based on the information already downloaded to the device. In this example, the personal data about the user has never been brought together on a government server, and therefore could not be easily breached.

International example: Estonia's X-Road

X-Road is a data exchange platform allowing information to be automatically shared between different organisations through a common set of protocols and authentication processes. This allows for data to be easily brought together temporarily without storing it in one database.

X-Road was originally developed for use in Estonia but is now also used in the Finnish and Icelandic governments. In Estonia, more than 2600 services across the public and private sector are connected to X-Road and, in 2019, its use saved an estimated 1000 years of working time.¹⁰⁹

Notwithstanding the potential for greater decentralisation, there is likely to be some personal information that can only be stored within the myGov profile on behalf of other government agencies. For example, Volume 2 subchapter 3.1 considers the role of an expanded myGov profile of personal attributes to ease the process of linking to new services.

Where data is stored as part of the myGov profile, it is opt-in, and there are clear and enduring protections in place for users. This includes legislative provisions to set out what personal information can be stored in the myGov profile, and the processes by which this data can be shared with others. The protections in place are clearly explained to users, including allowing people to remove some or all of the data from their profile if they choose. There is strong access control and auditing around the use of profile information. For example, users are able to see when a particular attribute has been accessed by government, and who accessed it.

The more control and visibility Australians have over the use of their personal data, the more people will consider government trustworthy enough to use personal data to offer better services.

Current state

Global trends towards greater decentralisation of data have led to emerging technology standards. For example, the *InterPlanetary File System* protocol offers a distributed way to store and share data across the internet,¹¹⁰ and the Solid project at the W3C gives people greater control over the use of their personal information.¹¹¹ The use of verifiable credentials, discussed in Volume 2 subchapter 3.4, is designed around the decentralised storage of personal data.

Currently, myGov only holds a small amount of data in the profile of a myGov account: a person's name and date of birth. This reflects the origins of myGov as a single sign-on capability for government. The profile data is used to ensure people can only link a service to their myGov account if their details match. The information is copied from a "profile member service" the first time a user links to the service.

¹⁰⁹ E-Estonia, *Factsheet: X-Road*, March 2020, accessed via <<https://e-estonia.com/wp-content/uploads/2020mar-facts-a4-v02-x-road.pdf>>

¹¹⁰ InterPlanetary File System [website], 2022, <<https://ipfs.tech/>>

¹¹¹ Solid Project, *About Solid* [website], 2022, <<https://solidproject.org/about>>

Services Australia has bought a cloud software product, Adobe Target, for tailoring myGov's content and functionality based on an 'enhanced profile' of a user. This software has not yet been used for live users. myGov has developed a 'personalisation strategy', but the audit was not made aware of any specific use cases identified for the tailoring functionality.¹¹²

Currently, there is no legislative basis that underpins myGov's collection and retention of information about individuals. This limits the extent to which personal information can be stored, regardless of whether consent has been provided. In the absence of a legislative basis, the protections for Australians are inherited from existing privacy legislation and are not tailored to the myGov environment. Without a clearer legislative basis, the future collection or storage of data in myGov, including for tailoring, will be limited.

Gaps and actions

For myGov to grow further as national service delivery infrastructure, it needs to be a trustworthy holder of personal information. The low levels of dedicated privacy protections for the personal information stored in myGov, including the absence of a legislative basis, don't support this today, and limit what myGov will be able to do for Australians in future.

ACTION: Establish a legislative framework (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1) for the storage and use of personal attributes within the myGov profile.

ACTION: Offer added transparency for Australians to see how their data is accessed and used throughout government.

If myGov is to go further in future and provide services tailored to the needs of Australians, a new privacy-preserving and decentralised approach to tailoring should be adopted, with the processes and safeguards transparently communicated to users. Enshrining privacy in the way features and technology are designed and built will help Australians to trust the safeguards that exist today will be enduring into the future.

ACTION: myGov should adopt a design principle that features should be designed so personal data from different government agencies is only brought together for a person on their personal device.

112 Services Australia, *Enhanced myGov Personalisation Strategy*, 2022, Attachment A, p.11

Chapter 4:

A modern delivery engine

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4.1 SECURE, SCALABLE, AND RESILIENT TECHNOLOGY

As the role of myGov continues to grow, the technology on which it runs becomes even more important. Outages, slow operation, and cyber breaches have a significant impact on essential services for Australians and undermine trust in government. With increasing cyber-crime across the economy, the government is legally obliged to play a greater role in protecting personal information – something that Australians expect will be fulfilled.

Australians should be able to rely on government services being available in times of need and to trust their personal information will be kept safe. If services aren't available or can't be trusted, people won't be able to use them, instead accepting the inconveniences of an offline channel, or forgoing the use of the service entirely – sometimes at significant financial, personal and social cost.

myGov's platform has become more secure and resilient as a result of investment since 2021, but further work needs to be done, including engaging more closely with the security research community. Clear accountability for the overarching risks across government services, designing technology for security and availability, and greater coordination across government in responding to incidents will protect Australians as services become increasingly connected.

Features of a desired future state

myGov has a security and resilience posture that reflects its role as critical national infrastructure that underpins government services relied upon by Australians day-to-day. This is supported by a coordinated approach to the security and resilience of government services linked to myGov, reflecting the increased risks of a more connected and expanded ecosystem of digital services for Australians.

To assure the security and resilience of myGov and government services, myGov is able to scale to meet unexpected demand and adopt leading cyber security practices. Government holds an integrated view of the security and resilience of services between myGov and agencies, including a coordinated response mechanism during outages or cyber security incidents.

myGov is able to adapt to meet unexpected demands, including high transaction volumes from Australians, and unforeseen impacts on technology. myGov's technology architecture allows its infrastructure to swiftly scale up and down in response to increases in the numbers of users using myGov at any single time. Adopting fault-tolerant design principles, and increasing the levels of redundancy available, helps myGov to continue operating and recover quicker when incidents occur.

myGov is at the forefront of cyber security practices for digital services in government, reflecting its integral role as a platform for other government services and its ability to influence significant improvements to the digital delivery practices of other government agencies. The Information Security Manual recommends the use of SecDevOps practices in development.¹¹³ Examples of this include the use of automated software vulnerability scanning early in the software delivery pipeline, and automated tracking of external software dependencies to ensure security patches can be easily applied.

¹¹³ Australian Cyber Security Centre, *Information Security Manual*, December 2022, p.105, accessed via <<https://www.cyber.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/Information%20Security%20Manual%20%28December%202022%29.pdf>>

Applying the positive experience of a number of forward-leaning jurisdictions such as Singapore, myGov operates a 'bug bounty' program, rewarding external experts who successfully identify vulnerabilities in the platform. The Australian Cyber Security Centre advises that bug bounty programs "remove the negative stigma often associated with unsolicited security testing", but caution that the work involved to set up and run a program cannot be underestimated.¹¹⁴ Attracting more security experts to scrutinise myGov's security posture, whilst providing an incentive to report platform vulnerabilities for those who might otherwise seek to exploit them, increases the security of myGov for all Australians.

The increased interconnectedness of government services means a single point of failure can result in a significant data breach or outage affecting multiple government agencies and millions of Australians. Government has clear accountability for the security and resiliency of digital services across myGov, member services, and digital identity. This is wider than the existing Protective Security Policy Framework and actively stewards 'system of system' risks specific to digital services, extending beyond any single agency.

There are times when an outage or cyber security incident occurs, either within myGov, digital identity, or a member service. If there is an outage there is a proactive and connected response to ensure that the services can adapt to increases in use of other channels and ensure people have access to services. A prompt coordinated response across agencies helps minimise any impact on Australians.

An expanded myGov incident management framework sets out the responsibilities for Services Australia and agencies in working together to respond to incidents that affect myGov or member services. The framework sets out clear procedures for escalation of incidents, communications to people affected, and alternative arrangements to support users to get things done on the phone or in a service centre. Making incidents visible to all member services breaks down communication barriers between agencies and speeds up government's overall response.

Current state

Privacy and security of personal data are vital to Australians individually, and to the integrity of our national infrastructure as a whole. To date, myGov has held a strong record on cyber security and, with one notable exception during the COVID-19 pandemic, a generally good record on resiliency. Both have been further bolstered from the Enhanced myGov program investment over the past 18 months. However, cyber security and resiliency risks of myGov and member services are not currently collectively assessed, with no single point of visibility or accountability for potential risks across many government services.

Cyber-security risks, especially in respect of personal information held by or on behalf of government, are significant. The risk level is becoming worse, with increasing numbers of cyber criminals looking to exploit weaknesses in cyber-security systems, and criminals having more sophisticated tools at their disposal. The inherent risks are also severe as the interconnectedness of the online environment means that a single point of failure can result in a massive data breach.

114 Australian Cyber Security Centre, *Vulnerability Disclosure Programs Explained*, November 2022, p.1, accessed via <<https://www.cyber.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-11/PROTECT%20-%20Vulnerability%20Disclosure%20Programs%20Explained%20%28November%202022%29.pdf>>

Australians are concerned about the security of their personal information and the consequences of cyber breaches. Research in 2022 by the Australian National University found 77% of Australians are concerned about their identity being stolen and 72% are concerned about not being able to access online services because of cyber-attacks. Since 2019, the percentage of Australians who believed it was the responsibility of the consumer to ensure data is secure has fallen from 63% to 46.5%.¹¹⁵ Further, Australians have low expectations of government's ability to protect and respond to the cyber threat: only 30% believe government can prevent data being hacked or leaked, and only 30% believe that government could respond quickly and effectively to a data breach.¹¹⁶

Earlier outages of myGov, whilst infrequent, have had very visible consequences for Australians. myGov's outage in March 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily prevented Australians applying for benefits online. In response, thousands of Australians lined up outside service centres, with queues "stretching for hours around the block".¹¹⁷ An earlier outage in July 2019 temporarily prevented Australians from lodging tax returns or reporting employment income to Centrelink.¹¹⁸

The new myGov platform is more easily able to scale, as it has adopted cloud-native technology principles and has been regularly tested with increased loads, such as the spikes found during tax time. Recent performance testing completed has found the required load capacity for a peak event period is approximately 422,000 page views per hour. myGov is hosted on Services Australia's private cloud infrastructure, which operates out of 2 data centres in Canberra.

When things go wrong, the Incident Management and Escalation Framework provided to myGov member services largely defers to the internal incident management processes within Services Australia. It does not prescribe any specific responsibilities or arrangements tailored for incidents affecting myGov and multiple agencies.¹¹⁹

myGov is regularly the target of cyber security attacks, particularly attempted denial of service and credential stuffing attacks.¹²⁰ For example, between July and November 2022, there were 7 significant cyber security events of this kind investigated by Services Australia's cyber security team.¹²¹ To date, myGov has not suffered a known data breach. Recent improvements have been made to enhance cyber security, including the introduction of centralised audit logging and monitoring.¹²² myGov has adopted many 'secure by design' principles, including building cyber security into the delivery and operational pipelines.¹²³

myGov has published an email address for security vulnerability disclosure on the web.¹²⁴ Compared with other agencies, such as the ATO,¹²⁵ myGov does not publish details about what is in or out of scope of the program or acknowledge any researchers who have reported vulnerabilities, which may limit the extent to which researchers choose to take part.

115 Biddle, N., Gray, M. and McEachern, S., *Public exposure and responses to data breaches in Australia*, November 2022, pp.10-11, accessed via <https://csm.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/2022/11/Public_exposure_and_responses_to_data_breaches_in_Australia.pdf>

116 Biddle, N. et al, *Data trust and data privacy: A brake on the data and digital dividend?*, October 2022, p.14

117 ABC News, *MyGov website crashes as thousands seek Centrelink help amid coronavirus pandemic*, 23 March 2020, accessed via <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-23/mygov-website-down-centrelink-massive-queues-coronavirus/12080558>>

118 Dingwall, D., *myGov restored but ATO online services down in tax-time stumble*, 12 July 2019, accessed via <<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6270628/mygov-restored-but-ato-online-services-down-in-tax-time-stumble/>>

119 Services Australia, *Member Service Handbook v3.2*, July 2022, p.36 (unpublished)

120 OWASP, *Denial of Service*, 2022, accessed via <https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/Denial_of_Service>

OWASP, *Credential stuffing*, 2022, accessed via <https://owasp.org/www-community/attacks/Credential_stuffing>

121 Services Australia evidence to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

122 Services Australia, *Enhanced myGov High Level Architecture v4.0*, September 2022, p21 (unpublished)

123 *ibid.*, p19

124 myGov, *About myGov* [website], 2022, <<https://my.gov.au/en/about>>

125 Australian Taxation Office, *Report a system security vulnerability* [website], 2022, <<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/Online-services/Online-security/Report-a-system-security-vulnerability/>>

Currently, each government agency assures their own services and capabilities in the ecosystem, and the myGov platform itself has been assessed against government cyber security standards.¹²⁶ In other words, assurance is based on trust. However, no single entity has visibility of overarching systemic risks across government services. The Panel has not seen any holistic security assessment of the ecosystem of services that connect with myGov.

Government agencies have told the audit that an added role or layer of governance is not needed,¹²⁷ but at present there does not appear to be sufficient visibility, management, or accountability of overarching risk. Since 2013, the Australian National Audit Office has continued to note concerns about the ability for agencies to accurately self-assess their cyber security maturity.¹²⁸

Gaps and actions

If myGov is to be secure, scalable, and resilient for Australians, investment should continue to build and maintain the platform foundations and respond to the ever-evolving global cyber security threat environment. myGov can build upon the existing foundational work done to ensure that it becomes a leader in government for resilient service delivery.

