

# “Speaker Spotlight”

## 7TH ANNUAL INNOVATE NSW SHOWCASE

Where practical operations meets pioneering innovation



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“ So data has always been important. It's about getting the right data to the right people at the right time with an appropriate interpretation. Data is data. You have information, then you have knowledge. What you need to be doing is getting data to drive knowledge to be able to be make better decisions. ”

JOANN WILKIE

— DEPUTY SECRETARY, ECONOMIC STRATEGY & PRODUCTIVITY  
NSW TREASURY





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From a capability perspective, whether it's in our work or in our personal lives, all of us are coming to grips with making more data driven decisions. The challenge with that is there's just more and more data out there. Getting through the misinformation or noise to figure out where to actually focus is really important.



CHRIS LAMB

— DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
NSW PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION





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“

The key to increasing productivity, is skills ...data by itself is no good. You've got to convert it to either knowledge or information, and you need the right skills for people to do that, not just the technical skills, but the soft skills.

”

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PETER ACHTERSTRAAT  
— NSW PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSIONER  
NSW TREASURY





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**Building trust in government is supporting the government to fulfil its commitments, but also from an advisory point of view, making sure the government and the Cabinet gets the best possible advice to make the best possible decisions to fulfil their democratic mandate and to make sure they are fulfilling the outcomes that they want to deliver for the community.**



RUTH OWEN

— DEPUTY SECRETARY, STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION GROUP  
NSW PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT





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“

I think building that strength [trust] in any organisation is one of the most important things we could do, and it's not just a leadership thing. It's about talking to customers, understanding what they're hearing, and being really good at listening to get the next ideas to create change.

”

SCOTT JOHNSTON

— CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF STATE REVENUE  
REVENUE NSW





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Private sector does a really good job around entertainment and consumer audiences. So I think in terms of how we go about public sector partnership, it's the "don't buy the horses, understand the races" position. Understand what your role is in enabling, as opposed to trying to control or prescribe.



MICHAEL RODRIGUES

— 24-HOUR ECONOMY COMMISSIONER  
NSW DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, INVESTMENT & TRADE





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“

A big systems transition is to be looking out of your silos in other departments and working out who your champions are. How can you build buy-in across government or across your project sphere? Can you recruit/promote innovative staff? What can you do to be innovative? Can you run workshops to create innovation?

”

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LISA MCLEAN  
— CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
CIRCULAR AUSTRALIA | DCCEEW



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“

Yes, you need data. Yes, you need to be tracking what you need, but you also need a human political platform where people care about the issue and where failure will get in the media or be noticed by the Treasurer, or be noticed by the Executive Director of your group, or whatever it is [to make it matter].”

”

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EAMON WATERFORD  
— CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
COMMITTEE FOR SYDNEY



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If we don't all work together and don't think differently about how our businesses operate and how we think about risk and opportunity in terms of the services that we deliver where innovation is required, we won't be able to make the changes that are going to be needed.



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CHRIS HANGER  
— CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
NSW DCCEEW





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Customers are quite sophisticated, and so they're not looking necessarily for simplicity of information. They're looking for simplicity of experience, but actually they're looking for quite complex information. Our customers live in very complex worlds, and tax legislation is very complex, so our job is to try and make the experience with us as simple as possible.



DAN BOWES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER SERVICE - TAXES AND GRANTS  
REVENUE NSW





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For us and how we do things in our organisation, it's to ensure we have a really broad cross section of employees. When we talk about diversity, certainly within my organisation, that's not a box ticking exercise. That's because it gives you a very real example of how to look at things through different prisms.



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KYLIE DE COURTENEY  
— MANAGING DIRECTOR  
NSW TELCO AUTHORITY





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“ The other the idea here is that government is not just protecting against risk, but actually, through its assurance framework, through its processes, through its committee processes, could actually proactively shape and positively shape the development of technology. ”

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— Vafa Ghazavi  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH & POLICY  
JAMES MARTIN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY



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If your organisation want to implement generative AI, the first thing is individual productivity. Your individual employees? Make them more productive. So this includes things like rolling out very good generative AI tools... go to and roll it out and boost whatever they do individually, right?



WILL LIANG

— EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSET MANAGEMENT  
MA FINANCIAL GROUP





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“ The AI review committee is not there to say “Stop, don’t do this this way”. It’s there to provide advice in terms of, we have members who are ethicists, lawyers, privacy experts, procurement experts, and cyber security experts. They’re all there to provide advice to the project sponsor. ”

JESSICA HO  
— DIRECTOR, DIGITAL INVESTMENT ASSURANCE  
DIGITAL NSW, DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



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**Innovative, divergent thinkers want autonomy. They want to be able to have their wild ideas, be able to work those through without necessarily structured disciplines getting in the way. So the challenge is, how do we make sure we've got good governance arrangements, but allowing for that autonomy, innovation, free thinking, collaborative discussion to happen?**



JODY GRIMA

— ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY, CORPORATE SERVICES/COO  
NSW DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE





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“ We’ve still got a lot of work to do in this space, as we’ve tried to move the conversation from ‘diversity and inclusion’ to belonging, and introduce people to new streams of work that they may not have done before, so they can understand their impact in the team. And we are starting to have some early wins in that space. ”

SHAUN RUMING

— DEPUTY SECRETARY/CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER  
NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





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“There’s now a positive duty to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace in Australia, which is huge. I mean, that’s really world leading. So that’s making a big difference in workplaces, not only to have a good response when someone complains, but actually to take really proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment and to make sure that there’s a respectful environment for every environment for everyone.”

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HANNAH TONKIN

— NSW WOMEN’S SAFETY COMMISSIONER  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE



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**We have to actually integrate data into our decision making processes. So you can't have a data team over here producing all these reports that are optional for the rest of the team to read. You actually have to embed it so that people are really comfortable using the data sets in their decision making.**



**NATASHA MANN**

**DEPUTY SECRETARY, FAIR TRADING AND REGULATORY  
SERVICES & NSW FAIR TRADING COMMISSIONER  
NSW DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE**





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One of the important things we need to do as data professionals is work out how we stitch together other technologies to support AI so it can provide robust, reliable, consistent answers to questions. That's what businesses need. So generative AI will become the front end of how users interface with things, but we will be supplementing that with knowledge bases that are feeding the generative AI.



KATE CARRUTHERS

— CHIEF DATA & INSIGHTS OFFICER  
UNSW