Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ICT Strategy

2021-2023

Secretary's Foreword

The APS Review presented at the end of last year made it clear that embracing data and digital technology presents a significant opportunity for the APS – to deliver better quality and more personalised services for Australians, and enabling staff to focus on higher-value work.

The Review reminded us that while Australians are among the fastest adaptors of new technology, the APS has room to improve: 58 per cent of APS agencies said they were under-skilled in the digital aspects of delivering for the Australian people.

At this time, we are enduring one of the most challenging periods our Department, the APS, and Australia has seen. It is clear that expanding our skillset to harness the full power of technology – and doing it in a way that supports and promotes trust in government – is an imperative.

During this period we have been reminded of the importance of the need for our ICT systems and processes to be as strong and streamlined as possible. We also need to approach all government capabilities from a whole of enterprise viewpoint, and ensure we are disciplined in our use, reuse and enhancement of assets.

As the APS moves ahead with its Reform agenda, it is important to me that PM&C plays its part in meeting this technological challenge, and transforming it into an opportunity.

From my view across Government, I see how critical it is that PM&C models best practice ICT, for the benefit of the agencies we provide ICT services to, and the Australian public we serve.

Responding to shifting circumstances with agility and within a complex and evolving cyber security environment demands a clear-headed strategy, one that enables valuable, resilient and secure digital assets as well as intelligent and trusted services and advice.

This ICT Strategy will guide PM&C's investment decisions, approaches and practices through to 2023.

It outlines our four key ICT leadership aspirations: that everything we do has the customer in focus; that our ICT systems and services rest on flexible, scalable and efficient foundations; that our assets are secure, resilient, reliable and reusable; and that we have confident digital capabilities.

By setting ourselves up to evolve and adapt, we will be well-positioned to not only serve the Government of the day, but also maintain the public's confidence that we are doing our best, with the best tools available, in their best interests.

Philip Gaetjens

Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Contents

Introduction

Purpose | Strategic context | Importance

Purpose

The *ICT Strategy 2021-2023* sets out the Department's vision for our ICT services from 2021 to 2023. It outlines the four strategic priorities that will be our focus, the approaches we will take, the outcomes they will deliver, and how we will measure success.

The next step is to develop an operational roadmap, describing the projects and initiatives that will move us towards our goals.

Strategic context

The Information Services Branch (ISB) provides corporate and enabling ICT services to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department), 3 other agencies and numerous taskforces. ISB's core purpose is ensuring that our customers have the technology they need to effectively deliver on government priorities. Supporting a diverse range of agencies and functions means out ICT environment and services are broad and complex.

The Department is responsible for providing fresh thinking and sound advice to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, coordinating cross-portfolio and cross-jurisdictional initiatives, and tackling issues and new priorities as they arise. The Department needs ICT services and tools that are responsive, collaborative and focus on effective knowledge and decision making, while maintaining the security of our network, systems, and classified information.

The largest of the portfolio agencies that ISB supports is the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), which makes up half of our 3000+ customers. NIAA has a broad remit across policy and service management, and needs ICT services and tools that are aligned to and enhance business objectives and processes, and are efficient, secure and reliable.

By supporting the Department and our portfolio agencies, we also support the APS more broadly. Our ICT services and tools must support the Corporate Plan, the Government's APS Reform Agenda, and must align to Whole of Government measures and initiatives.

Strategic Importance

The challenges that Australia has faced through 2019 and early 2020 have shown us the critical importance of being able to rapidly adapt to and anticipate needs, and secure and protect our national interests.

The public service will be faced with ongoing challenges that will continue to change how people interact with government services, and how governments work together.

We need to:

- Ensure we can quickly respond to emerging government priorities, and provide new services;
- Ensure our agencies, and the government as a whole, have easy access to meaningful information for timely decision making;
- Design our processes and technologies so they can transcend organisational boundaries and maximise interoperability within the APS enterprise;
- Work closely with our corporate counterparts to ensure we have a skilled and digitally enabled workforce, as we move further towards a digital economy;
- Make sure we are enabling a changing workforce and changing ways of working, and that we remain and employer of choice;
- Maintain the highest standards in cyber-security, underpinned by strong privacy and security protections, particularly as threats and targets rapidly evolve and shift;
- Enhance the agency's cyber security culture making sure our staff are cyber aware and vigilant; and,
- Ensure the ICT capability is fit for purpose so it enables the Department and partner agencies achieve their mission and satisfy statutory obligations.

