



Innovate NSW

Takeaway Cheat Sheets

2024 Showcase | Sydney

HARNESSING INNOVATION IN THE NSW PUBLIC SECTOR

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

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, focusing on integrating data into decision-making, maintaining robust data governance, and empowering staff at all levels. We delve into the broader applications of AI, emphasising the importance of progress over perfection, recognising good practices, and ensuring traceability and trust in data-driven strategies. Additionally, we address critical challenges such as evolving policies, enhancing leadership capabilities, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in government services.

In the coming pages, you'll find succinct summaries of priorities in service delivery, the impact of emerging technologies, and the evolving landscape of privacy regulation, among 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



PRODUCTIVITY AND DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

PRODUCTIVITY PANEL



Peter Achterstraat
NSW Productivity Commissioner
NSW Treasury



Chris Lamb
Deputy Commissioner
NSW Public Service Commission



Joann Wilkie
Deputy Secretary, Economic
Strategy and Productivity
NSW Treasury

1. EMPHASIS ON DATA UTILISATION

Increasing productivity in the public sector requires leveraging data effectively. It's not just about collecting data but ensuring it's high quality, appropriately interpreted, and used to drive knowledge and informed decisions.

2. IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

Enhancing productivity hinges on improving both technical and soft skills. This includes understanding and working with data to foster teamwork and problem-solving abilities.

3. BALANCING BUDGET CONSTRAINTS AND INNOVATION

In a budget-constrained environment, prioritising investments and being innovative with existing resources is crucial. Effective use of AI and other technologies can help streamline processes and improve outcomes despite financial limitations.

TRUST AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN GOVERNMENT

1. BALANCING INNOVATION AND PRIVACY

Effective service delivery in government must integrate privacy and security considerations from the outset. Implementing privacy impact assessments for every project ensures that innovations do not compromise trust and legal compliance.

2. BUILDING AND MEASURING TRUST

Trust in government is built through transparency, ethical behaviour, and effective communication. Regular surveys and targeted projects can help gauge and improve trust levels, addressing areas where trust is low.

3. COLLABORATION ACROSS AGENCIES

Breaking down silos and fostering collaboration between line and central agencies is crucial for addressing complex issues like housing and domestic violence. Shared frameworks and a focus on common goals can drive more effective and unified government responses.

TRUST FIRESIDE CHAT



Ruth Owen
Deputy Secretary, Strategic
Implementation Group
NSW Premier's Department



Scott Johnston
Deputy Secretary & Chief
Commissioner of State Revenue
Revenue NSW

INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION IN GOVERNMENT



Michael Rodrigues
24-Hour Economy Commissioner
Department of Enterprise,
Investment and Trade



Lisa McLean
Chief Executive Officer
Circular Australia | DCCEEW



Eamon Waterford
Chief Executive Officer
Committee for Sydney



Chris Hanger
Chief Operating Officer
DCCEEW

DIGITAL ECONOMY PANEL

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BALANCING DIGITAL INNOVATION AND HUMAN CONNECTION

CONNECTIVITY PANEL

1. PERSONALISATION AND COMPLEXITY IN SERVICES

Revenue NSW emphasises the importance of balancing simplicity in user experience with the complexity of tax legislation. Personalised and detailed information is crucial for sophisticated customers, with AI playing a role in maintaining and updating content to keep it relevant and accessible.

2. DIGITAL INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The NSW Telco Authority is developing a digital inclusion strategy focusing on accessibility across diverse communities. This involves community engagement to understand unique needs, ensuring that digital services are inclusive and cater to various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.



Kylie De Courteney
Managing Director
NSW Telco Authority



Dan Bowes
Executive Director, Customer
Service - Taxes and Grants
Revenue NSW

3. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND AI

Both organisations are exploring AI to enhance service delivery. For NSW Telco Authority, the goal is to provide situational awareness to frontline responders. Revenue NSW uses AI to automate legal document processing and to ensure that human expertise is reserved for complex tasks. The overarching aim is to utilise AI to enhance human capabilities and improve service efficiency.

