



# Innovate Australia Takeaway Cheat Sheets

## 2024 Showcase | Canberra

### HARNESSING INNOVATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

Welcome to this comprehensive report on the recent series of keynotes, fireside chats and panel discussions featuring prominent leaders and innovators from the Australian Public Service.

Our aim is to provide a distilled version of the rich discussions, highlighting the strategic directions, innovative practices, and crucial considerations that emerged from these conversations.

These cheat sheets capture the essence of each speaker's contributions, from exploring the nuances of AI governance and digital identity to addressing the critical challenges of talent retention and trust in government services.

In the coming pages, you'll find succinct summaries for priorities in service delivery, the impact of emerging technologies, and the evolving landscape of privacy regulation, amongst other critical areas.

This resource is designed to equip you with clear action points and thought-provoking ideas to enhance your approach to public service and policy implementation. Whether you are involved in digital transformation, policy design, or service delivery, these insights will help you navigate the complex environment of public sector innovation with confidence and clarity.

Patrick Joy | Head of Research & Analysis



# Modern Service Delivery Capabilities



**David Hazlehurst**  
**CEO**  
**Services Australia**

## 1. PURPOSE-DRIVEN COMMITMENT

Services Australia exemplifies a purpose-driven organisation, committed to providing simple, helpful, respectful, and transparent services. This clear mission is deeply embedded within the workforce, driving their dedication and enhancement of service delivery for Australians.

## 2. EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The organisation's workforce mirrors the cultural and community diversity of Australia. This connection allows Services Australia to effectively meet the varied needs of all Australians, particularly the most vulnerable. Promoting diversity and inclusion within public sector teams can significantly improve service relevance and accessibility.

## 3. MODERN AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Modern service delivery in Services Australia prioritises user-friendly interactions and anticipates diverse needs. By offering multiple channels (digital, face-to-face, telephony), the organisation ensures accessibility for everyone, including those who might face barriers to digital access. Public sector professionals should focus on providing flexible, inclusive, and anticipatory services to better serve their communities.

## 4. ETHICAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND AI

While exploring ambitious technological advancements, Services Australia is committed to ethical practices. This involves being radically transparent, involving stakeholders early in the process, and ensuring a human-centred approach. Building public trust is paramount when integrating AI and automation into service delivery. Ethical considerations and transparency should guide all technological innovations in the public sector.

## 5. LEADERSHIP AND FRONTLINE ENGAGEMENT

Effective leadership in large organisations like Services Australia requires a deep understanding of frontline operations. Leaders should adopt a humble and curious mindset, prioritising continuous learning and external perspectives. Engaging with frontline staff and understanding their daily experiences is crucial for developing responsive and empathetic services. Public sector leaders are encouraged to foster deep frontline engagement to enhance policy and service effectiveness.

*“MODERN SERVICE DELIVERY TO ME IS ABOUT PROVIDING PEOPLE WITH CHOICE AND RESPECTING THEIR DIVERSITY IN NEEDS, CAPABILITIES, AND BACKGROUNDS.”*

# Citizen Expectations and Emerging Opportunities for Progressive Technology



**Chris Fechner**

**CEO**

**Digital Transformation Agency**

## 1. EVOLUTION OF THE DIGITAL SERVICE STANDARD

The Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) is focused on enhancing the Digital Service Standard to ensure services are oriented around citizens rather than government structures. By adopting best practices and continuously improving service quality, the DTA aims to elevate public service delivery across all agencies, ensuring seamless and user-centric experiences.

## 2. DIGITAL IDENTITY ADVANCEMENTS

Digital identity is a cornerstone of providing simple, safe, and secure services. Recent legislative advancements have paved the way for broader implementation. Digital identity will enhance trust and confidence in the digital economy, enabling access to services without the need for redundant identity verification processes. This approach will streamline interactions and protect personal information more effectively.

## 3. RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

The DTA is committed to the responsible use of AI, focusing on transparency, trustworthiness, and collaboration. The establishment of an AI task force and the development of a nationally consistent approach to AI usage ensure that AI applications in government are safe, ethical, and beneficial to citizens. This collaborative effort across agencies is crucial for managing the rapid evolution of AI technologies.

## 4. CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION

Improving service delivery requires breaking down silos and fostering collaboration across different government departments. Initiatives like myGov and digital identity highlight the importance of integrated services. By leveraging AI and hyper-personalisation, the DTA aims to provide proactive, connected services that minimise friction and enhance user satisfaction.

## 5. SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH INDUSTRY

Government and industry must work together to strengthen Australia's digital capabilities. The DTA's partnerships with industry associations and support for small to medium enterprises (SMEs) through initiatives like the digital marketplace are crucial for building a robust digital economy. Encouraging innovation and supporting indigenous and regional businesses will ensure a diverse and resilient digital landscape.

*“WE MUST  
BALANCE BUILDING  
TRUST, ENABLING  
INNOVATION, AND  
PREVENTING HARM  
IN THE AI SPACE.”*

# THE VISION FOR A SIMPLE, SOPHISTICATED AND TRUSTWORTHY PUBLIC SERVICE



**Dr Rachel Bacon**  
Deputy Commissioner, Integrity, Reform and Enabling Services  
APSC



**Alison Rose**  
Chief of Division, Space Geoscience Australia



**Gemma Van Halderen**  
GM Data and Evaluation  
Department of Social Services

## 1. BUILDING TRUST THROUGH EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Dr Rachel Bacon emphasised the importance of trust in government and its services. The Australian Public Service Commission's initiative, "long term insights briefings," highlighted that while the public expects the use of AI to improve service delivery, transparency, empathy, and the presence of human oversight are crucial in maintaining trust.