ACTION: Evolve the existing vulnerability disclosure process into a bug bounty program to incentivise security researchers to help make myGov more secure for Australia.

If government services are to continue to be secure and available for Australians as myGov expands, and more personal information is shared across the ecosystem, independent assurance is needed to assess whether the current environment of trust and self-assessment is sufficient to deal with the increased connectivity of myGov, member services and digital identity.

ACTION: Undertake an independent review of the adequacy of current arrangements for assurance of systemic risk across the overarching government services ecosystem, including myGov, member services, and digital identity. This should include a risk assessment of the current state.

If government is to respond quickly when incidents occur and minimise the impact for Australians of an outage or cyber security attack, greater coordination is required across myGov and the rest of government.

ACTION: Review and expand the myGov Incident Management Framework and establish a dedicated incident response mechanism between myGov and other government services, with a focus on recovering faster when incidents occur and helping Australians navigate the consequences of services being unavailable. This should have consideration to existing whole-of-government incident management arrangements.

126 Services Australia, *Enhanced myGov PI4 IRAP Assessment Report v1.2*, May 2022 (unpublished)

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

128 Australian National Audit Office, *Interim Report on Key Financial Controls of Major Entities*, June 2022 pp.2526, accessed via <https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/Auditor-General_Report_2021-22_32.pdf>

4.2 STANDARDS SUPPORT ‘PLUG AND PLAY’ AND REUSABILITY

myGov offers a growing set of common technology capabilities for member services, such as an inbox and notifications. Greater use of these ‘building blocks’ by agencies will deliver a more consistent experience for Australians, and efficiencies for individual users and government as a whole. More can be done to ensure capabilities meet the needs of many government agencies, and the technical foundations are in place to give agencies the long-term certainty to invest in their adoption.

Features of a desired future state

Government agencies are quickly able to assemble capabilities like building blocks to respond to the changing needs of Australians and unexpected events. As more agencies reuse common capabilities rather than rebuilding their sites for new and enhanced capability, this creates economies of scale. This is more efficient and helps concentrate improvement efforts so all agencies (and people) benefit.

To get there, myGov is transparent about its technology architecture, gives certainty to agencies on how the technology works, and make sure capabilities can meet the needs of many agencies. In time, these technical foundations will be built upon by third party providers to offer more integrated and tailored services to people.

myGov’s architecture is clearly set out for agencies, detailing the common capabilities available for use and how to easily deploy these features. There is an open roadmap for agencies setting out new capabilities in development, and improvements underway.

Government example: Service NSW

Service NSW has published its technical architecture for government services. It shows how components can be reused across services without major rework, and across digital and non-digital user experiences. Some of the common services include email and SMS messaging, payments, case management, and proof of identity.¹²⁹

Agencies have more confidence in how myGov’s technology capabilities work and are able to see how they can easily be ported into their current architecture, increasing the adoption of myGov’s capabilities. myGov gives certainty to government agencies on the lifespan of technical integrations and sets clear responsibilities for agencies in maintaining integration.

There is technical support available for agencies, in addition to other non-technical incentives for agencies to adopt (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.5). For example, integration libraries in commonly used programming languages reduces the quantity and complexity of technical updates for agencies when myGov changes. A public status page setting out the current availability of each API makes it easier for agencies to respond to any integration issues.

International example: GOV.UK

GOV.UK Notify makes available code libraries in 6 different programming languages. This saves time as many agencies do not need to write custom integration code to use the platform. If technical changes are made to the platform, this reduces the changes for an agency to make.¹³⁰

129 NSW Government, *Service NSW omni-channel reference architecture*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/delivery/digital-service-toolkit/solutions/service-nsw-omni-channel-reference-architecture>>

130 Government of the United Kingdom, *GOV.UK Notify: Documentation*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.notifications.service.gov.uk/documentation>>

The APIs for GOV.UK Notify are versioned. This means major changes can be made without breaking the integrations of agencies already onboard. An online status page offers real-time reporting of platform uptime, so agencies can be automatically notified if an incident occurs.¹³¹

GOV.UK Notify publishes an online roadmap for agencies which sets out what has recently been done, what is currently being worked on, and what is forecast for upcoming quarters.¹³²

Common capabilities, such as notifications or tasks, are designed to meet the needs of many different, diverse services. This encourages adoption by more agencies as it meets more of their needs, rather than perpetuating separate capabilities designed for edge cases.

myGov designs new capabilities jointly with agencies. Technology decisions maximise the potential use of a capability across government, and new capabilities are built and tested with more than one agency. This mitigates the risk that technology challenges of any one agency could limit the future use of the capability elsewhere in government or across states and territories.

Expert research: Government platforms

Harvard Kennedy School research into government platforms notes that good platforms can often grow out of “point solutions” delivered by agencies as individual products. In addition, early adoption of a new platform capability by a high-profile use case can risk the platform becoming “tightly coupled with the demands of one use case”.¹³³

myGov’s technology is able to interoperate with other platforms and organisations outside government. For example, people can add appointments from myGov into the native calendar of their mobile device, alongside other calendar appointments. A health care provider can remind a person of an outstanding vaccination dose, captured as a task in myGov.

To meet the privacy expectations of Australians, any external provider needs to meet a high threshold for the privacy and security of a person’s data, noting this may limit some useful interactions where the privacy risk is disproportionate to the benefit for people. People are required to provide clear and specific consent for access.

Case study: COVID-19 vaccination certificate

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Australians could choose to access and share a vaccination certificate from Medicare through a state and territory check-in app.¹³⁴ As a result, people had the choice to automatically show their vaccination certificate when checking in to a venue, saving time by removing the need to open multiple different apps.

¹³¹ Government of the United Kingdom, *GOV.UK Notify Status*, 2022, accessed via <<https://status.notifications.service.gov.uk/>>

¹³² Government of the United Kingdom, *GOV.UK Notify Roadmap*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.notifications.service.gov.uk/features/roadmap>>

¹³³ Pope, R., *Playbook: Government as a Platform*, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2019, pp. 13,31, accessed via <<https://ash.harvard.edu/publications/playbook-government-platform>>

¹³⁴ Services Australia, *Share your COVID-19 digital certificate with a state check in app*, accessed via <<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/share-your-covid-19-digital-certificate-with-state-check-app>>

Current state

The recent investment through the Enhanced myGov program has re-platformed myGov into a microservices-oriented architecture. A key design principle is that API interfaces between myGov and member services are “standardised, not tailored to each service”.¹³⁵

Existing member services have been encouraged to transition from legacy endpoints to new APIs based on REST patterns.¹³⁶ However, there is no timeframe specified for member services to migrate and for old endpoints to be retired. Migration would require significant investment to legacy systems in agencies, competing with other priorities but, without a transition, ongoing effort is duplicated to support and improve 2 sets of APIs.

In 2021, the 130 federal, state, and local government agencies that adopted the DTA’s Notify platform were forced to find a new provider at short notice when the platform was retired, in response to a change in the DTA’s agency responsibilities.¹³⁷ Examples like this undermine agency confidence in being an early adopter of whole-of-government platforms, as it leaves a high risk that the technical investment to use a common capability might be written off.

myGov currently has limited interoperability with other platforms. For example, people do not have the choice to add cards, such as a Medicare card, from a myGov wallet into a native device wallet, or into a state or territory app. However, with the recent launch of the myGov mobile app, the use of push notifications to send myGov inbox messages directly to a user’s phone is a positive step forward.

Whilst Services Australia do interface regularly with many third-party providers through APIs (e.g. in healthcare), these providers do not currently consume myGov capabilities. If a provider were ready today, myGov would still need to deliver core capabilities to give people control over which third-parties could use their myGov account.

The adoption of common technology capabilities within member services has been limited. For example, not all member services support the processing of change of address updates through the ‘tell us once’ functionality.

Gaps and actions

myGov has adopted contemporary architectural principles and made considerable progress in building mature API foundations. There are incremental steps to take to support the wider adoption of common capabilities in the future, realising the opportunities and benefits.

To offer agencies more certainty on the direction and operation of common capabilities, myGov should set out the technology architecture, roadmap, processes, and status in the open.

ACTION: Publish the myGov technology architecture, including a blueprint for how agencies can incorporate current and future common capabilities into their services.

ACTION: Publish a ‘living’ roadmap for agencies of common capabilities in development and future capabilities in the backlog (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.3)

ACTION: In collaboration with government agencies, set out an API policy for myGov, describing a consistent approach for API standards, versioning, and retirement, including the responsibilities of member services.

ACTION: Create an online status page to monitor and report on individual myGov capabilities and allow agencies to automatically be notified if an outage occurs.

¹³⁵ Services Australia, *Enhanced myGov High-level Architecture v4.0*, September 2022, p.20 (unpublished)

¹³⁶ *Representational State Transfer* (REST) is a pattern for machine-to-machine data exchange. REST can be easier to use than older API patterns, such as SOAP, as it is more lightweight, supports many data formats, and makes greater use of web standards such as URIs and HTTP.

¹³⁷ Hendry, J., *DTA kills last of platform pilots as focus shifts to myGov rebuild*, August 2021, accessed via <<https://www.itnews.com.au/news/dta-kills-last-of-platform-pilots-as-focus-shifts-to-mygov-rebuild-567983>>

If future common capabilities can be easily adopted by a wide range of member services, the design process should make sure the capabilities support the diverse needs of agencies.

ACTION: Set out design principles for the development of new common capabilities including extensive co-design with current and potential future member services and, wherever possible, ensuring a diverse set of use cases and technology stacks are represented in the early adopters of a new capability.

To make more government services available in more relevant and tailored contexts for people, myGov should identify the most important needs of people this may solve, and gradually build out the platform enablers.

ACTION: Adopt a default principle that, subject to security and privacy considerations, new myGov features, such as appointments, should offer people the choice to integrate with any corresponding native features of the device.

ACTION: With wide consultation and regular updates, publish a list of the highest value needs of people that could be met through greater third-party integration with myGov.

ACTION: Over time, deliver future platform capability for individuals to manage thirdparty access and consent for myGov and member services, with high privacy and security thresholds to protect Australians.

4.3 A HIGH QUALITY ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE FOR AGENCIES

Government agencies looking to use myGov must navigate an onboarding process, like signing up to any online platform. To date, onboarding to myGov has been a complex, lengthy and frustrating process for member services, but targeted investment in the platform and additional support can overcome the existing challenges.

A sophisticated, cost effective and efficient onboarding process, backed by high-quality, real time agency support, will make the myGov platform more attractive to service agencies. In turn, this will mean users will be able to obtain more government information and services through the single myGov interface.

Features of a desired future state

Making the myGov onboarding process easier, faster, and cheaper for agencies incentivises agency adoption of myGov. This makes it easier to put into practice the stronger direction envisaged in the governance arrangements detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 5.4, increase the ease and consistency of accessing government services and provide more services for Australians.

It is easier for agencies to onboard themselves to myGov, dedicated support is available to help agencies with the onboarding process, and a community of government and industry staff with myGov expertise has been established.

myGov applies the same user-centred design approach used for designing services for Australians to the agency onboarding process. This includes surfacing the pain points experienced by agencies and increasing awareness of the technology challenges some agencies face in modifying existing systems to connect to myGov. Most importantly, this approach facilitates services joining myGov, increasing their accessibility and utility for Australians.

Expert research

Research into government platforms by the Harvard Kennedy School notes that a platform should consider government agencies as its users and apply the same usercentred design principles in making the platform easy to adopt. For example, platforms should “be usable without direct support”, including the need for “wellwritten documentation”, and making it possible for users to “try your platform quickly”.¹³⁸

myGov makes available technical documentation and ‘quick start’ guidance to prospective or onboarding services. By making it easy to find the technical requirements and show how to get started, agencies are able to self-assess their readiness for myGov. As a result, agencies that previously perceived the complexity of myGov to be too high, are considering onboarding.

Agencies are able to quickly create ‘sandbox’ infrastructure environments to test their services’ integration with myGov without real data. This makes testing easier and more reliable for agencies and frees up the myGov team from coordinating complex multiagency integration testing, resulting in a simpler and faster onboarding process.

¹³⁸ Pope, R., “*Playbook: Government as a Platform*”, 2019, pp. 16-18, accessed via <<https://ash.harvard.edu/publications/playbook-government-platform>>

International example

In the United States, the Login.gov platform offers an online developer guide with detailed integration documentation, the ability to automatically create 'sandbox' accounts for testing, and a published process and timeframes for deployment to the production environment.¹³⁹ This experience has resulted in more than 300 services onboarding to login.gov since 2017.¹⁴⁰

In the United Kingdom, GOV.UK Notify allows any public sector organization, including devolved and local governments, to set up and start using the platform in 'trial mode', before making a standard 'request to go live' through an online dashboard.¹⁴¹ Since 2016, a total of 6,800 services from 1,425 organisations have onboarded to GOV.UK Notify.¹⁴²

A dedicated team of myGov onboarding experts is funded in addition to the existing core delivery team, so that there is always support available for agencies, and the process of onboarding new agencies does not draw effort away from the delivery of new myGov features and day-to-day operation of the platform.

For prospective or onboarding agencies, there is always a clear contact point when help is needed. This provides confidence to agencies that dedicated help is available and avoids agencies needing to understand the organisation structure of Services Australia (or wider government) when onboarding.

Government example

Service NSW runs a dedicated partnerships team of more than 250 people to help agencies onboard to the platform and support the services already delivered through the agency.