This strategy provides us with a way to ensure ICT is a critical enabler for the Department and our agencies, on the journey to building a stronger, more integrated, more resilient and more flexible public service.

Vision

What we are aspiring towards

Our vision is to be a strategic ICT partner for the Department and Portfolio Agencies; providing valued and secure digital assets, and trusted services.

Our vision sets the direction for the type of services we want to provide, and the organisation we want to become. It has been developed following extensive consultation, within our Department and across our portfolio agencies.

Our vision reflects our aspiration to be a leading provider of ICT services within the APS. But it also reflects how we see our role evolving from predominantly being a provider of ICT services to becoming a trusted ICT partner.

In our role as partner to the Department, we recognise that effective technology and services is critical to delivering on the Corporate Plan.

We commit to help the Department achieve its goals by providing valued, intelligent and resilient digital assets, and high quality, trusted, services and advice.

Our vision also reflects core tenets of the Government's APS reform agenda, including the Secretaries Board's focus on driving APS enterprise-wide transformation, particularly in relation to creating a more data-driven and digitally enabled Government and driving better public service outcomes in a complex operating environment.

For the Department:

This means **empowering our people with** data and insights to enable the effective delivery of government priorities.

It means organising ourselves efficiently, and for maximum effect. It means changing based on feedback and innovating to meet new needs.

It means maintaining the highest standard of security, reliability and resilience of our systems and networks given their criticality to our national security, as well as the importance of maintaining public trust in public services.

It also means recognising and promoting the Whole of Government perspective that comes through the Department's unique coordination role, and delivering technology and services in line with this.

For portfolio agencies:

This means recognising that Portfolio Agencies make up more than half of the customers we provide services for, and that their objectives and organisations are unique.

This means embedding better ways of partnering with our agencies to ensure we understand their context and needs, and structuring ourselves internally to be responsive and accountable to this.

For ICT customers:

This means more meaningful engagement, listening carefully to understand our customers' needs, and providing end-to-end support across the service delivery lifecycle.

It also means providing digital literacy education, systems training and organisational change management to ensure our customers can make the most of the technology they have, and can work at their best.

For our own staff:

This means improving the diversity of our teams, linking people and processes across the Branch, finding new and more efficient ways of doing things, and more proactively managing people's time and skill sets.

Strategic priorities

How we achieve our vision

Our Strategic Priorities for 2021-2023 are:

1. To adopt new ways of working that are *customer centric and outcome focused*

2. To build *flexible, scalable and efficient foundations* across our organisation, processes and tools

3. To provide *secure, resilient, reliable and reusable digital assets* that are valued and trusted

4. To develop confident and knowledgeable digital capabilities so we can work at our best in a complex operating environment

1.

Customer centric and outcome focused ways of working

Our priority is to put our customers at the centre of our services and systems, and ensure everything we do delivers a valuable outcome.

It's a future in which our ICT services are intelligent, fit-for-purpose, easy to use and access, and continually improving.

To achieve this, we need to partner with our customers more effectively, listen carefully to what people do and don't need, and work collaboratively to deliver innovative and value-add services.

We will support our customers to:

- Deliver on their missions and priorities and engage with stakeholders and citizens
- Provide high quality advice, support and outcomes
- Develop as flexible and collaborative organisations

We will do this by:

- Uplifting our user experience design, business architecture and analysis capabilities.
  - *Why? To ensure services meet needs, understand context and deliver value.*

- Creating dedicated business relationship roles and a single front door to ICT services.
  - *Why? To ensure stakeholders know where to go, and facilitate deeper engagement and partnering.*

- Implementing continual improvements to existing technologies and platforms based on well-defined feedback loops.
  - *Why? To ensure fit for purpose technology and services that meet customer needs.*

- Establishing a service performance framework and strengthening service level agreements.
  - *Why? To incentivise the right behaviour and help us measure our performance.*

- Better utilising common and shared data sources to improve reporting and analytics.
  - *Why? To drive informed decision making and better outcomes.*

- Continuing to trial emerging technologies.
  - *Why? To look for better services and platforms that improve the productivity of our customers.*

2.