## 2. USER-CENTRIC PLATFORMS FOR ACCESSIBLE DATA

Alison Rose introduced the Digital Atlas of Australia, a platform that integrates 175 trusted datasets from 19 government entities to support place-based policy making. This platform, likened to "Google Maps on steroids," aims to provide free and open access to government data, enhancing trust and usability for Australian citizens and government agencies alike.

## 3. EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH DATA

Gemma Van Halderen discussed the Department of Social Services' mission to improve the lives of Australian families and communities through transparent and accessible data. The Digital Atlas of Australia supports this mission by providing community-level data to facilitate local decision-making and build long-term insights, crucial for initiatives like the \$200 million targeting entrenched disadvantage package.

## 4. PLACE-BASED POLICY INITIATIVES

The panel highlighted the importance of place-based approaches in policy-making. By integrating socio-economic, geographical, and social security data, the government can better understand and address the unique needs of different communities. This method aids in making informed decisions about the placement of services like Centrelink offices and health facilities, ensuring they are accessible to those in need.

## 5. ENHANCING PUBLIC SECTOR CAPABILITIES

Rachel Bacon pointed out the need for the Australian Public Service to build capabilities that go beyond transactional skills to relational government. This includes cultural capability, shared responsibility, and effective community partnerships. These skills are essential for tackling complex social issues such as entrenched disadvantage.

## 6. COMBATING DISINFORMATION WITH TRANSPARENCY

The discussion underscored the role of transparency in combating disinformation. By providing accessible, reliable data from trusted sources, public sector agencies enable citizens to fact-check and verify information. This approach helps to dispel myths and build public trust in government data and services.

# Navigating the Emerging & Evolving Realm of Critical Privacy & Information Requirements



## Carly Kind

**Australian Privacy Commissioner  
OAIC**

### 1. INNOVATION BEYOND NOVELTY

Carly Kind emphasized that for innovation to be a public good, it must create value, improve effectiveness, or address unmet needs. Innovation should go beyond mere novelty and should involve input and buy-in from the people it aims to benefit, ensuring it delivers public value and enhances privacy rights.

### 2. IMPACT OF TRACKING PIXELS

Kind discussed the pervasive use of tracking pixels and other surveillance tools on websites, which facilitate granular user tracking and targeted advertising. While these tools can potentially deliver public benefits, they also pose significant privacy concerns, underscoring the need for careful consideration and regulation.

### 3. NEED FOR REGULATORY INNOVATION

To address privacy challenges posed by new technologies, Kind advocated for regulatory innovation. She highlighted the importance of modern, technologically neutral, and robust regulatory protections to ensure businesses and governments maintain a social licence to innovate while safeguarding privacy rights.

### 4. PRIVACY ACT REFORMS

Kind outlined proposed reforms to the Privacy Act, which aim to shift the onus from individuals to entities in safeguarding privacy. Key proposals include introducing a fair and reasonable test, requiring transparency in automated decision-making, and expanding the definition of personal information to include technical and inferred data.

### 5. SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH INDUSTRY

The new digital identity system was highlighted as a significant innovation for enhancing privacy protections. This system will allow individuals to prove their identity online more securely without sharing identity documents with multiple organisations. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner will regulate the system to ensure compliance with privacy safeguards.

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OR ADDRESSING  
UNMET NEEDS”*

# HERALDING THE NEXT PHASE OF AI, DIGITAL & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



**John Shepherd**  
FAS Digital ID and Data Policy  
Department of Finance



**Niki Strachan**  
Acting GM AI Governance  
Department of Industry, Science  
and Resources



**Zoe Hawkins**  
Head of Policy Design  
ANU Tech Policy Design Centre

## 1. AI REGULATION: BALANCING INNOVATION, HARM PREVENTION & TRUST

Niki Strachan highlighted the Australian Government's focus on AI regulation. Transparent and inclusive consultations across all levels of society, including government, industry, academia, and civil society, are essential for responsible AI development and deployment.

## 2. DIGITAL IDENTITY: LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATIONS & PUBLIC TRUST

John Shepherd discussed significant progress in establishing a robust legislative framework for digital identity in Australia. The recent passage of the Digital ID Bill and the appointment of the ACCC as the regulator are foundational steps in building public trust. Emphasising voluntary participation and providing citizens with genuine choice in using digital IDs enhances security and convenience while maintaining privacy.

## 3. POLICY DESIGN & TECH CONVERGENCE

Zoe Hawkins underscored the importance of understanding the interaction of various emerging technologies, such as AI, quantum computing, and digital identity. A comprehensive policy approach is needed to address the convergence of these technologies and their combined impact on the digital economy and national security. Effective policy design must consider broader implications, ensuring resilience and adaptability in a rapidly evolving tech landscape.

## 4. BUILDING & RETAINING PUBLIC TRUST

Maintaining public trust in the face of rapidly advancing technologies requires clear communication, education, and inclusivity. Engaging diverse demographics, including those with lower digital literacy, is vital. John Shepherd and Niki Strachan emphasised the importance of transparent pilots of new technologies with visible benefits, and ensuring citizens understand and feel secure about their data and digital interactions.

## 5. WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS

Preparing the workforce for the future involves continuous upskilling and integrating new technologies into education systems. Niki Strachan highlighted initiatives like the National AI Centre and Future Skills Organisation, which play critical roles in equipping both current and future generations with necessary skills to navigate and lead in a tech-driven world.

## 6. FOCUS ON INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

Ensuring that all Australians, including those from marginalised communities, can participate in and benefit from digital advancements is a priority. John Shepherd discussed addressing barriers to digital identity access and providing tailored support for different user needs. The government aims to prioritise inclusion in its digital initiatives, recognising the diverse requirements of its citizens.