This team has enabled Service NSW to grow to support more than 70 agencies in the NSW Government, and more than 30 local council agencies.¹⁴³

myGov grows and nurtures a community of myGov users within government. This increases the numbers of digital practitioners across the APS who are familiar with myGov and understand how to use its features in service delivery. In turn, this increases the ease of adoption of new myGov capabilities by agencies and makes it easier for agencies new to myGov to draw on the experiences of others.

An established community of myGov practitioners offers a useful feedback loop back to Services Australia in the continuous improvement of myGov. This community is drawn upon in the design and prototypes of new capabilities or in identifying improvements for existing features, which helps make sure changes meet the needs of agencies.

139 U.S. General Services Administration, *Login.gov developer guide*, 2022, accessed via <<https://developers.login.gov/>>

140 U.S. General Services Administration, *Login.gov Frequently Asked Questions*, 2022, accessed via <<https://login.gov/partners/faq/>>

141 Government of the United Kingdom, *GOV.UK Notify: Get started*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.notifications.service.gov.uk/using-notify/get-started>>

142 Government of the United Kingdom, *GOV.UK Notify Performance Dashboard*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.notifications.service.gov.uk/performance>>

143 myGov User Audit discussion with Service NSW (unpublished)

International : Design system communities example

There are large established communities around design systems in the UK and the US which include online forums, drop-in sessions, workshops, and conferences.¹⁴⁴

These have contributed to the widespread adoption of these design systems across their respective governments.

Current state

The current process of onboarding a new member service to myGov is manual and results in complexity for both Services Australia and the member service. Government agencies have described the “high project management and integration overhead” required as a barrier to onboarding to myGov.¹⁴⁵ One government agency characterised this as “the burden of myGov”.¹⁴⁶ Other non-technical onboarding barriers for agencies are explored in Volume 2 subchapter 5.5.

The focus on delivering the Enhanced myGov program’s platform meant that in the 2021-22 financial year, no new member services were onboarded to myGov. Services Australia told the audit that, prior to this, the average end-to-end time for an agency to onboard to myGov was 9 months.¹⁴⁷

myGov prioritises the work to onboard a new service against the existing planned delivery activities for a quarter, which means there is a direct trade-off between delivering product improvements and onboarding agencies.

Technical documentation for myGov integration is not openly published but shared privately on request. There are no publicly available contact details for prospective member services to enquire about onboarding to myGov. This means agencies interested in onboarding to myGov need to understand the organisation structure and contact points for Services Australia to find out who to speak with or what the requirements are.

Agencies have particularly called out to the Panel pain points in testing integrations between member services and myGov. The current process is “especially complicated with significant work required”. Test environments are “problematic” and not always available, causing “significant cost and time delay” to agencies wanting to deliver services through myGov.¹⁴⁸

Onboarding to myGov requires agencies to provide Services Australia with continuous access to the service’s test environments.¹⁴⁹ This introduces added complexity and dependency for agencies and is uncharacteristic of the requirements to onboard to contemporary platforms.

144 Government of the United Kingdom, GOV.UK Design System: Community [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://design-system.service.gov.uk/community/>>

U.S. General Services Administration, U.S. Web Design System Community [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://designsystem.digital.gov/about/community/>>

145 Australian Government agency submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

146 Government agency feedback, roundtable hosted by the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

147 Services Australia evidence provided to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

148 Feedback from government agencies, submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

149 Services Australia, *Member Service Handbook v3.2*, July 2022, p. 22 (unpublished)

Gaps and actions

If myGov is to increase the number of member services available to Australians in the short to medium-term, significant effort is needed to simplify the onboarding process to make myGov more attractive to a wider range of government agencies. Without this, even the strongest mandates to adopt myGov will be difficult and costly to implement in practice.

If myGov is to reduce the perceived and actual overhead for agencies to onboard, there needs to be an increased focus on designing the onboarding experience around the needs of government agencies and the realities of their technology.

ACTION: Publish online the end-to-end onboarding process for prospective member services, including technical documentation, case studies of existing onboarded agencies, and a way for interested agencies to express their interest.

ACTION: Set up a dedicated onboarding support capability, including clear contact points for agencies, ringfenced from other myGov product improvements and able to scale up or down to the current level of interest.

ACTION: Consider where future investment in automating some of the onboarding processes would increase efficiency and be useful for agencies.

If myGov is to address the largest pain point of agencies in onboarding, integration testing, then investment should be made to transition to contemporary and flexible testing environments. This will increase the speed of onboarding for agencies, and the speed of delivery of new and improved common capabilities for all member services.

ACTION: Introduce simpler, standardised and more automated integration testing patterns for member services.

ACTION: Allow agencies to easily use standalone 'sandbox' infrastructure environments for integration testing, with a commitment to service availability.

If myGov is to tailor the future technical capabilities of the platform to the needs of agencies, it should harness the growing network of myGov users across government, nurturing a community of practitioners to provide a valuable feedback loop for improvements, and the advocacy and experience to support other agencies to onboard.

ACTION: myGov should build a dedicated community of practitioners working on member services and regularly seek and report performance indicators from this group on the agency experience of myGov.

4.4 THE MOST AGILE AND RESPONSIVE PART OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY CHAIN

myGov plays a critical role in the government service delivery chain, helping agencies deliver government services to Australians. For myGov to perform this role effectively, it cannot be a bottleneck, and must instead facilitate rapid, efficient and high quality government service delivery.

Creating an environment that empowers small digital teams to deliver digital services faster and more often will help myGov to respond quicker and better meet the needs of users and agencies. More frequent delivery of digital services will require safeguards that reflect the potential consequences to Australians if early versions of new services or features do not work as intended.

Becoming the most agile and responsive part of the chain will provide a further incentive for agencies to adopt myGov, as it will reduce the delivery time and perceived and actual risk of using myGov in a service. It will also assist in the uptake of standard platforms (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 4.2) and an easier onboarding process (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 4.3).

Features of a desired future state

myGov delivers new features incrementally. Drawing feedback from real-world use cases, beyond just testing in controlled environments, offers unique insights that help make sure myGov meets the needs of Australians, and allows for the safe smaller-scale testing of new features before rolling out to the wider population. The consequences of a government service not working as intended for people can be much more severe, compared to many private sectors services. Major contributors to this include the fact that government is the sole provider of many services, services are often critical to people's livelihoods and people who rely most heavily on government services are often in need or vulnerable. Strong protections are in place to make sure that early releases of functionality do not cause unintended harm to Australians.

myGov's product teams are set up to allow rapid responses when issues occur, whether making small improvements or bug fixes, or supporting Australians in times of crises, such as natural disasters. The speed of software releases can be a virtuous cycle, because the more often software is released into the production environment, the smaller the changes can be, and therefore the lower the risk of technical issues occurring. This is enabled by increased automation in testing, monitoring, and the release process.

International example: GOV.UK

Within the first 2 weeks of the GOV.UK website going live in October 2012, the Government Digital Service released over 100 updates to the website for users. This was possible because changes were made in “smaller chunks”, the release process was highly automated, and more than 1,300 automated alerts monitored for issues.¹⁵⁰

In 2021, the GOV.UK team went further and adopted a practice of ‘continuous deployment’, where code changes are deployed automatically to the website as soon as they are made to the codebase. This reduced the average time for a change to be deployed to users from 3 days down to 0.5 days.¹⁵¹

myGov’s product teams are each be empowered to own and solve problems of high importance over the long-term, rather than being tasked with the delivery of ad hoc priorities. Teams are given an elevated level of trust and autonomy from senior leaders. This allows teams to focus on the best outcome for Australians, continuing to calibrate the design of features so they meet user needs and do not cause harm throughout design, execution, and ongoing operation.

To do this well, myGov’s teams are multi-disciplinary, bringing together practitioners across multiple areas, such as design, user research, or software engineering. This breaks down the barriers commonly found in large delivery organisations between practice areas, allowing for closer collaboration to identify and deliver the most appropriate solution for the user’s need.

Expert research

Leading technology product organisations deliver in empowered product teams, operating with high levels of trust from leadership and a clear mandate to serve the customer.

Marty Cagan, of the Silicon Valley Product Group, observes that empowered product teams are “so much more effective at innovation and in solving hard problems.”¹⁵²

New services and features for Australians are released with an extended period of beta testing. People have the choice to opt-in to try the beta service and, if they encounter a problem, there are clear pathways to return to the existing service or other channels.

myGov has robust mechanisms to assess how new features are working for users, and easy ways for people to provide feedback to a team able to address it. This includes prompting users for feedback after completing a task, such as adding a new card to the myGov wallet. The ethics and inclusion committee, as detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 5.4, provides important advice to myGov’s teams, providing early warning of potential harmful factors in the design and delivery process.

Working in the open, as detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 4.5, includes making roadmaps and backlogs available in public. Increasing the default visibility of work for other agencies reduces the communication overhead of working with myGov, and agencies are more easily able to see the medium-term vision and priorities for each myGov team.

150 Rushgrove, G., *Regular Releases Reduce Risk*, November 2012, accessed via <<https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2012/11/02/regular-releases-reduce-risk/>>

151 Thorner, B. and Nichols, J., *How and why we switched to Continuous Deployment on GOV.UK*, August 2021, accessed via <<https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/05/how-and-why-we-switched-to-continuous-deployment-on-gov-uk/>>

152 Cagan, M., *Empowered Product Teams*, October 2018, accessed via <<https://www.svpg.com/empowered-product-teams/>>

Current state

myGov's software release cycle targets 2 releases per quarter, but additional flexibility is available for teams to release "out of cycle" changes where required.¹⁵³ 'Functional changes' that affect users or a member service are subject to a 10 business day notice period from Services Australia to agencies and a requirement for member services to have the opportunity to conduct their own testing of the changes.¹⁵⁴ Whilst this will help in mitigating unintended consequences for agencies, the extended time duration provides hard limits on the frequency that myGov can be updated for users.

The Enhanced myGov program has adopted the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe). In the SAFe approach potential features are prioritised, planned and delivered in quarterly 'program increments'. Prioritisation calls are made by executives and business areas within the myGov team and the wider Services Australia agency, and activity is then sequenced across multiple delivery teams over the quarter.

This has benefits compared with a traditional waterfall project management process. The quarterly planning cycle offers a regular way to reassess priorities and readjust the course from what has been learned. This allows for issues to be addressed earlier in the development process, reducing delays.

However, this approach can result in a high centralised management overhead which can struggle to scale as the number of teams increase. Setting feature priorities from the top down can limit the ability for feedback to flow up from delivery teams 'on the ground'. Changing course during the quarter, for example if the results of a user research session call for a different approach, can be cumbersome.

Increasingly, leading product design organisations have looked to solve this problem by seeking to "descale big monolithic, internally focused systems into tasks that can be run by small self-managing customer-focused teams."¹⁵⁵ Whilst there are broad schools of thought and different frameworks to achieve this,¹⁵⁶ these generally focus on multi-disciplinary and autonomous teams, delivery of ongoing products over time-limited projects, and measuring customer outcomes rather than delivery outputs.

Within government, the inflexibility of existing funding and governance approaches can limit agile ways of working. Government's preference to fund digital delivery as large programs exceeding \$30 million (and sometimes more than \$200 million), rather than ongoing funding streams, creates high delivery risk which is met with extensive governance. These governance arrangements, such as the Gateway Review Process,¹⁵⁷ strongly incentivise waterfall-style delivery processes, because the extensive planning and documentation they require contrast sharply with the principles of the Agile Manifesto.¹⁵⁸ Other jurisdictions have introduced lean funding processes, such as the NSW Digital Restart Fund.

Similar considerations apply to the internal governance, portfolio management and finance processes within Services Australia, which are designed to support a wide range of capital projects and legacy IT transformation in addition to digital service delivery.

153 Services Australia evidence to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

154 Services Australia, *Member Service Handbook v3.2*, July 2022, p.28 (unpublished)

155 Denning, S., *Understanding Fake Agile*, May 2019, accessed via <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2019/05/23/understanding-fake-agile/>>

156 Examples include the 'Spotify model', *Large Scale Scrum (LeSS)*, and *Scrum-at-Scale*, although it is common for organisations tailor these to an approach that works for their context.

157 Department of Finance, *Gateway Reviews Process*, 2022, accessed via <<https://www.finance.gov.au/government/assurance-reviews-and-risk-assessment/gateway-reviews-process>>

158 Manifesto for Agile Software Development [website], 2001, accessed via <<https://agilemanifesto.org/>>

Gaps and actions

The panel recognises the work done to adopt more agile delivery practices within the myGov program, in comparison to the delivery approach of the technology stack prior to 2021. As myGov continues to scale to offer more functionality across more services, a further stepchange will be needed in its delivery approach if it is to operate at pace to meet the needs of users and agencies.

ACTION: In combination with the actions proposed in Volume 2 subchapters 4.2 and 4.3, simplify the release coordination processes with member services to reduce the time needed to release software.

ACTION: Increase adoption of multi-disciplinary product teams, and give these teams greater autonomy to prioritise, design and deliver features that meet the needs of Australians and government agencies over the long term.

ACTION: Consider where changes to internal corporate processes within Services Australia could create a better enabling environment for ongoing and continually improving digital product delivery teams.

ACTION: Review the funding and governance arrangements for digital service delivery in the Australian Government, including the Gateway Review Process, to remove disincentives to adopting agile, product-led delivery approaches. Volume 2 subchapter 5.2 includes further detail on myGov funding arrangements.

