

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Public Hearing – 01 February 2024
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
National Disability Insurance Agency

Topic: NDIS Participant Data

Question reference number: NDIA IQ24-000006

Question asked by: Julian Hill

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page: 6

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 29 February 2024

Question:

Mr Hill: Thanks. The answer on notice indicated that NDIA participant data had been stored in Germany, not in Australia, and that was due to be shifted onshore in December 2023. Has that happened?

Mr Satyan: That shift has happened, and, to correct the record, it's one module that uses email functionality, called Salesforce Marketing Cloud, that is hosted in Germany. The main CRM itself is based on a cloud module called Health Cloud. There are two things: Health Cloud is the core based CRM platform—

Mr Hill: Apologies, yes. You're absolutely right. I'm reading the answer to question on notice 32, which refers to Salesforce Marketing Cloud. That's now shifted to Australia? It's just a housekeeping question.

Mr Satyan: Yes. It's either in the process or confirmed. I'll probably take that on notice to give you a formal answer.

Answer:

Salesforce Marketing Cloud became available in Australia from 11 December 2023, and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) had been working with Salesforce for several months prior to this, to prioritise NDIA as one of the first customers to be migrated. NDIA is currently in the process of reconfiguring its Marketing Cloud on the Australian instance. With expedited support from Salesforce this is expected to be completed prior to 30 June 2024.

While the infrastructure hosting is being transitioned to Australia, Salesforce Marketing Cloud continues to be used to deliver generic email newsletters including automated "Hello and Welcome" email campaigns to participants. Marketing Cloud is also used to provide generic alerts, communications and surveys. It is important to note that while the platform is hosted in Germany, no participant information is stored on Marketing Cloud.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
National Disability Insurance Agency

Topic: Customer Relationship Management adaptation

Question reference number: NDIA IQ24-000011

Question asked by: Linda Reynolds

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page: 10

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 29 February 2024

Question:

Senator Reynolds: Thank you. If you want to put some more thought into this, you could perhaps put some more information back to us. But given that you now have a CRM that works and, as you said, one of the advantages of this system is that you've got a great rules based capacity, so you can change as policy changes and you can adapt that pretty quickly, which in my mind would then make it far more adaptable to other departments—say health and aged care and veterans, in particular, where you've got clients in common—would you use the rules based system then to do some adaptation to the different circumstances and the different systems?

Ms Falkingham: Yes, we will absolutely give some thought to that. Just to give you some heart, Senator, we are having conversations with DVA, who are very interested in this platform and how they could leverage off either the contract or our lessons learnt. I think it's a really thoughtful question. So let us take that on notice and come back to you with something fuller.

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) continuously looks for shared opportunities to collaborate and engage with other government agencies about appropriate platforms and systems, both to leverage investments driven by other parts of government, and to share the insights and lessons from the NDIA's major Information Communication Technology projects.

The NDIA welcomes the opportunity and will continue to share lessons learned from the PACE implementation with other government agencies. The NDIA has previously met with Comcare and Department of Veteran's Affairs on this topic and is currently in discussion with the Digital Transformation Agency on pathways to leverage the Agency's PACE implementation, noting that the PACE platform is heavily customised to reflect the complex and bespoke requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The NDIA notes the need for other agencies to assess their own needs against the market to ensure any investment is fit for purpose for their requirements. In considering investments in platforms such as a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, agencies should consider how the investment and the digital transformation program aligns with their strategic objectives and constituents' needs, as well as the maturity of their internal ICT capability.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
National Disability Insurance Agency

Topic: Salesforce contract

Question reference number: NDIA IQ24-000015

Question asked by: Julian Hill

Type of Question: Written.

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 29 February 2024

Question:

3. Why were the additional professional services asked from Salesforce from 2021-23 at a cost of over \$20 million in total? Please also provide the rationale for the contract now being above \$100 million over 4 years?

Answer:

Salesforce professional services provides qualified product experts such as architects and solution designers, on a time & materials basis, that form part of an organisation's delivery team.

The Agency chose to use Salesforce professional services specifically, due to the complexity, size and criticality of the PACE Customer Relationship Management system. Salesforce professional services have significant expertise in their own product and have access to their internal product teams when specialist technical advice is required. This provides the Agency with an additional level of support, particularly when dealing with non-standard product requirements such as heightened accessibility. The professional services were sourced under the Agency's Master Services Agreement (MSA).

Due to the evolving complexity of the program, additional technical support was required over time. Of particular note was the adoption of Vlocity in order to provide a rules based engine.

During this time, the Agency also experienced growth in participants entering the Scheme, the NDIA workforce and partner organisations, which has increased the licensing requirements and usage of PACE. This included:

- an increase in the core licenses for staff and partners from 5,000 to 12,500 required to support National Expansion. Core licenses for staff and partners are the primary cost driver for the platform
- additional supplementary licenses for an appointment booking tool
- products to support the delivery of online training for Agency staff and partners
- enhanced platform and product support.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

National Disability Insurance Agency

Topic: PACE cost projections

Question reference number: NDIA IQ24-000016

Question asked by: Julian Hill

Type of Question: Written.

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 29 February 2024

Question:

4. What are the forward cost estimates and projections for the use of the PACE System? Can NDIA provide a breakdown of this?

Answer:

Disclosure of forecast costs may impact the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) ability to achieve value for money outcomes in the renewals and procurement processes of Customer Relationship Management platform licencing and related supports going forward. NDIA will be actively considering potential extension options to existing contracts as well as forward procurement plans in line with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

Our total direct expenditure on the Salesforce-based PACE system between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2023 was \$112.4 million - Salesforce (\$102.78 million) plus previous other related contracts with Vlocity (\$8.79 million) and Mulesoft (\$0.85 million). These amounts reflect the Agency's actual expenditure rather than the committed contractual spend which may vary due to processing times for invoice payments.

Costs beyond April 2025 are subject to change and cannot reliably be estimated as they remain subject to future decisions to be made by the NDIA about its technology strategy and procurements.