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Transforming business, making life simple

TechnologyOne Submission to Senate Standing Committees on Economics

Inquiry into Digital ID Bill 2023 and the Digital ID (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill 2023

January 2024

Introduction

TechnologyOne welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this Senate inquiry.

TechnologyOne is an ASX100 Software-as-a-Service business founded in Brisbane in 1987 and headquartered in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane.

From an entrepreneur-founded business with one customer, TechnologyOne has grown to have 16 offices in Australia, New Zealand, across the Pacific and PNG, Asia and in the UK.

TechnologyOne has chosen to focus on selected vertical markets so that we can deeply understand their needs and most closely meet their requirements. These markets are Local Government, Higher Education, Government, which includes Australian Federal and State and New Zealand Central governments, Asset Intensive, such as airports, water authorities and large project construction, and Health and Community Services.

TechnologyOne develops, supplies and supports core business management systems, such as financial systems, HR and payroll, and asset management, as well as systems for specific customer segments, such as student management systems and property and rating systems.

The company reinvests about 20 percent of annual revenue in R&D – predominantly undertaken in our R&D lab located in our Brisbane Headquarters.

The industries we serve are all highly exposed to cyber security risks, and TechnologyOne invests heavily to understand and deliver the highest standards of cyber security, to ensure we elevate the cyber security posture of our customers and those using downstream services they support.

We take a security-by-design approach to both our platform and to new service applications we develop and our proud to offer the highest security standards available in the market.

This submission reflects both our commitment to security and our insights into the potential relevance of this initiative to local government, a sector not prominently identified in the Bill but one where we believe this initiative can deliver real benefits to the community, in effect, all Austrailans.

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The Digital ID Bill and Local Government

TechnologyOne strongly supports the Digital ID Bill and believes a more trusted and universally accessible system of online identify validation provides a tremendous opportunity to deliver both community benefit and business and government efficiency.

We note, however, that Local Government is not directly referenced in the supporting material to the Bill and want to raise attention to the potential benefit of trusted and simple Digital ID verification for this sector.

TechnologyOne is the leading provider of core business management systems to Australian Local Government. About 75 percent of Australians live in a municipality that employs TechnologyOne systems to deliver services such as core internal financial management, development applications, food and health licensing, property and rates management, and management of community assets.

TechnologyOne believes Local Government is a constituency with a great deal to gain from a trusted, well regulated Digital ID service model because it will facilitate much improved – and safer – citizen service delivery.

Increasingly, TechnologyOne is using the inherent capabilities of modern Software-as-a-Service applications to develop new capabilities that support councils responding to the needs of their communities.

This new generation of software allows new self-service options for citizens by allowing them to access the data relevant to them in their councils' core systems. For example, they can gain real time access to development applications they have lodged or can quickly and simply register animals. These are two very commonly accessed services. These new generation technologies natively integrated into the core systems are both more efficient to deploy and manage for councils and more accurate and reliable for citizens as they are support the development of a "single source of truth" model by councils.

However, identity verification often makes the experience less than seamless for the citizen and more labour intensive than strictly necessary for the council.

There is also a risk to privacy if the identify management system is insufficiently robust. Councils often have multiple identities in their systems under the same or similar names. Sometimes, this is the same individual who has registered for multiple services under slightly different names (e.g, T. Smith at the library, Tim Smith as a dog owner, and Timothy Smith as a ratepayer) but it might also be different individuals.

Verifying identity can therefore be labour intensive and frustrating for citizen and council alike.

Ease of use of and trust in digital service delivery is, in our submission, a topic of critical importance for governments at all levels.

Independent research commissioned by TechnologyOne in New Zealand validated the anecdotal reports of a step change in the use of digital services delivered by both Central and Local Government during and since the Covid pandemic.[i]

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This research, the largest survey of its type ever conducted in New Zealand, also found, however, that those in the community least likely to be using digital services are those with most to benefit – people in disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances.

Service complexity and trust are among the biggest barriers to service usage nominated by people surveyed.

The researchers have indicated to TechnologyOne that, based on their anecdotal experience, these results would likely be reflective of the Australian experience, too.

TechnologyOne is investing in improving the sign on experience for citizens accessing our application. However, there will remain challenges for our Local Government customers in managing the data within their systems where there are multiple identities with the same or similar names.

A universally available and trusted identify verification and management system, such as Australian Government ID System, could integrated into the TechnologyOne system, materially reduce cost and risk.

Summary and Recommendation

TechnologyOne strongly supports the intention of the Bill and believes it has the potential to uplift identity security to the benefit of individual and the wider services delivery marketplace.

The Local Government sector has a tremendous opportunity to benefit, and, while we are unaware of any barriers in the Bill to this being realised, we urge the Committee to consider this issue.

Contacts

TechnologyOne would be pleased to provide further assistance or information to the committee on request.

Please contact:
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[i] New Zealand Digital Citizens Continuing the Journey with Empathy. IBRS.
https://technologyonecorp.co.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/237880/NZ-IBRS-report.pdf