If the increased pace of delivery for Australians is to be matched by strong safeguards to mitigate unintended consequences of regular and incremental software releases, especially in the high-stakes context of government service delivery, greater use of staged rollouts will be needed, supported by robust mechanisms to quickly assess if changes released are working properly.

ACTION: Release new capabilities and improved features using staged release approaches, including opt-in private and public beta programs, and provide clear escape routes for users if new features do not work as intended.

ACTION: Enhance the measurement frameworks for myGov to provide clear guidance and tooling for teams to assess if new features are working as intended, and an easy and quick way to roll back changes that do not work.

4.5 MYGOV INVESTMENT DELIVERS WIDER BENEFITS FOR GOVERNMENT DIGITAL SERVICES

myGov is uniquely placed to play a leadership role for government digital service delivery, based on its view across many agencies' digital services, and the existing and future investment in myGov as a whole-of-government platform.

myGov should work in the open to maximise impact and reach across agencies, and lead by example in the consumption and development of whole-of-government capabilities.

As a digital service leader, myGov will drive long-term structural benefits for government, and better services for Australians, as the overall digital capability of government increases.

Features of a desired future state

Maximising the benefits of investment in myGov's digital capabilities for wider government use has led to long-term improvements in digital capability for all government agencies. The overall digital experience for Australians has improved as agency digital delivery capabilities increase.

myGov is recognised as a digital leader within government: it develops, nurtures and proves contemporary design and delivery practices, is an exemplar for wholeofgovernment technology reuse and adopts open ways of working so that other agencies can learn from myGov.

myGov is a leader in the application of mature digital delivery practices within government. Agencies are able to see for themselves how myGov puts into practice leading approaches to design, user research, accessibility, software engineering, content, and other disciplines.

Digital delivery practices are easily adapted for use by service agencies and across jurisdictions, building the overall digital capability of the Australian, state and territory governments to deliver for Australians, and reduce potential delivery bottlenecks for agencies or jurisdictions with lower digital capability.

International example: U.S. Government's 18F

18F, the internal technology and design consultancy for the U.S. Government, posts online regularly about the practices being tried and tested with projects underway in government agencies.

Recent examples include advice on writing simpler legal content, based on experiences redesigning the Americans with Disabilities Act website,¹⁵⁹ and interviews with digital leaders at the U.S. Tax Court on delivery of a new case management platform.¹⁶⁰ This practice has allowed the sharing of lessons learnt and best practice across government agencies.

159 U.S. General Services Administration, *Content design for beta.ada.gov: writing for action and flexibility*, July 2022, accessed via <<https://18f.gsa.gov/2022/07/13/content-design-ada/>>

160 U.S. General Services Administration, *Building capacities within a government agency to build and support a new case management system*, June 2021, accessed via <https://18f.gsa.gov/2021/06/16/building_capacities_within_a_government_agency_to_build_and_support_a_new_case_management_system_part_1/>

myGov makes technology decisions to maximise reuse across government, including in contexts beyond digital service delivery.

myGov preferences use of existing whole-of-government capability rather than building new or buying again. If whole-of-government capabilities exist but do not offer all the features needed, myGov invests in uplifting the capability wherever possible, so that all agencies can benefit. This accelerates the convergence on a common government technology architecture, unlocking the economy of scale benefits detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 4.2.

Overall, this maximises the return on investment in myGov infrastructure for government and Australians as capabilities are invested in once and reused widely.

Australian example: Check-in CBR app

The code for the Check-in CBR app, developed by the Australian Capital Territory Government, was reused by the governments of Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. This was both a time and cost saving for jurisdictions.

This was also easier for users, because any of the 3 check-in apps could be used to check in to venues in any of the other 3 jurisdictions without setting up another app.

myGov works in the open through regular and agile communication such as blog posts and videos, the publication of design patterns and components, and the release of opensource code for myGov's digital capabilities.

This expands the reach of myGov's impact and removes barriers to cross-government collaboration by allowing practitioners and leaders to share through their existing networks, reaching people deep in agencies or jurisdictions that could benefit, without predicating any specific use cases an agency might have.

The transparency from working in the open fosters greater trust with Australians, civil society, and government. The regular engagement with the community shapes a guiding framework for the work of the myGov team, aligned with potential commitments made in the charter detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 5.1. Talking regularly about the work underway and the decisions being taken provides a fuller picture of the operations of the myGov team, also helping to build greater understanding in the community when things go wrong.

With the right preconditions in place, working in the open enhances myGov's cyber security posture. For example, the increased public scrutiny of open-source code encourages more robust and secure software development practices, such as keeping secret data out of the codebase.¹⁶¹ The establishment of a bug bounty program, as detailed in Volume 2 subchapter 4.1, counterbalances potential malicious users accessing open-source code with well-intentioned security experts.

¹⁶¹ Government of the United Kingdom, Be open and use open source [website], 2022, accessed via <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/be-open-and-use-open-source>>

“Make things open: it makes things better.

We should share what we’re doing whenever we can. With colleagues, with users, with the world. Share code, share designs, share ideas, share intentions, share failures. The more eyes there are on a service the better it gets – howlers are spotted, better alternatives are pointed out, the bar is raised.

Much of what we’re doing is only possible because of open source code and the generosity of the web design community. We should pay that back.”

– UK Government Design Principles¹⁶²

International example: Estonia’s X-Road

X-Road is a standardised and interoperable data exchange layer created in the Estonian Government and is now expanded for use by many other countries worldwide.

It allows the secure exchange of data across government services and the private sector. It enables Estonia’s data architecture principle that information about a citizen can only be stored in a single place, and then must be reused thereafter.

The X-Road core is published under the MIT open-source licence, and the source code and all protocol specifications are publicly available on GitHub. Support is available through X-Road Community and X-Road Technology Partners.¹⁶³

Building on from the success of X-Road, the Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solution was created across Estonia, Finland, and Iceland to allow collaboration, development, and strategic management of potential cross-border digital infrastructure.¹⁶⁴

Current state

myGov has developed important advances in technology of potential wider benefit for Australians, however during the lifespan of the original technology stack for myGov, there was no re-use of the underlying code or components by other government agencies. This has not yet changed since the introduction of the new myGov technology platform in September 2022.

Services Australia have considered the future opportunity to make certain myGov components available as open-source code for reuse, such as a design system, however cyber security concerns have been raised on making core myGov platform code available in the open.¹⁶⁵

162 Government of the United Kingdom, Government Design Principles [website], September 2019, accessed via <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles>>

163 GitHub “X-Road Development”, accessed via <<https://github.com/nordic-institute/X-Road-development>>

164 Nordic Institute for Interoperability Solutions, Digital society solutions and cross-border cooperation [website], accessed via <<https://www.niis.org/>>

165 Interviews with Services Australia technology leaders, myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

In designing the technology platform for the Enhanced myGov program, the whole of government content management platform, govCMS, was considered, but did not offer the functionality needed, particularly for content personalisation. Adobe Experience Manager was purchased instead. Since then, govCMS has started work to develop similar capabilities for government.¹⁶⁶ Once these are available, there may be opportunities for myGov to transition to govCMS. This could see future investment in myGov resulting in broader benefits for the 100+ other government organisations who use govCMS.¹⁶⁷

myGov operates several social media channels, including posting videos on YouTube. The focus of content to date has been instructional or promotional material directed at people who use myGov or responding to support queries, rather than on digital capabilities.

Gaps and actions

If myGov's experiences in delivering digital services for Australians are to be harnessed by other agencies and jurisdictions, myGov needs to play an active digital leadership role across government.

To maximise the benefits of current and future investment in myGov's technology across government, a strong default should be adopted for reuse and uplift of existing wholeofgovernment capability.

ACTION: Update the myGov technology architecture to default to the reuse of existing whole-of-government capability where available, invest in uplift where existing capabilities do not meet myGov's needs, and consider the development of new whole-of-government capabilities where they do not exist.

ACTION: Once the DXP functionality of govCMS has been delivered, consider if a transition of the myGov content management and DXP functionality to govCMS could offer increased value for money and greater benefits for agencies across government.

If myGov is to work in the open successfully, cyber security barriers will need to be overcome, investment will be needed in platforms for open sharing, and team members will need explicit permission from leaders to be open.

ACTION: Connected with the charter, set out principles for working in the open, including guidance for team members in sharing patterns, practices, and lessons learned, and reflecting cyber security considerations.

ACTION: Set up and curate digital channels, including blogs, for the myGov team to communicate regularly across government about work underway.

ACTION: With the Australian Cyber Security Centre, agree the guardrails for publishing source code in the open and, over time, publish the majority of myGov's source code online.

¹⁶⁶ govCMS, *DXP Proof of Concept Showcase*, August 2022, accessed via <<https://www.govcms.gov.au/news-events/news/dxp-proof-concept-showcase>>

¹⁶⁷ govCMS, statistics on current users of govCMS [website], December 2022, accessed via <<https://www.govcms.gov.au/>>

Chapter 5:

Enabling future delivery

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5.1 LEGISLATION OUTLINES COMMITMENTS TO AUSTRALIANS

The Government should make clear commitments to Australians to improve performance and increase transparency, trust and satisfaction in government digital services. Legislating myGov as national service delivery infrastructure with clear and effective accountability mechanisms will make its commitment public and real.

Features of a desired future state

Legislation confirms myGov as a critical piece of national service delivery infrastructure. The legislation articulates myGov's core functions and commitments to the community.

The legislation includes:

- myGov's purpose, scope and high-level commitments to Australians
- a requirement to publish a long-term road map (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.3)
- a requirement to publish a service charter, including clear performance standards and commitments for the design and operation of myGov and related government services
- a requirement to publish performance data against the standards for myGov and related government services (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.8)
- a requirement to establish independently chaired advisory arrangements (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.2)
- an annual report to Parliament on performance against the road map and the charter (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.8).

Government Example: My Health Record

My Health Record is a secure digital system used to store health information, including vaccinations, prescriptions and emergency contacts for Australians (i.e. anyone who has a Medicare card or an individual healthcare identifier). The My Health Record system operates under the *My Health Records Act 2012*. The Act establishes:¹⁶⁸

- the role and functions of the System Operator (that stores key records of a healthcare recipient's My Health Record);
- a registration framework for Australians and healthcare providers to participate in the system; and
- a privacy framework (aligned to the Privacy Act 1988) specifying which entities can collect, use and disclose certain information in the system (such as health information contained in a healthcare recipient's My Health Record).

The Act creates the legislative framework for Australia's digital health record system. It builds public trust by communicating when and how their health information will be collected, used and disclosed.

¹⁶⁸ Australian Digital Health Agency, My Health Record - Legislation [website], accessed December 2022, <<https://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/about/legislation-and-governance>>

A published myGov service charter contains more specific information regarding the Government's commitment to Australians. The charter, which is clear and simple, covers:

- myGov is available for all Australians to access government services
- levels of service Australians will receive when interacting with myGov
- myGov being an easy to use and accessible system for everyone
- use of reliable technology and robust security protections
- strong protections to uphold human rights, including privacy and safety by design overseen by a public ethics and inclusion committee (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4)
- myGov being scalable in times of need (e.g. natural disasters and other difficult to predict events)
- clear indicators to measure and demonstrate performance against commitments aligned to the monitoring framework indicators (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.8), and
- complaints and dispute resolution mechanisms.

The charter is a statement of commitment to Australians rather than a legal instrument. As such, the provisions of the charter are not themselves justiciable. People still have access to support mechanisms where issues occur such as reviews, appeals, acts of grace and defective administration arrangements which continue alongside (but separate to) the charter.

Performance information, including the Government's (top 5) headline indicators, are published online to support transparency and enable Australians to see how myGov is performing against its commitments. The headline indicators are developed and co-designed across government and the community and focus on myGov's key priorities, for example:

- **Satisfaction:** How satisfied people using myGov are using the system?
- **Access:** How accessible and inclusive is myGov to all Australians?
- **Services:** How many services are available through myGov?
- **Reuse:** How often are people using myGov?
- **Reliability:** How often is the myGov system unavailable to people needing to use it?

Jurisdictional example: Service NSW

Service NSW provides weekly updates through a performance dashboard available at www.service.nsw.gov.au/performance-dashboard to their users.¹⁶⁹ This dashboard displays progress across their delivery channels and programs and uses customer feedback to publicly demonstrate their performance.

The dashboard publishes data against key metrics including calls answered, customer satisfaction, service centre visits and active mobile app users to show trends over time. The dashboard also shows how NSW is progressing against key programs such as national disaster recovery support – including the top 3 reasons for declined applications.

The Service NSW dashboard is an open and transparent way for people to see how the NSW Government is tracking against their commitments and provides an incentive for agencies to continually improve their services and programs as it will be published for the community to see.

¹⁶⁹ ServiceNSW, Performance Dashboard [website], 2022, <<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/performance-dashboard>>

Current state

The Government does not currently publish clear commitments to Australians regarding its operation of myGov, although individual agencies do publish some data on their own services (i.e. Services Australia publishes data about myGov in its annual report, but this does not include member services managed outside the agency).¹⁷⁰ myGov does not currently have a service charter nor a legislative basis, and government does not consistently publish information about user satisfaction or service usage of myGov and other digital services.

Industry and government, including Bupa¹⁷¹ and **business.gov.au**,¹⁷² have implemented service charters that make commitments to their customers and set expectations when interacting with their services.¹⁷³

Community engagement has shown that most people do not fully understand what myGov does and does not do and their “understanding is from their own experience.”

