



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency



Senate Economics Legislation Committee

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

Digital Transformation Agency Submission

Introduction

The Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Economics Legislation Committee's *Inquiry into the bills of Digital ID Bill 2023 & Digital ID (Transitional and consequential provisions) Bill 2023 (the Bill)*. The DTA supports the Bill to establish the modernisation of Australia's Digital ID arrangements in line with the Government's digital transformation agenda.

As the Government's strategic adviser on whole of government ICT and digital services and investments, the DTA considers that the Bill will be critical to the delivery of the government's strategic direction for digital services, as set out in the Data and Digital Government Strategy (DDGS).

In addition, the DTA considers the Bill critical in its role to:

1. ensure voluntary but highly secure access for all Australians to government services, which includes work to secure identity verification credentials (e.g. driver's licence, passport, and Medicare card) from duplicate use within the Australian Government Digital Identity System (AGDIS);
2. provide a simpler method for any citizen to manage consent to share their information with government when they choose to use a Digital ID;
3. allow for personalisation of online services for citizens based on having to only provide details of identity or circumstances once, facilitating the Government's aim to reduce touchpoints for connection to services and where possible adopt 'tell us once' approaches for business and people alike;
4. simplify interactions with Government for individuals by negating the need to remember account and password combinations for multiple government agencies;
5. promote the re-use of existing technology investments and architectural patterns, reduced complexity, total cost of ownership, risk of obsolescence, and quantification of re-use;
6. support the intent of the Digital Service Standard (DSS) which is compulsory for some digital services;
7. establish secure and highly assured connections between individuals and legal entities (e.g. Relationship Access Manager {RAM}); and
8. align agreed technology standards across government and business, allowing digital identity to provide opportunities for interoperability between governments and the private sector.

Connection of Digital Identity to the broader digital government agenda

Data and Digital Government Strategy

The DDGS delivers on the Government's commitment to simple, secure, and connected services for people and business, through improved data and digital capabilities across the nation.

- The Bill is consistent with the DDGS which highlights the importance of Digital ID in enabling trust, security, and privacy to support the digital transformation of services.
- The DTA supports the standardised approach to managing consent enabled by Digital ID, as it promotes control and transparency of data sharing across the whole Digital ID system, in line with the DDGS.
- The Bill strongly aligns with *Mission Two: Simple and Seamless Services* of the DDGS to tailor policies and services to an individual's circumstances. For example, Digital ID is foundational to reforming Government service delivery and improving security by promoting a 'tell us once' approach to the collection of identity information, while also fostering a data minimisation approach to the collection of personal information required by services.

Digital Service Standard

The DSS is compulsory for all non-corporate commonwealth agencies and establishes the requirements for designing and delivering digital government services across multiple digital platforms.

- With respect to the voluntary nature of using a Digital ID in the AGDIS, the Explanatory Memoranda to the Bill states 'This ensures that individuals acting in their personal capacity can choose whether to use a Digital ID to obtain or access a relying party service.' This stance is consistent with the DSS, which encourages agencies to consider inclusion and include non-digital users by adopting an omni-channel approach, where alternate access channels are available.
- The DSS encourages agencies to find opportunities to request information only once. The ability to create a Digital ID once, along with the once-off checking of electronic documents will be a key enabler of a 'tell us once' approach to digital services, in line with the DSS.
- The re-use aspect of Digital ID has strong linkages to the DSS, where agencies are directed to draw on the experiences and learning of others and adopt common design patterns for seamless experiences.

- The DSS guides agencies on how to 'build trust in design' as a cornerstone of maintaining confidence in government. The bill informs that Digital ID will enable services to have trust that a person's ID has been verified to a high standard. Strong verification of credentials along with robust privacy provisions will better protect people's personal information and safeguard user data.
- The DSS will also support putting people and business at the centre for myGovID through an effective and simple user experience.
- Digital ID is outlined as a key enabler for supporting connected, interoperable services. The phased approach of Digital ID extending to 'states and territories and, in time, the private sector,' speaks to the necessity to consider flexibility and scale from the outset as detailed in the DSS.

National Life Events Program

The National Life Events program (Life Events) is a key driver for the DTA's strategic direction for change across government service delivery, providing connected services and improving people's experience accessing Government services during a major event in their life, for example, having a baby or recovering from a natural disaster.

- The DTA supports the intent of the Bill as it will be an important enabler of interoperable Digital ID across government services based on adoption of common standards. This will, over time, provide opportunities to streamline identity verification during life events.
- The Bill's intent to also support simplified management of consent will support and strengthen the user experience through life events by reducing digital touchpoints and supporting secure, consent-based sharing of identity and attribute data.
- Interoperability will help reduce the administrative burden upon people and businesses when engaging with various parts of the Government and facilitate the development of new streamlined services such as those centred around Life Events.
- Without a nationally agreed suite of policies, standards, and capabilities to support Digital ID integration, there are increased risks of duplication, limited interoperability, and future costs to reintegrate disparate systems. Improving interoperability across jurisdictional systems achieves significant operational and economic efficiencies by reducing risks and their impact on delivering connected digital services.
- Applying a 'life event' lens to government services has been used to identify opportunities available to transform customer and service experience. As evidenced through a recent

review of the Life Event program, requested by the Data and Digital Minister's Meeting, program success is dependent on whole of Government interoperability.

Australian Government Architecture

The Australian Government Architecture (AGA) is a collection of digital artefacts and guidance that are organised in such a way as to guide and inform its users on how to align to the digital directions of government and map their investment to preceding work.

- The AGA contains information relating to the existing Trusted Digital Identity Framework – which is an unlegislated accreditation scheme for Digital ID services that sets out requirements that applicants need to meet to achieve accreditation. This framework underpins the AGDIS and will be evolved into a legislated Accreditation Scheme, if the Bill passes. It also provides linkages to key existing designs (systems, solutions, blueprints, or patterns), such as the Identity Verification Services managed by the Attorney-General's Department.
- The AGA enables efficient reuse and encourages consistency and reliability of services to the benefit of users by showcasing and mapping existing Designs. By presenting evidence-based Standards and Positions, the AGA de-risks, standardises, and enhances new investments.

Conclusion

Digital ID is a principal vehicle to drive service standards for reuse, interoperability and the digital services ecosystem more broadly. Its alignment and connections to the role of the DTA will support and strengthen the Government's strategic direction, through the DDGS.

The DTA, in our role as strategic adviser on whole of government ICT and digital services and investments, supports this Bill and considers it critical to the delivery of the government's strategic direction for digital services.