Flexible, scalable and efficient foundations

The environment in which we operate is complex and rapidly changing. Our priority is to build flexible, scalable and efficient structures, processes, tools and technologies that enable us to continue to evolve and adapt.

Delivering value for money is important, but our concept of value needs to encompass all of our resources, including the skills and time of our people, and the usefulness of our tools.

Improving our internal governance and organisational structure will improve our capacity to deliver strategically aligned and efficacious services, while enhancing quality.

We will support our customers to:

- Respond effectively to transformational changes in a complex operating environment
- Simplify and standardise services and bring discipline and structure to the delivery of purposes
- Create and adjust services and programs based on data and insights

We will do this by:

- Enhancing a program management capability and better using tools, templates and standards in project delivery.
    - *Why? To ensure work is strategically aligned, well executed and delivers intended benefits.*

- Improving demand management and capacity planning functions.
    - *Why? To ensure we can quickly deploy resources to where they are needed the most, with minimal impact.*

- Developing multi-disciplinary and agile delivery teams.
    - *Why? To ensure the right skills for each challenge and increase the speed of delivery.*

- Using automation to streamline and enhance processes and services.
    - *Why? To maximise the value of the assets we have, and creating time for higher value work.*

- Assessing our current digital and ICT assets and consolidating duplicate systems and tools.
    - *Why? To maximise return on investments and improving the quality of technologies and services.*

- Ensuring ICT sourcing and delivery approaches are data driven, efficient, effective, and accountable.
    - *Why? To enable scalability, rapid responses, value for money and compliance.*

3.

Secure, resilient, reliable and reusable digital assets

Our digital capability is what allows us to deliver high-quality and timely advice to the Government and underpin our services to the Australian public.

A key priority for us is to ensure digital assets are fit-for-purpose and that we focus our investments on reusable technology, optimising our use of the cloud, and innovating to respond to new challenges.

Maintaining the security, resilience and reliability of our digital platforms and environments must always remain at the core of what we do. We aim to design systems and processes in a way that understands and leverages best practice user design and promotes security conscious behaviours.

We will support our customers to:

- Mitigate the risk of cyber security threats, data breaches or service disruption
- Ensure information, data and knowledge are easily accessible
- Build and strengthen data privacy requirements and ethical considerations in systems, processes and solutions
- Support a flexible working environment where people are well connected

We will do this by:

- Enhancing our cyber maturity and actively participate in Whole of Government cyber initiatives.
  - *Why? To ensure we are prepared for emerging and anticipated threats.*

- Increase our use of contemporary and alternative platforms, including cloud.
  - *Why? To provide rapid scalability and additional business continuity options.*

- Modernising legacy solutions including our corporate applications.
  - *Why? To ensure better quality information and data and alignment with Whole of Government initiatives.*

- Improving our WoAG digital platforms (CABNET+ and Digital First) that make it easier to engage with quality advice and deliver on government priorities.
  - *Why? To improve the timeliness, quality and transparency of government advice and decision making.*

- Exploring integrated and cross government platforms.
  - *Why? To improve our customers' experience, improve collaboration and reduce duplication.*

- Continuing to embed security, resilience, privacy requirements and ethical considerations through policies and controls.
  - *Why? To support trust in government and ensure we uphold the high standards expected of the public service.*

4.

Confident and knowledgeable digital capabilities

Our customers' capacity to embrace technology and access information will strengthen our ability to deliver for the Government and the Australian people.

This includes both the engagement and confidence in the technology we have, but broadening our horizons to better understand the benefits of new and emerging fields, and how they can deliver value to our business.

Creating a customer and outcomes-focused organisation means we need to invest in the people who will innovate, design and deliver services, and lift the digital capabilities and culture in our workforce.