Services Australia designs myGov using human-centred design practices and has a data, trust and ethics committee which monitors key decisions across the agency (including myGov). However, these structures are internal to Services Australia and do not extend across member services.

Security and availability incidents across government and industry (such as the recent Medibank and Optus data breaches) and useability concerns with myGov itself, are often reported to people via the media.¹⁷⁴ These incidents erode trust and heighten community expectations regarding privacy, security and transparency. Feedback from people has supported the need for greater transparency for Australians about how data is collected, used and shared.¹⁷⁵

Gaps and actions

Feedback from people who use myGov highlighted the need for a “meaningful declaration of service delivery” that provides “tangible targets of delivery within set timeframes”.¹⁷⁶ A service charter itself will not be effective unless there are appropriate governance arrangements in place to ensure the commitments to Australians in the charter are being met.

Legislating myGov with committed service offerings, governance and metrics will support government to increase transparency, trust and satisfaction in government digital services.

ACTION: Legislate myGov to provide a simple and clear vision, better manage planning and provide clear government accountability obligations.

170 Services Australia, Annual Report 2021-22, 2022

171 BUPA, Customer Charter [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.bupa.com.au/about-us/customer-charter>>

172 Department of Industry, Science and Resources - business.gov.au, Customer service charter [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://business.gov.au/about-us/customer-service-charter>>

173 WhereTo, myGov User Audit Research Report, 2022, pg12 (unpublished)

174 9News, myGov website back online after widespread outage, 21 November 2021, accessed November 2022 via <<https://www.9news.com.au/national/mygov-widespread-outage-hits-mygov-website/11d3a5e0-8f6b-4b78-b598-ccc1995b4a51>>

175 myGov User submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022.

176 Where To, myGov User Audit Research Report, 2022, pg34 (unpublished)

Development of the roadmap, service charter, advisory committee, annual report and performance standards should not wait for the passage of legislation. These are all independent elements and should be given priority while the legislative development and passage process is taking place. If required, they could be updated to comply with the legislation once established.

ACTION: Implement and publish a myGov service charter that sets clear performance indicators, monitored by independent governance (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

ACTION: Develop a public dashboard, updated regularly to create transparency and accountability, while demonstrating progress against the service charter.

ACTION: Publish a myGov annual report (to Parliament if legislated) to measure myGov's results against its public commitments in the roadmap and the service charter.

5.2 A LONG-TERM FUNDING COMMITMENT TO OPERATE AND IMPROVE MYGOV AND UPLIFT MEMBER SERVICES

To deliver digital experiences as critical national infrastructure, myGov needs to be funded through a modern sustainable approach, that incentivises agencies to connect their digital services and grows myGov's service offering.

myGov is not a cost saving approach for government, rather a national investment in delivering better services for Australians and a key enabler of the nation's digital economy. The benefits to Australians, government and the economy of investing in myGov as a national asset outweighs the cost. Independent economic analysis commissioned by Services Australia found improving the quality of myGov has "huge potential to make the lives of Australians easier and to improve their interactions and trust in Government" and "should be viewed as an investment in an important national, digital public good".¹⁷⁷

Features of a desired future state

Government is investing in myGov as critical national infrastructure through an ongoing and agile funding model. The funding model provides strong incentives for agencies to connect their services to myGov and continues to grow and strengthen myGov services. This enables continuity in the system, which over time, builds trust in government. This funding helps drive the priorities of myGov (outlined in the strategic roadmap in Volume 2 subchapter 5.3 and is managed through governance in Volume 2 subchapter 5.4). The funding model includes:

- **Ongoing annual funding of myGov at the same level as sustainment funding in 2021-22 and the Enhanced myGov program** that allows myGov to build, operate, improve and support other agencies through direct appropriation without the need for biannual government authority requests. A backlog of features is prioritised through ministerial governance (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4) on an annual basis to give assurance on the ongoing operation and expansion of myGov.
- **An initial investment period of 4 years, pausing the current agency-pays model** to allow for the platform to mature and expand with new services. After 4 years, the Government will review the funding arrangements and consider funding models to ensure myGov remains cost effective and attractive for agencies to deliver services.
- **A myGov development fund**, financed from new Budget funding, offset through a levy on agencies, or a combination of both, to support the connection of new services. The initiatives funded also uplift existing services to comply with the Digital Service Standard and Design System. The fund, refreshed annually, supports prioritised services and capabilities to be technically ready and connect to myGov. Services need to meet standard requirements to be eligible for funding support, including alignment to the Australian Government Architecture, incorporating the service standard and Design System.

The Panel's recommended funding priorities are at Volume 1 Attachment C.

The funding model is overseen by a joint ministerial committee to make investment decisions for myGov and manage the prioritisation and allocation of funding for the myGov Development Fund (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

Continued investment and funding of traditional service delivery channels (e.g. telephone and face-to-face services) continues to ensure a high level of service quality for Australians who are unable (or unwilling) to use digital. The funding model also supports expansion to the states and territories and local government (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.6) to deliver life events and maintain other service pathways.

¹⁷⁷ Services Australia commissioned independent economic analysis, 2021 (unpublished)

Service NSW and New Zealand Digital Government have successfully adopted central funding approaches to invest in their digital projects.

Case study: NSW Restart Fund

In June 2020, the NSW Government introduced a Digital Restart Fund (DRF) to support “iterative, multi-disciplinary approaches to planning, designing and developing digital products and services in NSW”.¹⁷⁸ An initial investment of \$1.6 billion, which included \$1 billion in new funding and \$600 million in savings redirected from NSW government agencies over 3 years has demonstrated large success across the digital services ecosystem, including \$687 million allocated across to 107 projects in 2021-2022.¹⁷⁹

The DRF is supported by the *Digital Restart Fund Act 2020* (NSW), which, was introduced by the NSW Minister for Customer Service, the Hon Victor Dominello MP, who stated in his second reading speech: “The fund moves away from the approach of funding large capital projects where benefits may not be realised for many years. Instead, the fund is designed to draw focus to smaller, iterative solutions linked to the life events and customer experiences that matter to people. The fund will assist in generating benefits more quickly, reducing duplication in investment and eliminating inefficient legacy systems”.

Case study: New Zealand Digital Government Partnerships Innovation Fund

New Zealand’s Department of Internal Affairs introduced a \$5 million innovation fund “that invested in digital and data innovation in the public sector.”¹⁸⁰ The intent was to provide government agencies the opportunity to work collaboratively on common problems to design or pilot solutions. Applications were made through submission of a lean canvas that demonstrated alignment to the ‘Strategy for Digital Public Service’ and ‘Data Roadmap’. There were an initial 7 projects funded in 2019-20, and a further 28 projects funded in 2021-22.

Over the long term, technology costs incurred by individual agencies will be reduced by connecting to myGov as will the need for government to fund individual ICT capabilities across government including delivering new digital platforms, ongoing maintenance, related infrastructure and software licencing costs.¹⁸¹

Current state

The current program-based funding model constrains long term investment in myGov and reduces confidence in myGov continuing. The current funding cycle generates unnecessary debate and recurring administrative waste given the time and cost to prepare the relevant products for the Government’s consideration. The current cycle can take up to 12 months and impedes the ability of myGov to try innovative technologies and approaches as funding is committed to certain projects years in advance.

178 NSW Government, Digital Restart Fund [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/strategy/nsw-government-identity-strategy/current-initiatives>>

179 Digital.NSW, Digital Restart Fund Annual Report 2021-22, 2022

180 New Zealand Government, Digital Government Partnership Innovation Fund [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.digital.govt.nz/digital-government/programmes-and-projects/innovation-fund>>

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

Agencies have highlighted the challenge of “finding offsets for the costs to integrate with myGov amid other funding pressures” and “the need to gain support from their portfolio minister to prioritise myGov over other policy priorities in their portfolios” as key barriers to joining myGov,¹⁸² limiting service offerings for Australians.

The current volume-based charging model is a disincentive for agencies to onboard to myGov. Feedback from agencies highlighted the “ongoing usage costs for myGov are high” and “delivering services through myGov has high project management and integration overheads”.¹⁸³

Each service that connects to myGov must meet a set of technical requirements and most agencies are not funded to uplift their systems to meet them. myGov also currently charges a \$107,000 fee per member service to onboard to myGov.¹⁸⁴ This leads to agencies “needing to pull resources from other areas to prioritise work to introduce the new features in myGov”.¹⁸⁵ Agencies are “seeking clarity on the charging model” to enable them to “understand the ongoing implementation and support costs of connecting to myGov”.¹⁸⁶

Gaps and actions

myGov is fundamental to the Government’s service delivery and needs to be funded as such. The Government needs to transition myGov from being treated as a project or program, to an enduring national asset. Maintaining a return to government funding approach puts the Government at risk of being left behind as digital adoption and expectations of Australians continue to grow. Notably, Australia’s progress in digital government has been slower than other countries, contributing to Australia’s drop in the UN’s eGovernment rankings from fifth in 2020 to seventh in 2022. A sustainable and responsive approach to funding needs to apply to myGov to further enable other government service delivery, covering operational costs, sustainment and enhancements costs.

ACTION: Commit to ongoing appropriation funding for myGov sustainment and enhancements, enabling myGov to deliver the highest priority features through a ministerial backlog refinement process, in place of multiple Budget proposals.

ACTION: Establish prioritisation criteria for the ministerial governance committee outlined in Volume 2 subchapter 5.4 to make myGov investment decisions, addressing strategic alignment to roadmap, feasibility and return on investment.

Agencies have advised that the service member charging model is the largest barrier to connect their services. Agencies are choosing to create their own bespoke solutions rather than onboard to myGov. Agencies should be encouraged, not punished, for delivering content and services via myGov. Government needs to remove this barrier. The return-to-government approach for funding questions the system’s enduring nature.

ACTION: Commit to an investment period of four years, from 1 July 2023, by continuing the current suspension of the agency charging model to allow for the platform to reach maturity and to incentivise agencies to onboard (to be reviewed after four years).

ACTION: Establish a myGov development fund to support agencies to uplift their services to meet the onboarding requirements of myGov.

As a national asset, the Australian Government should ensure states and territories and local governments are sufficiently supported to enable a seamless experience for Australians.

ACTION: Establish a service offering for myGov, which includes co-funding with states and territories to support expansion across life events.

182 Australian Government Agency submission to the myGov User Audit 2022 (unpublished)

183 *ibid.*

184 *ibid.*

185 *ibid.*

186 *ibid.*

5.3 A ROADMAP

Effective collaboration across the Australian Government, states and territories, and industry will help achieve the Government's vision for myGov. Publishing a strategic roadmap will promote transparency and clarity on government priorities. This will break the current cycle of short-term incremental investments, reduce the risk of larger strategic opportunities being overlooked and will provide commitment to delivering ongoing service improvements for Australians.

Features of a desired future state

A published roadmap, updated annually, sets the 5-year strategic plan for myGov. It defines the future for myGov and its deliverables, listing new and improved services and features, against a 5-year timeline.

The roadmap supports transparency for Australians, other jurisdictions and the private sector on where government is taking myGov, including availability of new features and services.

The roadmap is managed by the design authority and provides the ministerial group a prioritised list of services and capabilities. This assists in allocating investment through the myGov development fund (refer to Volume 2 subchapters 5.4 and 5.2) and ensures that government keeps Australians at the centre of their decision making.

The first roadmap incorporates relevant recommendations from this report, particularly the funding priorities outlined at Attachment C. The roadmap is measured and reported against the monitoring framework (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.8) and tabled to the ministerial governance committee (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

Current state

There is an existing roadmap for myGov, however it is not public and is limited to the 2-year Enhanced myGov program (currently to June 2023). It does not include the broader myGov and digital ecosystem nor the changes agencies are making to their own services. The current roadmap is for government use and only available to APS stakeholders. Agile delivery teams prioritise features to design and deliver but are locked into delivering what has been agreed by Cabinet. This approach does not provide citizens with visibility of what is planned for myGov, and when they can expect to see upcoming changes.

Case study – WA Digital Strategy Roadmap

In January 2022, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Office of Digital Government for Western Australia published their roadmap outlining the initiatives prioritised to 2025. Captured within 5 categories of better services, informed decisions, safe and secure, digitally inclusive and supporting digital foundations, this roadmap is updated twice yearly and remains flexible to deal with ongoing changes in the state.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Government of Western Australia, Digital Strategy Roadmap 2022, accessed November 2022 <<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/office-of-digital-government/digital-strategy-roadmap-2022-january>>

Feedback from agencies highlighted that the myGov roadmap is “set by Services Australia and then agencies have to attempt to adapt to that roadmap.”¹⁸⁸ Agencies also highlighted that feature delivery “doesn’t consider other agencies’ project or program scheduling or investment cycles” which leads to “a lack of harmonisation of delivery plans” across Services Australia and member services.¹⁸⁹

Feedback has also highlighted agencies are seeking “a clear strategy and roadmap for myGov, with linkages to cross government digital strategies and future-state customer experience.”¹⁹⁰

A myGov service onboarding prioritisation model is currently used to determine high value services to connect to myGov, based on volumes, timeliness, digital maturity and service criticality.

myGov does not currently publish a roadmap for myGov or its commitments for the program, other than in the Budget papers.

Gaps and actions

Government should publish its plans for myGov through a roadmap, to be transparent and build trust. Government and Australians do not have a full picture of the future direction of myGov or major planned changes and milestones. The roadmap should outline the services that will be onboarded and what features and capabilities will be rolled out. The roadmap should include a timetable for introducing new services and new features on myGov, as well as changes to existing services and features.

