



AUSTRALIAN
CRIMINAL
INTELLIGENCE
COMMISSION

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SUBMISSION

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit Inquiry into the failed visa privatisation process and the implementation of other public sector IT procurements and projects

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit regarding their inquiry into the implementation of IT systems in the Australian Government, including large-scale IT procurement regarding issues of capability, culture, probity, policy, systems and decision-making. Specifically, this submission will focus on lessons arising from IT procurement for the ACIC's Biometric Identification Services (BIS) project. The agency supports a desktop review of the Auditor-General's *The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's Administration of the Biometric Identification Services Project* report (the report).

The ACIC's purpose is to protect Australia from serious criminal threats through coordinating a strategic response and collecting, assessing and disseminating intelligence and policing information. The agency connects police and law enforcement to essential criminal intelligence, policing knowledge and information through collaborative national information systems and services.

The BIS project had two key goals:

- replacement of the existing National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)
- addition of a facial recognition capability to enhance law enforcement's biometric capabilities.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE BIS PROJECT

The BIS project encountered difficulties at an early stage including project delays. Despite intervention by the ACIC executive and unsuccessful negotiations between the ACIC and the vendor, NEC Australia, the then ACIC Chief Executive Officer terminated the project in June 2018.

LESSONS LEARNT FOLLOWING ANAO'S AUDIT

The ACIC provided the Australian National Audit Office with a table describing 27 lessons the agency learnt from the BIS project, which were included in the report.

The ACIC responded to the lessons learnt from the BIS project by bolstering its Portfolio Management Office (PMO) to ensure a consistent, high-level approach to the delivery of programs and projects. This included uplifting the maturity of the agency's Portfolio, Program and Project Management (P3M) framework and practices including governance and risk management, contract management and records management.

The PMO ensures the ACIC's investment decisions are strategically prioritised, viable, balanced and benefits-driven. The PMO is the custodian of the portfolio, programs, projects, change, benefit and business analysis frameworks. It also ensures all related activities are managed consistently and in alignment with the respective agreed frameworks. The PMO demonstrates its success through the delivery of agreed outputs, outcomes and benefits and an agreed and established set of services, solutions and capabilities. These services, solutions and capabilities have been defined, designed, built and continuously improved through enduring and trusting partnerships and culture.

The P3M Policy sets out the mandatory requirements for the oversight and governance of all programs, projects and managed activities associated with the ACIC. The P3M Policy adheres to all relevant Government legislation and policies.

The PMO has matured and is a core ACIC capability. The NAFIS NextGen project, which replaced the BIS project was effectively delivered under the revised P3M framework.

The ACIC regularly reviews the scope, expected benefits and ongoing feasibility of our projects.

NATIONAL AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT INFORMATION SYSTEM NEXT GENERATION

BIS was to be a critical enabling system for Commonwealth and state and territory law enforcement agencies. Following the then CEO's decision to terminate the BIS project in June 2018 the ACIC commenced a new project and the legacy National Automated Fingerprint Information System (NAFIS) successfully transitioned to full operation in NAFIS NextGen.

NAFIS NextGen is the national capability that provides Australian law enforcement agencies with the critical fingerprint matching capability to support law enforcement operations at all levels. It is the only national fingerprint and palmprint capability in Australia.

Australian law enforcement agencies use NAFIS NextGen to identify individuals. The system helps to solve crimes by matching crime scene evidence to persons of interest. It also enables near real-time uploads of prints from crime scenes, helping police to identify suspects in minutes. This system has proven to be a fit for purpose, highly reliable and an accurate national fingerprint system which will continue to support Australian law enforcement agencies into the future.