ADVANCING AI: OUTCOMES, ETHICS, AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN THE NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC SECTOR

AI PANEL

1. APPLICATIONS OF AI IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

AI is already used extensively in the public sector, including chatbots for education and AI-driven asset management.

Generative AI can enhance productivity by helping employees with tasks like writing documents, conducting research, and automating repetitive processes.

Projects like AI-powered road maintenance and education chatbots demonstrate significant benefits to the public, not just cost-saving measures for the government.

2. ETHICAL AI DECISION-MAKING

Addressing ethical concerns in AI involves managing bias, ensuring data privacy, and maintaining transparency.

Intellectual property issues arise with AI-generated content, creating challenges in defining ownership and responsibility.

Building AI responsibly includes considering environmental impacts and creating transparent, explainable models for public trust.

3. LEARNING FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Financial services have been using AI for decades, but generative AI presents new challenges and opportunities.

The public sector can benefit from private sector strategies to enhance individual and organizational productivity.

Both sectors need to address the speed, cost, accuracy, and legal implications of implementing AI.



Vafa Ghazavi

Executive Director, Research & Policy
James Martin Institute for Public Policy



Jessica Ho

Director, Digital Investment Assurance
Digital NSW
Department of Customer Service



Will Liang

Executive Director, Asset Management
MA Financial Group

4. SHARING AI SOLUTIONS ACROSS GOVERNMENT

New South Wales Government has an AI working group to facilitate the sharing of AI solutions and best practices among agencies.

Publishing findings and case studies can help other parts of government and the private sector learn and adopt similar approaches.

Centralized support mechanisms and capacity building are crucial for smaller agencies to implement AI effectively.

5. REGULATING AI AND OUTCOMES

Regulating AI by focusing on outcomes rather than the technology itself can be effective, but must account for the actions of bad actors.

Ensuring balanced power among AI developers and promoting democratisation of AI technology are essential for ethical AI use.

Transparency and accountability in AI processes help build public trust and ensure the technology benefits everyone.

INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION IN GOVERNMENT

FUTURE WORK PANEL



Jody Grima
Acting COO
Department of Customer Service



Shaun Ruming
Chief People Officer
Department of Education



Hannah Tonkin
NSW Women's Safety Commissioner
Department of Communities and Justice

1. MEANINGFUL WORK AND AUTONOMY

The key to attracting and retaining top talent in the public sector rests on the ability for employees to see the impact and value of their work and appreciate the freedom to execute their roles with a certain level of independence.

2. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Remote work, part-time positions, job sharing, and compressed hours can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention. Flexibility is particularly beneficial in supporting mental health, preventing burnout, and accommodating the personal needs of unique individuals.

3. COLLABORATION AND CULTURE

Encouraging cross-functional teamwork, ensuring psychological safety, and fostering a sense of belonging within the workforce can lead to more effective and innovative public service solutions. Additionally, creating opportunities for professional growth and feedback can further enhance employee engagement and development.

BALANCING DIGITAL INNOVATION AND HUMAN CONNECTION

DATA & INSIGHTS PANEL

1. INTEGRATING DATA INTO DECISION-MAKING

Embedding data insights into everyday decision-making processes is crucial. Rather than treating data reports as optional, organisations should make them integral to guiding inspector deployments and other strategic actions, ensuring more accurate and effective outcomes.

2. DATA GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Proper data governance, including understanding data holdings, securing data, and ensuring appropriate access, is fundamental for leveraging AI effectively. Automating data management processes, such as data deletion, can enhance data accuracy and reduce risks.



Natasha Mann
NSW Fair Trading Commissioner
Department of Customer Service



Kate Carruthers
Chief Data & Insights Officer
UNSW

3. PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Embracing progress over perfection while maintaining strong governance and traceability is essential. Ensuring trust and safety in data usage involves clear policies and an understanding of the implications of data-driven decisions, fostering an environment where innovation can thrive within safe boundaries.