ACTION: During 2023, develop and publish a 5-year roadmap for myGov, including new capabilities, services and key dates and milestones.

Government needs to ensure that the highest priorities are delivered, and myGov evolves over time, continuing to improve and meet the needs of Australians. A prioritisation model and process, informed by data, should be established to iterate the roadmap and managed through the proposed design authority.

ACTION: Develop a prioritisation model for services to be connected to myGov that offer the most benefit to Australians and government that considers the following principles:

- Volume – services that have a large customer base and will have high usage by being onboarded to myGov.
- Readiness – the digital maturity and readiness of services to onboard to myGov, including any required uplift required.
- Value – services that have known, common pain points from the perspective of Australian users, and these should be addressed to improve the user experience.

ACTION: Prioritise services to include on the roadmap including:

- DFAT’s Passport Office, to connect their passports application and renewal service through myGov
- AEC, to connect their election enrolment services through myGov (i.e. update details and enrolling to vote).
- ABS, to access and complete the census (noting the need for Australians to recognise this data is not being used for myGov, but only for census).
- Department of Finance to introduce digital document execution through myGov

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

189 *ibid.*

190 *ibid*

ACTION: Develop a prioritisation model for new capabilities in myGov that offer the highest value to Australians and government, considering the following principles:

- Benefit to people – how much the user experience will be improved or citizen-value will be achieved
- Reuse – the extent to which the capability can be reused across multiple government services
- Cost effective – savings across government by rolling out the capability.

ACTION: Prioritise capabilities to include on the roadmap including:

- Document execution – people can digitally sign common legal documents online using their digital identity.
- Nominees – people can permit someone else to act on their behalf digitally.
- Appointments – people can book an appointment in myGov for their government service, and view all appointments for government in one place.
- Consent – people can view, edit and revoke any consent they have given myGov on use of their data in one place.
- Tasks – all tasks a person is asked to do by government can be viewed in one place.

ACTION: Identify critical milestones and include on the roadmap including:

- Improving accessibility of myGovID to help with the transition use to digital identity as the way to sign into myGov,
- Introducing the new design authority as part of the proposed governance arrangements, and
- Applying the Design System for all services connected to myGov.

5.4 CENTRAL GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY EXPANDED ACROSS DIGITAL SERVICES

Even if each minister, department or agency designs and delivers services that meet the needs of Australians 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.

Governance for myGov and myGovID (separate to the Government's broader digital identity system governance), including a design authority and an independently chaired advisory board, would prioritise the services and capabilities with the most benefit for Australians, and would maintain focus on myGov meeting its overarching commitments (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1). Governance covering both myGov and myGovID will help deliver a consistent user experience for Australians across interoperability of these systems.

Features of a desired future state

Appropriate governance oversees myGov to ensure it delivers the highest priorities, is designed and delivered to meet people's needs and meets its commitments (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1). The governance model simplifies prioritisation and decision making, ensuring the priorities across government are considered. It provides clarity in roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities across myGov and myGovID. For myGov ID, this is separate to, and in parallel with, the existing arrangements of the Australian Government's identity security system¹⁹¹ and broader digital identity program.¹⁹²

The myGov governance model clearly articulates joint ministerial responsibilities and structures to deliver and operate myGov as critical national infrastructure. An advisory board provides advice to ministers, providing oversight and assurance of myGov. This board is chaired independently and considers the views of government and community stakeholders, form independent judgements and constructively challenges norms where needed.

An ethics and inclusion committee, comprising of external experts and government representatives provides advice to government on inclusion, safety, privacy and transparency of myGov.

Australian comparison: NSW Artificial Intelligence (AI) Review Committee

The NSW Government established an AI Review Committee to guide and oversee how AI is used in NSW. The Committee brings together government and non government experts to provide NSW external and professional input to assist agencies to design, build and use AI-enabled products and solutions.

The establishment and operation of the Committee aims to build community trust in how NSW uses AI and has led to the development of the NSW AI Assurance Framework and the AI Ethics Policy.¹⁹³ The Committee uses its extensive and varied experience to provide ongoing strategic advice on the use of AI to assist in decision making and improve service delivery across the NSW Government.

191 Department of Home Affairs, Identity Security [website], 2022, <<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/criminal-justice/cybercrime-identity-security/identity-security>>

192 Australian Government, Digital Identity [website], 2022, <https://www.digitalidentity.gov.au/>

193 NSW Government, Artificial Intelligence Ethics Policy [website], 2022, <<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/policy/artificial-intelligence/artificial-intelligence-ethics-policy#:~:text=The%20Artificial%20Intelligence%20Ethics%20Policy,%2C%20fairness%2C%20privacy%20and%20accountability>>

The myGov policy and delivery roles remain separated. The myGov delivery owner is viewed by member and future services as a critical partner, providing support and engagement to stakeholders. The policy owner ensures the rules and standards for myGov are adhered to across government. It is important for decisions to be made in the whole-of-government context, not only in the context of individual agencies or government programs.

Case study: Department of Customer Service and Service NSW

The NSW Department of Customer Service was established to “make it easier to deal with government by driving improvements in customer service”.¹⁹⁴ It is a regulator and central department of government responsible for:

- helping establish the customer at the centre of all programs and initiatives across the NSW Government
- delivering a more consistent and efficient digital experience with government
- using data and behavioural insights to drive customer service improvements, and
- engaging more effectively with the people of NSW.

Service NSW is an executive agency that sits underneath the Department of Customer Service. Service NSW is responsible for the delivery of all services across NSW to deliver a world class one-stop-shop service for customers, businesses, and partner agencies, including their Service NSW platform and app.

These 2 organisations work together to deliver excellence in customer service, digital leadership and innovation to deliver easy, safe and secure government services for people living in NSW.

The Australian Government might consider transitioning to a similar organisational structure as NSW. This would involve a centralised service delivery policy department with responsibility for the strategy, policy and regulatory requirements across all government services and has authority to mandate onboarding and assess against standards, and an agency with overarching responsibility within government for the delivery of myGov and the front-end interface of appropriate services.

myGov is recognised as a core element in delivering citizen-centric digital service delivery, with increased authority for those overseeing its delivery including:

- **legislation** that establishes myGov as national service delivery infrastructure and sets out the obligations and commitments of myGov, including boundaries of what myGov will and will not do, and a requirement to publish its service offering and performance measurements to increase transparency and accountability in the myGov system (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1); and
- **mandating** the connection of new and existing Australian Government digital services to myGov with set requirements and timeframes managed through the myGov roadmap (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.3), to offer a complete experience to Australians through myGov and limit the establishment of individual, bespoke solutions.

¹⁹⁴ NSW Government, Department of Customer Service [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/customer-service>>

Current state

myGov's current governance arrangements do not place Australians at the centre of planning, development and implementation. Each individual agency focuses on their users, but there is a lack of whole-of-myGov oversight and the collective impact of government services on users. Good progress has been made in the development and delivery of enhanced myGov during 2022, but there is more work to be done.

myGov's authority is currently managed through a two-year Cabinet process, which expires in June 2023. myGov is not explicitly recognised in legislation.

Currently there is joint ministerial responsibility but government agencies have expressed confusion about agency accountabilities and responsibilities across myGov and its member services.¹⁹⁵ Governance of the Enhanced myGov program is managed in house by Services Australia with decisions relating to service prioritisation, delivery and improvements made by an internal delivery board, with representation from DTA and independent advisors. A myGov and digital identity steering committee and program board, including membership across Services Australia and member services, was led by the DTA until June 2022, when governance transitioned to Services Australia as part of the Enhanced myGov program management transition.

Member services currently have limited control over the myGov release schedules, meaning they sometimes must wait for upgrades that could improve their services based on the myGov project or program priorities and schedules. Member services advise that the planning and prioritisation process "could be improved" and there is "little to no co-design or joint prioritisation" across the myGov ecosystem.¹⁹⁶ Feedback also highlighted that the current roadmap for services and features is "set by Services Australia and agencies have to attempt to adapt to it",¹⁹⁷ rather than the roadmap being informed through collaboration and joint prioritisation. The two-year nature of the enhanced myGov program and funding through specific Budget measures have further exacerbated this.

Member services each apply their own service governance arrangements that do not always consider broader myGov decisions and priorities. This siloed approach to service delivery limits the ability for government to make informed decisions about myGov's design, prioritisation and strategy as there is no single, holistic oversight of the digital ecosystem.

The Australian Government's national identity security system, and digital identity system both currently operate under their own governance arrangements. myGov is a member of the digital identity federation and a member of the digital identity program's governance committees. myGovID is individually governed within the ATO.

¹⁹⁵ Australian Government agency submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

Gaps and actions

For myGov to meet its vision, clear guidance is needed for agencies to align their services with myGov within milestone specified timeframes.

ACTION: Provide clear guidance and authority for new and existing Australian Government services to be connected to myGov.

ACTION: Set requirements for agencies to integrate their services with myGov, including:

- mandating the connection of new digital services to myGov, in alignment with the Government's reuse policy.¹⁹⁸
- requiring services be delivered in accordance with common requirements including aligning to Australian Government Architecture and the Design System.

Authority for myGov needs to be supported by a citizen-centred governance model that brings together myGov ownership and decision making alongside myGovID. These structures are needed to reduce the risk of government services being disconnected and to include agencies in decision making and prioritisation processes for myGov. This is consistent with coordinated governance models which have proven successful across industry and jurisdictions, including Service NSW and Service Canada.

International Example: Service Canada

Canada has a multidisciplinary governance structure combining capabilities from both its Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and Service Canada to manage its digital services and products.¹⁹⁹ Service Canada works in conjunction with the OCIO to shape digital strategy for MyServiceCanada, prioritise initiatives and balance resources across impacted agencies and services.

Canada's approach to government digital service delivery is underpinned by 2 key documents – the Policy on Service and Digital²⁰⁰ and the Directive on Service and Digital.²⁰¹ These documents serve as an integrated set of rules that articulate how the Canadian Government manages service delivery, information and data, information technology and cyber security in the digital era. These functions support the mandate of the Minister for Digital Government in leading the Canadian Government's digital transition.

The Guideline on Service and Digital supports agencies to implement the Policy on Service and Digital and the Directive on Service and Digital with advice, considerations and best practice principles.²⁰²

OCIO, Service Canada, and other departments use an integrated approach to governance, reporting, and planning on service, data, IT and cyber policy, managed by Chief Information Officers or designates from each department. This coordinated approach to governance streamlines bureaucracy, advances digital priorities across government through collaboration, and promotes shared services and proactive risk management.

198 Digital Transformation Agency, Digital and ICT Reuse Policy, <<https://www.dta.gov.au/our-projects/digital-and-ict-reuse-policy>>, 2022

199 Boston Consulting Group, myGov User Audit Research Comprehensive Report, 2022 (unpublished)

200 Service Canada, Policy on Service and Digital [website], accessed in December 2022, <<https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32603>>

201 Service Canada, Directive on Service and Digital [website], accessed in December 2022, <<https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32601>>

202 Service Canada, Guideline on Service and Digital [website], accessed in December 2022, <<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/guideline-service-digital.html#ToC1>>

ACTION: By mid-2023, establish a new citizen-centred governance model to guide decision making, prioritise changes to myGov and myGovID and confirm roles and responsibilities across the eco-system, including:

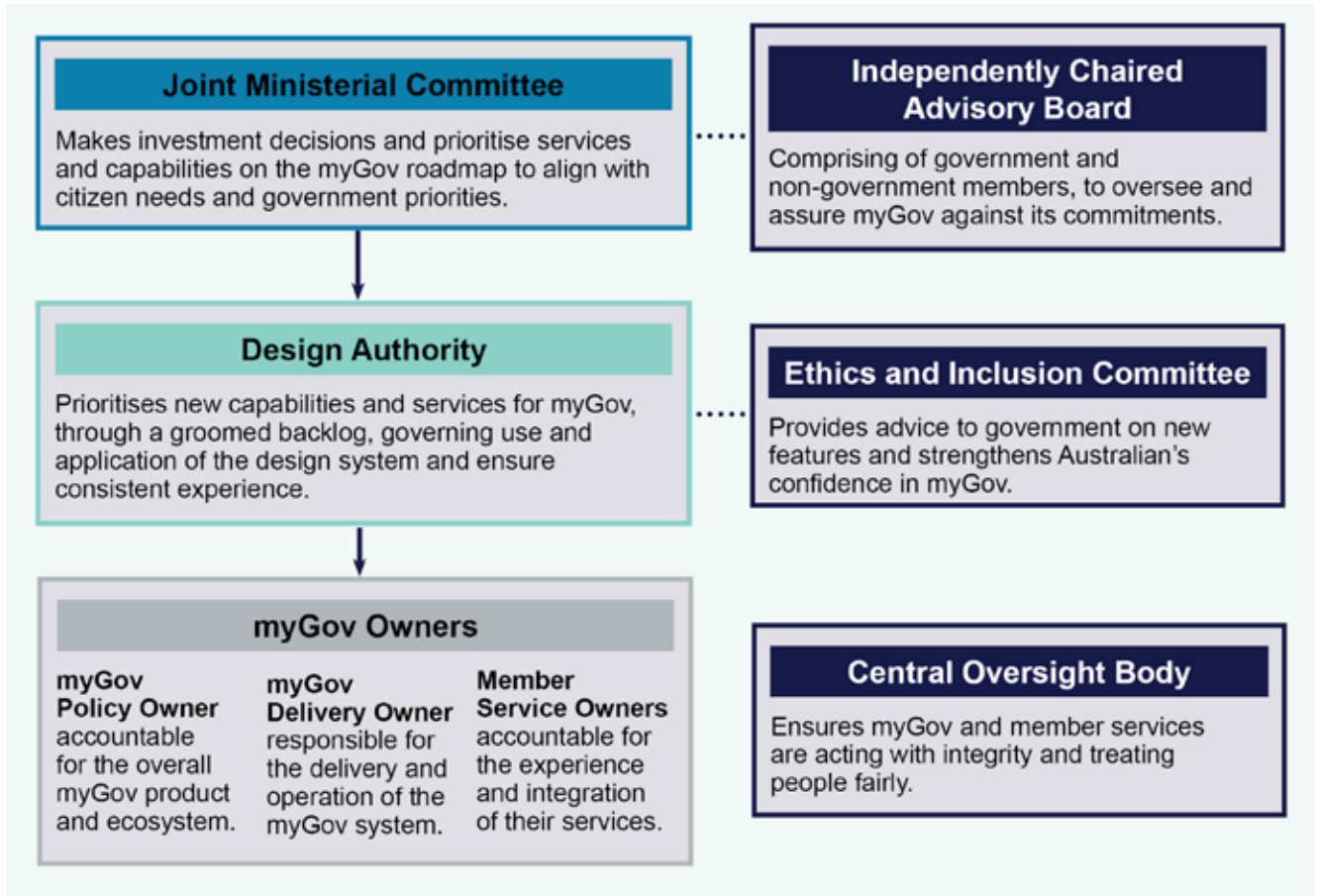
- **A joint ministerial committee** (i.e. Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet sub committee) to make funding investment decisions (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.2) and prioritise the services and capabilities to be onboarded to myGov in alignment with the myGov roadmap (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.3), the needs of Australians, and government priorities. The committee would include the joint owners of myGov, the Minister for Government Services and Minister for Finance along with relevant ministers that lead Government's service delivery impacted priorities.
- **An independently chaired advisory board** comprising of government and non government members, to provide formal advice to the ministerial group, and oversight and assurance of myGov against its commitments to Australians.
- **A 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 (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.2). Membership of this authority will include the chair of the ethics and inclusion committee, myGov and myGovID business and delivery owners, member service accountable owners and other critical decision makers.
- **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. This group of experts will ensure myGov and myGovID is designed according to the Australian Data and Digital Council's Trust Principles:²⁰³ respect, security, transparency and accountability, and provide advice to government as to whether these principles are being met.

ACTION: By mid-2023, establish clear operational roles and responsibilities across myGov and myGovID including:

- **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 the design authority, and ensuring technical requirements are delivered and operated as needed. They will also be a member 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.

203 Australian Data and Digital Council, Trust Principles, 2020, accessed via, <<https://pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/addc-trust-principles.pdf>>

FIGURE 11: PROPOSED GOVERNANCE MODEL



At an appropriate time, the Australian Government may wish to consider the development of a dedicated service delivery department, like the NSW Department of Customer Service, to provide oversight and consistency across all government services, including myGov.

5.5 MYGOV IS THE TRUSTED, VALUED AND RELIABLE DIGITAL DELIVERY PARTNER OF CHOICE

myGov connects Australians to the government services available to them. It follows that if agencies do not connect their services to myGov, people may be unable to find what they need. The delivery owner of myGov, Services Australia, can help to reduce barriers by being the delivery partner of choice. More work is needed to reduce and remove barriers, such as costs to connect and transact, transparency in decision making and governance arrangements, and a delivery environment based on open-design principles and reusable technologies.

Features of a desired future state

Services Australia, as the delivery owner of myGov, is the partner of choice for government agencies to deliver digital services. Services Australia's significant delivery experience supports agencies deliver their services digitally.

A simple onboarding process between Services Australia and member services enables services to easily reuse common myGov capabilities, such as authentication using digital identity, notifications, inbox, tasks and payments with additional capabilities available as required. Services Australia and member services have clear obligations and commitments through a refined member handbook that includes ongoing relationship management, governance, reporting, release management, issue resolution, complaints handling and escalations.

Agencies want their services connected to myGov. They are supported to uplift their services in line with the Australian Government Architecture, the Digital Service Standard and the Design System (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.7) through funding from a myGov Development Fund (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.2).

Services Australia has increased its speed-to-market of new features and improvements through the adoption of leading product management approaches and software release processes. This provides member services confidence in the agency's agility to deliver new features and respond to changing needs.

Current state

Service agencies currently have the choice to connect their services to myGov, regardless of the Australian Government's reuse policy.²⁰⁴ Currently agencies face several barriers to onboarding, which leads to a disjointed experience because people expect all relevant services to be available through myGov, but often they are not. Government agencies have told the audit that myGov did not meet their needs, so they built their own system instead.

"The onboarding process for myGov is resource intensive. It can also be difficult to know who to engage in Services Australia to onboard. This process could be streamlined to reduce red tape and remove administrative barriers."²⁰⁵

204 Digital Transformation Agency, Digital and ICT Reuse Policy, <<https://www.dta.gov.au/our-projects/digital-and-ict-reuse-policy>>, 2022

205 Australian Government agency submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

“...myGov did not meet the business requirements and was therefore deemed not to be the preferred solution... it was determined that establishing a single centralised account registration and management capability ... was more beneficial than migrating applications to myGov.”²⁰⁶

The average duration to onboard services to myGov is around 9 months. This includes a combination of engagement, design, funding, onboarding processes and technical integration.²⁰⁷

As member services onboard to myGov, they enter into an agreement through a member services handbook and service schedule which outlines “responsibilities, requirements, standards, guidelines and procedures that apply to the member service as a recipient of myGov capabilities and support”.²⁰⁸ Through this, member services are offered a core set of capabilities to onboard to, but this is limited to authentication, account linking, account management, help desk plus some other back of house management. Member services can choose to opt-in to additional capabilities including Tell Us Once, inbox, myGov profile among other new capabilities including tasks and payments. This opt-in approach makes the experience disjointed as users cannot tell which service uses which capability (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.4). For example only 9 of 15 member services use the myGov inbox, and only 7 use the ‘Tell Us Once’ capability.²⁰⁹

Feedback from Australian Government agencies indicates the myGov funding model disincentivises agencies to connect their services. Prior to 2021, myGov was funded through a cost recovery charging model where member services were invoiced and charged based on the number of capabilities they used, and the volumes of transactions, resulting in high costs and limiting their interest in onboarding to more capabilities.²¹⁰ Notably, the charging has been suspended during the delivery of the enhanced myGov program.

As delivery lead, Services Australia makes key decisions prioritising and designing myGov through its governance committees, including a Delivery Board. Some government agencies have expressed concerns the needs of their customers and services are not being met, “In the past, many policy changes have been constrained by the inflexibility and costs of changing Services Australia IT”,²¹¹ and inconsistent architecture across government systems, and lack of design system prevents them from integrating their services. “Integrating with myGov technical platforms can be difficult for legacy systems that often have significant technical debt”.²¹² The enhanced myGov platform is a big step forward, 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, and
- a Customer Journey Analytics tool producing data and insights which can be used to improve services.

206 *ibid.*

207 Services Australia, Member Service Handbook v3.2, July 2022 (unpublished)

208 *ibid.*

209 Email from Services Australia, dated 1 November 2022

210 The Enhanced myGov program commenced in 2021, pausing cost recovery actions until a new funding model is agreed by Cabinet

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

212 *ibid.*

Gaps and actions

myGov offers Australians a central place for them to interact with the government services they need. To do this, Services Australia needs to continue improving and growing to be the delivery partner of choice for all services.

ACTION: Services Australia should actively promote their service delivery offerings across government to build the community of government users and build a greater understanding of myGov's shared capabilities.

Services Australia should adopt a streamlined myGov onboarding approach that:

1. Ensures the core capabilities that Australians interact with on myGov are connected to relevant services, so a person does not need to understand the inner workings of government to access information or a service.

ACTION: The core set of capabilities to which member services onboard should be expanded to include authentication using digital identity, inbox, Tell Us Once capability, payments and tasks.

2. Establishes consistent architecture so all services can interact with each other, and the experience looks and feels familiar, rather than jumping between brands and different interfaces.

ACTION: myGov and member services should adopt the Australian Government Architecture's Design System and Design Service Standard to enable a consistent look, feel and functionality for digital services (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.2).

3. Offers a more cost-effective solution for agencies compared to building their own, bespoke solutions, supported by a funding model that accounts for sustainment and uplift.

ACTION: Government should adopt a new funding model that incentivises agencies to onboard their services to myGov (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.2).

ACTION: DTA should expand the Australian Government Architecture to cover all the requirements of myGov (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.7).

ACTION: Services Australia should mobilise myGov support teams to assist member services to uplift their services to meet the onboarding requirements of myGov (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.7). This includes aligning them to the Australian Government Architecture's Design System and Digital Service Standard.

5.6 ALL THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER ON A NATIONAL ASSET

The Government's current approach to delivering digital services can be disconnected and digital services vary across jurisdictions. People should not need to know how to navigate different government structures when they need to access a service online. They expect governments to work together to provide information and services in a way that is simple and aligned to the life events they are experiencing. The Australian Government should partner with states and territories to make it easy for people to find and do what they need to across local, state and territory and Australian Government services.

Features of a desired future state

myGov is an exemplar of government digital service delivery that supports Australians to find and access services across the Australian Government, states and territories, and local governments especially at key transitions or events in their lives when they need to access multiple services (often referred to as 'life events'). Information and services, across all levels of government, are simple to use, easy to understand and accessible to everyone.

The Australian Government, states and territories and local governments work together on a long term plan to make it easier for Australians to access the services they need, regardless of the level of government that is delivering the service.

Australians are supported to complete their business with government, through common look, feel and functionality of services, checklists for each life event and access to their credentials (e.g. drivers' licences, Medicare cards) in the wallet or app they choose.

myGov enables fair and equitable access to services, so that people, regardless of where they live, will have equal access to quality government services.

Current state

Digital maturity varies significantly across jurisdictions, with different capability, willingness and interest to onboard to myGov. States and territories also maintain their own digital footprints. Many of the states and territories consider they have "well established service delivery platforms with functionality that aligns to the accountabilities of states and territories".²¹³

Some states and territories do not currently prioritise funds required to integrate and change their system requirements for myGov. In the past, the Australian Government has also provided limited authority or willingness to help co-fund states and territories to onboard to myGov.

At times, people do not understand the difference between Australian Government and state and territory government services and want to complete all their government business in one place.

"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."²¹⁴

²¹³ State government submissions to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

²¹⁴ User Audit – Qualitative Feedback Report, November 2022 PwC

Australian Data and Digital Council Ministers (now known as the Data and Digital Ministers' Meeting) agreed to a national approach to life events in 2019.²¹⁵ The Australian Government has commenced proof of concepts with the states and territories across the 'birth of a child' life event, including digital birth certificates.²¹⁶

While significant work has been undertaken across the life event pilots, lack of dedicated funding and commitment from the Australian Government and states and territories has limited its broader roll out.

The Australian Government has also commenced work with some states and territories to make verifiable credentials (including drivers' licences and Medicare cards) available across the myGov and ServiceNSW apps. Pending success, this could be extended to other jurisdictions.

Gaps and actions

Most life events that require interaction with government include a combination of Australian Government, state and territory government and local government services. To date, myGov is limited to only 15 member services, consisting mostly of Australian Government services, with some Victorian Government services. For myGov to truly provide support for the life events of individuals, it needs to connect state and territory government and local government services to allow interoperability and ease of access for Australians.

ACTION: Partner with state and territories to develop a 5-year plan to make it easy for people to access services across all levels of government.

ACTION: Develop checklists to assist users to navigate through life events connecting them to Australian Government, state and territory government and local government services available (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 1.1).

ACTION: Urgently accelerate the introduction of national digital identity legislation and a national regulator for the digital identity system to ensure effective security, privacy and other human rights protection (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 3.3).

ACTION: Continue existing proof of concepts (POCs) with jurisdictions, including:

- implement the 'birth of a child' life event into myGov, connecting relevant Australian Government and state and territory government digital services for users.
- expand and implement 'verifiable credentials' POC to be interoperable across Australian Government and state and territory government digital platforms.

215 Australian Data and Digital Council, Australian Data and Digital Council Communiqué, 6 September 2019

216 Hamoo, N., Improving Citizen Life Event Journeys, 2021, accessed via <<https://publicsectornetwork.com/insight/article-citizen-life-journey>>

5.7 GOVERNMENT HAS THE SKILLS AND CAPABILITY TO DELIVER WORLD LEADING DIGITAL SERVICES

Having the right capabilities to deliver, develop and manage myGov is essential to its success. Government's ability to invest in reusable capabilities is critical. Technology should be designed with interoperability in mind, rather than multiple customised solutions, with high standards of usability and accessibility. Cultivating skills and capability across myGov and its member services supports better interoperability between government agencies and ensures strategy, delivery and operations can be maintained.

