



**Australian Government**

**Department of Immigration  
and Border Protection**

# **Parliamentary Inquiry into the Digital Delivery of Government Services**

Finance & Public Administration References  
Committee

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# Context - Department of Immigration and Border Protection – digital services and transformation

## The Department's Mission

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection ("the Department") – including its operational arm, the Australian Border Force (ABF) – has a clear mission: To protect Australia's border and to manage the movement of people and goods across it. DIBP has a broad remit, spanning immigration and citizenship, customs and trade, revenue collection, maritime security and the compliance and enforcement activities related to these functions. These functions are undertaken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in 84 locations across each state and territory in Australia and in 50 locations worldwide.

Front-line immigration, citizenship, travel, cargo and intelligence activities are supported through client-facing systems that facilitate travel and migration permissions and confirm a client identity. Analytics tools are used to identify threats and systems record the outcomes of cargo or passenger interventions.

## Digital Services and Transformation

The Department operates a diversity of technology that includes more than 250 SmartGates and kiosks, more than 3,000 CCTV cameras, patrol boats, surveillance aircraft, 2,000 terrestrial and satellite communications capabilities, 660 detection and inspection technology units, and more than 11,000 personal defence equipment and wearables located within 48 armouries. This is in addition to enterprise systems, including desktop computers, telephones and video conferencing, comprising more than 14,000 desktops, 900 applications, 6,577 servers and seven data centres.

This breadth of technologies is underpinned by a complex technology foundation of networks (spanning unclassified, protected, secret and top secret classifications), data storage infrastructure and is delivered through a range of different models ranging from in-house support to fully managed commercial services. These systems represent critical infrastructure that allow the Department to protect and manage the border.

## Technology Strategy 2020

To position DIBP for the future *Technology Strategy 2020* was published in 2016, to ensure the Department has a clear strategic direction for its technology resources to provide the framework that underpins technology design, delivery and sustainment decisions. The Strategy is underpinned by several key principles that are being applied to the Department's technology decisions:

- information at the core, to improve information accessibility, accuracy, currency and timeliness;
- developing self-contained business systems that share common services;
- robust integration capabilities that connect our people, processes and information; and
- architecture that is extensible and adaptable, enabling adoption of new and innovative technology without needing to re-engineer existing systems.

Based on these core principles, the Strategy outlines the Technology Architecture and Roadmap that identify the building block capabilities and platforms that DIBP requires as a Department to protect Australia and its interests from terrorism, illicit materials, illegal migration and organised crime.

The *Technology Strategy 2020* at Attachment A describes in detail DIBP's technology approach going forward, and links into and contributes guidance to the ongoing activities to enhance and improve project, programme and capability lifecycle governance.

## Department of Home Affairs

On 18 July the Government announced that it would establish a Home Affairs portfolio, which will incorporate DIBP and the ABF in their entirety. This will be a complex undertaking and will be implemented in phases, as was the integration of the former Customs and Immigration organisations on 1 July 2015.

To that end, DIBP's priorities in 2017-18 reflect our operating environment and, importantly, the way we will respond to it through our involvement in the establishment of Home affairs (HA). Our challenge is to appropriately balance our risk tolerance, resources and service levels to ensure that we continue to respond to the Government's priorities and expectations, while building future capability and preparing for Machinery of Government changes.

Over the next four years, the Department will continue to face significant growth in trade, travel and migration, with passengers and crew movements expected to rise by 22 per cent; air cargo imports by 34 per cent; and sea imports by 13 per cent.

In this environment the *Technology Strategy 2020* provides strategic direction for DIBP's technology resources, and the framework to underpin technology design, delivery and sustainment decisions.

## Response to Senate Terms of Reference

This section of this submission is structured against the Terms of Reference.

### Whether planned and existing programs are able to digitally deliver services with due regard for:

#### Privacy

DIBP seeks to conform to all privacy legislation, whether dealing with client data or internal staff data. The Department takes such obligations seriously, and works to ensure client data within our digital systems is kept secure in line with the Privacy Act.

#### Security

DIBP seeks to meet agreed whole of government digital security requirements.

#### Quality and reliability

DIBP is seeking to progressively improve quality and reliability of its business services, most of which are underpinned and enhanced through increasing use of digital services.

DIBP works to ensure all digital investments are aligned with broader departmental and Government priorities. The governance surrounding the Capability Investment Process continues to be modified to ensure that investment proposals are aligned with identified capability gaps, both in ICT and other areas.

The Visa and Citizenship Online Application Expansion, and SmartGates, are two examples of projects targeting quality and reliability of business and ICT:

## SmartGates

- a. **Business objectives** – The SmartGate project provides the foundation for a new and smarter way of doing business at the border by delivering technology enhancements to clearance processes, for both airports and seaports. This is through the development of a new traveller border clearance platform to support delivery of next generation border processing infrastructure and biometric technologies.
- b. **Digital quality & reliability objectives** – The end-state will be a next-generation integrated platform supporting the ABF's future business operating model. It will include automated biometric technology that will strengthen the reliability of identity matching. This will support the objective to release officers from undertaking their efforts on manual routine roles and to focus their efforts on persons of interest.

