

Senate estimates – 15 november 2017

Chief Executive Officer

Digital Transformation Agency

Opening statement

Good evening senators and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would like to add a short opening statement to the one that I tabled at the last hearing.

I want to take this opportunity to briefly share my perspectives on digital transformation after six months in the CEO role.

As the committee may well be aware, I have worked in the financial services sector for 30 years and more notably, in the latter years, led large scale and complex whole-of-business transformation programs.

These programs all had similar ambitions to that of the federal government.

Firstly, to support the desire of individuals and businesses to be able to do more digitally – to be empowered to access the information and services they need at a time, place and method of their choosing.

Secondly, to have an improved service experience that is easy, accessible, safe and secure.

And thirdly, to improve the overall economics of providing that service. That is, to significantly improve the overall productivity of the operating environment or business.

Experience shows that to achieve these ambitions, we require a different mindset, approach and capabilities to those that were traditionally used in the past.

The pace of change is being driven by the availability of new and emerging technologies, expectations of citizens and the capability of people.

It has often been said, and I believe it to be true, that culture eats strategy for breakfast.

I know, based on my experience, that to successfully deliver meaningful transformation, it must start at the top of any organisation and requires leaders to be completely orientated and vested in the business outcomes they are seeking to achieve.

It requires a clear articulation of the issues to be solved and the opportunities to be embraced.

There needs to be a culture that encourages innovation and a drive to smaller and more discrete programs of work.

Time must be spent doing the discovery work and mapping out the key customer journeys.

We need to work in an agile way, build prototypes to test thinking and demonstrate potential solutions, and partner effectively with the private sector to bring the very best capability and solutions to bear in short timeframes.

We must be prepared to fail, but fail fast and make sure that the costs of failure are far outweighed by the benefits of the learnings gained. This does require a culture that recognises the value of learning.

Large, multi-year, billion dollar programs with benefits realisation delivered far into the future is not the way anymore. Rather, we need smaller agile projects that regularly deliver key outcomes and benefits as building blocks to the overall transformation.

This approach provides the flexibility to more easily adjust to change in circumstances, priorities and to take full advantage of new capabilities as they emerge.

Importantly, this does not negate the need for long term vision and continued investment in core legacy systems, processes and knowledge management. It is important that an appropriate level of investment continues to be directed towards maintaining a level of currency in our systems environment to reduce the risks of outages and improve our delivery of services.

The DTA is playing a critical role and will continue to do so by working constructively across the public service, with government and industry to help bring about this change.

We do this by:

- advising government where to best invest
- ensuring new initiatives are set up for success by drawing on the DTA's expertise, as well as private sector capability, and
- providing ongoing appraisal and advice to government on their ICT project portfolio.

Thank you

Senate F&PA Committee

Tabled Document

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Organisation: Digital Transformation Agency.