Features of a desired future state

myGov is an exemplar system that reuses whole-of-Government policies and standards, including the Australian Government Architecture, incorporating the Design System and the Digital Service Standard.

myGov and its member services focus on new ways to develop APS capabilities to align across the breadth of strategic, digital, and service delivery skills with a strong focus on upskilling, in line with the APS Review and APS Academy work. This includes investing in the skills and capabilities needed to deliver world class service delivery across myGov and its member services, including:

- agile ways of working
- technological skills to enable myGov to scale and improve
- cyber security skills to protect the safety and security of Australians
- policy and strategy skills to develop and manage services across the government services ecosystem
- human centred design skills to ensure citizen-centric approaches

Current state

The digital maturity of government services and agencies varies significantly across government, which translates to differing levels of capability. With global demand for digital capability across human, business and economic obstacles "continuing to hit record highs", consulting firm McKinsey summarised their global surveys from 2021 and found that businesses were making the significant shift towards skill development to close the capability gap (69%), compared to other capability development practices like hiring (42%) and contracting (36%).²¹⁷ Government pressures have also inhibited capability development in digital and innovation. The 2021 Digital Review found that only a quarter of agencies surveyed support their staff with learning and development programs to innovate and lead transformational change.²¹⁸

The need for technology skills is growing across the economy and will continue to grow over the coming years.²¹⁹ The Australian Government has committed to create 1.2 million tech jobs across Australia by 2030 to address this growing need.²²⁰

²¹⁷ McKinsey & Company, McKinsey Global Surveys, 2021: A year in review, 2021

²¹⁸ Digital Transformation Agency, Digital Review, 2021

²¹⁹ Tech Council of Australia, Getting to 1.2 million, 2022 <<https://techcouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-Getting-to-1.2-million-report.pdf>>

²²⁰ The Hon Ed Husic MP, Minister for Industry and Science, Mapping out Australia's path to tech jobs future (media release), 2 August 2022, accessed via <<https://www.minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/husic/media-releases/mapping-out-australias-path-tech-jobs-future>>

The APS reform agenda has a strong focus on people and capability, recognising the high demand for digital and data expertise.²²¹ A number of functions exist to assist agencies with building capability across a range of areas including the:

- Australian Public Service Commission’s Digital Profession: offers career development programs, guides and resources to build the core digital expertise across the APS workforce.²²²
- APS Academy: provides a networked hub of learning and development excellence for the APS.²²³
- APS Surge Reserve: provides additional capacity to assist Australians during and immediately after major national disasters or emergencies.
- Australian Government Graduate Program: offers graduate job opportunities across a range of disciplines.²²⁴

myGov does not currently have a capability development plan that spans across myGov and its member services, noting broader work under way in the context of APS reform and the Digital Profession. Agencies have raised that even with the enhancements to the myGov platform, they “do not have the right resources and have not been funded to meet the new platform requirements”.²²⁵ Currently, agencies are only given minimal support to uplift their services to meet the onboarding requirements.

Gaps and actions

myGov should be seen as an exemplar to using the Australian Government Architecture, including the Digital Service Standard, and government should enforce this across digital service delivery. Further investment is needed to refresh and enforce an “in the open” government Design System for use across digital service delivery, to ensure myGov offers people a consistent experience that promotes accessibility and interoperability.

ACTION: Enforce the Australian Government Architecture, including Design System and Digital Service Standard to all myGov member services through established governance committees (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4).

ACTION: Deliver myGov as an exemplar of the Australian Government Architecture providing standardised interoperable technology architecture that is reusable by government agencies outside myGov.

ACTION: Refresh the Government Design System, within the Australian Government Architecture, to establish open-source interoperable code and fast track the Government’s ability to deliver online services.

A capability development plan is required to ensure the right skills and capabilities are attracted and retained to deliver on the myGov vision. Without a consistent capability plan across government, capability gaps will continue to increase across government and agencies will not have the support required to grow digital government services.

ACTION: Develop a capability plan to promote innovation across digital capability and meet skills requirements across strategy, policy, digital literacy (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 2.3), design, delivery, cyber and data, across myGov and member services, building on the work under way by the APS reform taskforce, the Australian Government Architecture, including the Digital Service Standard.

221 Australian Government, APS Reform [website], accessed in November 2022, <<https://www.apsreform.gov.au/>>

222 Australian Government, Digital Profession [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.digitalprofession.gov.au/>>

223 Australian Public Service Academy, The APS Academy – connecting capability and craft [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.apsacademy.gov.au/>>

224 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government Careers Pathway [website], accessed December 2022 <<https://www.dewr.gov.au/graduate-and-entry-level-programs/graduate-program/australian-government-careers-pathway-agcp>>

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

Given skills shortages across the economy, it will be increasingly important to upskill new and existing staff to help government meet the needs of myGov into the future.

ACTION: Establish new capability programs, in partnership with APS Reform, to assist government to meet the skills and capability needed to deliver and manage myGov, for example:

- digital fellowship programs to partner with digital experts across the private sector.
- virtual internships and mentoring across digital leaders internationally.
- leadership programs targeted at contracting professionals seeking to develop the skills necessary to take on future government roles or share skills with the APS.

5.8 MYGOV IS A LEARNING SYSTEM

To provide great digital services to Australians, the myGov system must gather performance and experience data, and act on this data to drive continuous improvement. “A digital government functions in a way that is digital by design – driven by the needs of users and making the most of data.”²²⁶ As a learning system, myGov needs to continually improve across:

- myGov as a system, to monitor, improve and better manage the platform and its capabilities.
- member services, to understand and improve the total experience of Australians between myGov and digital government services.
- longitudinal data sets (e.g. the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP)) to better inform government to make data-driven policy decisions and deliver better services.

Features of a desired future state

Government has adopted a data and citizen insight driven approach. myGov insights are used to inform and improve myGov and its member services. Overarching monitoring frameworks are applied across myGov and its member services to demonstrate performance and benefits, and for longitudinal analysis to be undertaken across the total experience of Australians.

International example: GOV.UK

GOV.UK publishes a monitoring framework that assists agencies in ways to measure, analyse and report services, to ensure:²²⁷

- The service is meeting user needs
- The service allows users to easily complete the task it provides
- There are enough people using the service to make it cost efficient
- People know about the services and are choosing to use it

The framework identifies the data sets that must be collected, measured and published (on **data.gov.uk**). The 4 mandatory key performance indicators (KPIs) include:

- Cost per transaction
- User satisfaction
- Completion rate
- Digital take-up

A consistent application of measurements ensures citizens get access to information about the performance of services in a single place – **data.gov.uk**.

Government has adopted a data and citizen insight driven approach. myGov insights are used to inform and improve myGov and its member services. Overarching monitoring frameworks are applied across myGov and its member services to demonstrate performance and benefits, and for longitudinal analysis to be undertaken across the total experience of Australians.

²²⁶ Digital Transformation Agency, Digital Government Strategy [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.dta.gov.au/digital-government-strategy>>

²²⁷ Government of the United Kingdom, GOV.UK [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/measuring-success>>

The user journey between myGov and member services is recorded consistently and brought together to draw insights on real user experiences when navigating myGov and linked services. Insights highlight points in the end to end user experience where people drop out of digital services, have difficulty completing tasks and activities or require additional support. These insights are then drawn on to continually improve myGov and member services, including the interaction between various services.

The monitoring frameworks cover performance management, benefits management and social policy indicators to help inform continuous improvement for myGov and other government policies and services.

myGov has established new ways to collect data across myGov and its member services including leveraging other data collection processes such as the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Survey of Trust in the Public Service²²⁸ to better inform the development of digital services through myGov.

It is imperative that myGov identifies and understands its key indicators, benchmarks its success against those indicators, and acts to improve, centering on the needs of Australians. Example monitoring frameworks, at Volume 1 Attachment D, demonstrate the approach government takes to performance monitoring. Government does not measure its services in the same way as the private sector. Government measures success and satisfaction through success accessing the services people need, not the ones they want, as there is no alternative. For example, if a person needs assistance from the government, they do not have the choice of multiple parties to interact with, they only have one option.

The use and management of Australians' data is protected when captured for performance or other measurements. Storage or use of a person's data is only for proper use and should not cause harm. In particular, use of data is governed by appropriate ethical frameworks, including First Nations data governance, where applicable.

Current state

The current approach to measuring performance across myGov and its services is fragmented because data is managed across different agencies. There is no consistent approach for measuring end-to-end digital services through myGov. Member services are not required to share usage or performance data with myGov.

Measuring and understanding the total experience of Australians is currently limited. This is due to a combination of factors including the inability to capture metrics about people once they have transitioned to the member service they are accessing. This is because there is no consistent approach for measuring online services and each agency applies their own metrics framework.

myGov is currently delivered and measured against the Services Australia corporate performance measures piloted in 2021-22.²²⁹ Services Australia currently collects customer experience data from call centres through usability testing of new features and a quarterly customer sentiments survey of around 1,000 people.

The DTA and Services Australia have limited authority to collect performance and benefits information from member services to help inform improvements to myGov and its services.²³⁰ The current myGov platform has given government a contemporary base to build from and has a more significant data capability than the previous platform provided, however, further work is required by all member services to realise its potential.

228 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Trust in Australian Public Services [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.pmc.gov.au/public-data/trust-australian-public-services>>

229 Services Australia, 2021-22 Corporate Plan, 2021

230 Australian Government agency submission to the myGov User Audit, 2022 (unpublished)

The Digital Review found that only 35% of agencies reported having benefits monitoring processes throughout the lifecycle of their digital and ICT projects.²³¹ Additionally, performance metrics across government are currently in short supply due to the limited use of real time information sharing using APIs across member services.²³²

Gaps and actions

While new capability to better track the user experience has been introduced through the Enhanced myGov program, further work is required in both myGov itself and (more significantly) in member services to consistently track and record the end to end user experience across the digital services ecosystem.

There is no consistent myGov measurements framework spanning the entire ecosystem of the platform and member services. This needs to be introduced to fully assess and improve user satisfaction and to help enable policy development. Without a consistent framework, decisions surrounding myGov's planning and prioritisation process will remain limited. Government's ability to holistically measure and improve service delivery experience across agencies will be equally restricted.

It is imperative that myGov identifies and understands its key indicators, benchmarks its success against those and acts to improve experiences and outcomes, centering on the needs of Australians.

ACTION: By mid-2023, a myGov monitoring framework needs to be developed that allows Government to understand and measure:

Performance management – including, but not limited to:

- operational metrics covering system performance, stability, availability, volumes, load times.
- experience metrics covering customer satisfaction, behavioural change and accessibility for those who need to use assisted technologies.
- outcome metrics covering task success rates, password resets, support usage across myGov and its member services.

Benefits management – identifying the benefits of myGov to Australians, government and the economy and ensuring they are measured and monitored to deliver better services for Australians.

Policy Indicators – where myGov will be integrated with, or manage a similar process alongside, the MADIP to develop “whole-of-life insights about various population groups in Australia, such as the interactions between their characteristics, use of services like healthcare and education, and outcomes like improved health and employment.”²³³ The data in and of itself needs to be supported by broader contextual research to ensure that inequalities based on previous policies in the system do not perpetuate. This needs to be done in a way that safeguards the different communities across Australia and protects people from harm including consideration of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies code of ethics.²³⁴ This could also be expanded to cover other policy domains as the scope of myGov broadens.

231 Digital Transformation Agency, Digital Review, 2021

232 Services Australia, myGov Transition Report (unpublished)

233 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Multi-Agency Data Integration Project [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-integration/integrated-data/multi-agency-data-integration-project-madip>>

234 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, 2020, accessed via <<https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/aiatsis-code-ethics-jan22.pdf>>

The monitoring framework needs to be applied across myGov and its member services to enable accountability and timely improvement. Longitudinal analysis will support an understanding of the total experience of people using myGov and member services, and improve connections, transitions and key identified pain points. A legal authority for myGov would enable this (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1).

An example monitoring framework at Volume 1 Attachment D, demonstrates the approach government should take to performance monitoring.

ACTION: The myGov monitoring framework should be co-designed and agreed with the independently chaired advisory board (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.4), regularly reported on, and held accountable through this governance forum.

ACTION: By mid-2023, government should invest in a whole-of-government digital service monitoring framework, as part of the Australian Government Architecture²³⁵ and commit that all agencies adopt that framework.

ACTION: myGov should develop a set of clear key indicators and benchmarks within the monitoring framework and publish progress against them, for example:

- **Satisfaction:** How satisfied are people with the myGov system?
- **Access:** How accessible and inclusive is myGov to all Australians?
- **Services:** How many services are available through myGov?
- **Use:** How often are people using myGov?
- **Reliability:** How often has the myGov system been unavailable to people needing to use it?

ACTION: The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's 'Survey of Trust in Australian public services'²³⁶ should be leveraged to better understand trust levels in myGov by including questions relating directly to digital service delivery.

ACTION: The end-to-end experience of users should be measured by monitoring, collecting, analysing and acting on data to drive improvements and value.

ACTION: The myGov member services handbook and agreements should be updated to request member services share relevant data with myGov to identify changes needed to improve individual services and measure the success of the myGov customer experience.

The use and management of people's data needs to be protected when captured for performance or other measurements. myGov needs to ensure that any storage or use of a person's data is intended for proper use and does not cause harm. In particular, use of data needs to be governed by appropriate ethical frameworks, including First Nations data governance, where applicable.

ACTION: Establish myGov legislation (refer to Volume 2 subchapter 5.1) to enable the myGov accountable party to collect data across member services in order to drive program and policy improvements across government.

ACTION: myGov should partner with relevant agencies to feed insights from the myGov system across longitudinal analysis to assist government's policy decisions (for example through MADIP, or similar programs).

235 Digital Transformation Agency, Whole of Government Architecture [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.dta.gov.au/whole-government-architecture>>

236 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Trust in Australian Public Services [website], accessed November 2022, <<https://www.pmc.gov.au/public-data/trust-australian-public-services>>

Appendix

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