We will support our customers to:

- Strengthen digital capabilities and build a technology-adept workforce
- Build their capability as knowledge organisations
- Promote diversity and inclusion and maximise the diverse experiences our people bring

We will do this by:

- Providing practical training, including through existing digital literacy and privacy programmes.
  - *Why? To empower customers can make the most of available technologies.*

- Uplifting our organisational change management capability.
  - *Why? To drive adoption and ensure the benefits of technologies are realised.*

- Build data skills and capabilities and foster knowledge sharing.
  - *Why? To improve decision making quality and speed.*

- Improving our collaboration, knowledge management and document management systems.
  - *Why – To reduce key person risk, improve productivity and decision making.*

- Partner within Corporate Services, including with risk, assurance and privacy stakeholders, to accelerate a flexible and secure work environment.
  - *Why? To provide technology that supports an inclusive and diverse workplace and workforce.*

- Working with our partners across government and industry to identify, leverage and lead digital service excellence.
  - *Why? To promote best practice and innovation across the public service.*

Measurement

How we measure our success

Our strategy is outcomes-focused and includes measures that will allow us to review progress against each strategic priority. Progress will be reviewed each year and on an as-needed basis to measure success and consider new developments in Government and Departmental priorities, policy and technology innovations.

Strategic Priority	Measure
1. Customer centric and outcome focused ways of working	**Customer satisfaction - systems:** Are our customers satisfied with the technologies available to them?
	Customer satisfaction – services: Are our customers satisfied with the services available to them?
	Benefits realisation: Do our key projects result in the benefits we wanted?
2. Flexible, scalable and efficient foundations	**Responsiveness:** How efficiently and effectively do we respond to changing priorities?
	Completion rate: 100% of ICT services or projects that are initiated are delivered.
	Time to complete: ICT services or projects completed within agreed time, cost, and quality parameters.
3. Secure, resilient, reliable and reusable digital assets	**IT Security incident management:** All security incidents have been handled in accordance with statutory obligations and Government requirements and are effectively mitigated.
	Major IT incident management: All major incidents have been handled in accordance with legal requirements, Departmental processes and policies and are effectively mitigated.
	Policy compliance: All ICT system designs and services are risk assessed and are compliant against security, data, privacy and other relevant legal and policy requirements.
4. Confident and knowledgeable digital capabilities	**Staff confidence:** Are more than 80% of our staff confident in their ability to safely use technology?
	Adoption: More than 70% of target staff are actively using a technology.

Alignment to corporate plan

How our ICT Strategy aligns to our Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024 defines the operating environment, people and capability, and risk management and oversight needed for the Department to achieve our purpose. To show how this ICT strategy is aligned to meet those needs, the following table maps corporate plan outcomes against the Strategic Priorities outlined in this ICT Strategy.

Corporate Plan 2020-2024	ICT Strategy 2021-2023 Strategic Priority			
	1	2	3	4
Our Purposes				
1. Growing our economy, incomes and creating jobs 2. Vibrant and resilient regions 3. Strengthening families and communities 4. Enhancing Australia's international and national security 5. Govern well 6. Preparing well to respond to critical issues	Our ICT strategy will ensure we continue to deliver and enhance the digital capabilities needed to achieve the purposes set out in our Corporate Plan. Specifically, our focus on data and analytics, security, and cross-government collaboration and information management will support multiple policy outcomes.			
Operating Environment				
• Promote a whole-of-government perspective	✔			
• Adapt to a fast-paced and changing environment	✔	✔		
• Meet the increasing needs and expectations of the public	✔		✔	
• Bring discipline and structure to delivery of our purposes		✔		
• Maintain strong links with partner agencies and taskforces	✔			
• Maintain an increasingly interconnected landscape			✔	
People & Capability				
• Build workforce capability				✔
• Build digital capability		✔	✔	✔
• Promote inclusion, diversity and collaboration among our workforce				✔
• Equip people with experience and insights		✔	✔	✔
• Improve collaboration within PM&C and across APS		✔	✔	✔
• Provide simple & secure access to information			✔	
• Provide flexible working arrangements		✔		
• Improve people's well being	✔	✔	✔	✔
Risk Management & Oversight				
• Manage risk to staff including by embedding physical and mental safety considerations in day-to-day operations	✔	✔	✔	✔
• Manage risk to critical enablers to government including through maintenance of deep expertise and robust systems and processes.		✔	✔	✔
• Manage risk in quality of advice provided to government by supporting decision making		✔	✔	✔

Key

1 Customer and outcomes-focused ways of working and partnering

2 Flexible, scalable and efficient foundations

3 Secure, resilient, reliable and reusable digital assets

4 Confident and knowledgeable digital capabilities

OFFICIAL