## Visa and Citizenship Online Application Expansion

- a. **Business objectives** – This initiative expands the online products and services for the majority of applications for citizenship, temporary and permanent visas, to deliver efficiencies to the Department's processing network. It enables online lodgement channel for visa and citizenship applications to reduce paper handling and provide clients with an enhanced experience, allowing them to apply for a visa from anywhere in the world, at any time of the day.
- b. **Digital quality & reliability objectives** - Client feedback indicates a preference for online services, and all forms and services are continually updated based on feedback to improve usability.

## Value for money

Constrained budgets and expanding requirements from Government require significant focus on value for money. This is being achieved in various ways as evidenced by the following two examples:

- a. The new SmartGates capability will expedite processing times for the majority of travellers and provide a standard look-and-feel to various border ports. This will allow staff to focus on border interventions where they are most required.
- b. The Visa and Citizenship Online Application Expansion will achieve value for money through:
  - An efficient visa and citizenship processing network which is able to meet future challenges, in regard to volume, security and efficiency.
  - Improved risk management and identity matching through use of technical resources, including accessing and exchanging data on high-risk clients.
  - Automated processes which enable staff to work on higher value tasking.
  - Increased access to online products, services and information to encourage client self-service.
  - Fast and efficient service for genuine travellers through technical enhancements that ensure reliability and performance are maintained as online volumes increase.

In the last six months, expansion of the online visitor visa application lodgement channel to China and India has resulted in a transition from paper to online lodgement of more than 50 per cent of overall applications received.

## Strategies for whole of government digital transformation

### Digital Transformation Agency (DTA)

The Department works closely with the DTA to ensure the Government's Digital Service Standards are applied in making decisions, particularly ones which affect future digital capabilities and investment. The Digital Services Strategy and the Channels Strategy 2017-2020 incorporates whole of government strategies and requirements.

The Department is actively contributing to the DTA's Digital Investment Management Office by providing performance data on ICT projects with a budget of \$10 million or more. This data is included in the ICT Investment Portfolio Dashboard and shared within the Australian Public Service (APS) and the Digital Transformation Committee of Cabinet for :

- a. Greater visibility of dependencies.
- b. Connections with others who have faced similar challenges.
- c. Sharing of mitigation examples.
- d. Identification of opportunities for reuse.

Additionally the Department contributes to, and gains value from, the DTA Portfolio Managers Roundtable, the P3M Community of Practice and the general sharing of data, insights and experience across the APS.

### Whole of Government Links

The Department's role in border protection requires effective whole of government interoperability across a range of Agencies to share intelligence, assess risk and undertake operations. To meet these demands, the Department is pursuing several strategies including:

- a. Information at the core.
- c. Expanding digital engagement by enabling more online channels for clients to access departmental services.
- d. Decoupling systems to provide separation of system functions, data and hosting platforms, and enable the use of whole of government shared services where possible.

### Reform Strategy

The Department's journey to 2020 will lead to more seamless, less intrusive and faster processes, and systems to support trade and travel and to protect our borders.

The Enterprise Transformation Programme is a Department-wide portfolio of work driving the changes required for the Department to meet its objectives. The programme comprises existing and emerging projects and activities that will deliver the agreed business outcomes needed to position the Department for 2020 and beyond.

Digital transformation is a key plank of the Department's Transformation Programme. Work is underway to harness digital technologies and build enhanced capability to better deliver client-centric border and immigration services. Through improved digital delivery, the Department is working to show that it can meet public expectations of modern service delivery while also reducing the cost to the taxpayer. Transformation will also ensure investment in ongoing professionalism and repositioning of our staff to drive and support the change we need in the years ahead.

## Digital project delivery

### Project governance

Visibility of project and programme delivery exists at all layers of the Department, with ultimate oversight from the Department's Executive Committee and Audit Committee. The Major Capability Division helps to ensure initiatives are viable, cost effective, strategically aligned and within budget and risk tolerances.

Projects and programmes are governed by four principles – partnership with business, strong and clear governance, business and capability alignment and robust controls.

DIBP has invested significant effort to improve lifecycle ICT governance, at the strategic capability level as well as at the programme and project levels.

This is of particular importance and value in that it brings together business and ICT in a partnership, with neither one 'ruling the roost' from a digital transformation perspective.

### Design and build of platforms

An ever-increasing reliance on digital platforms for both the Department's operations and client engagement means that the platforms supporting business systems need to be resilient, scalable and highly available. To meet these demands, the Department is designing and building future platforms that:

- Take advantage of industry investments in infrastructure automation and support multiple application development methods.
- Are able to scale and meet future demand for front-line services and an increase use of digital channels for client engagement.
- Enable greater sharing of data and intelligence across Government.
- Are secure and able to meet threats of cyber security, such as denial of service attacks.
- Reduce the ongoing cost of service delivery while enabling more rapid systems development.

Given the size and complexity of the Department's technology environment, effective governance is critical. To this end, the Department has several key programme review committees that ensure investments align with the Department's strategic objectives. The Architecture Review Board ensures all systems are designed to sustainably meet the Department future needs.

### The adequacy of available capabilities both within the public sector and externally

The Department is making a significant investment in modernising the capabilities required to facilitate legitimate travel and trade while disrupting illegal activities. The implementation of SmartGates, improved biometric capture, analysis of identity data, and intelligence systems will underpin the platforms for the Department to further automate and streamline processes into the foreseeable future.

Likewise, planned investments to modernise visa processing and extend intelligence and risk assessment across an expanded range of scenarios will also ensure the Department's capabilities meet operational requirements through to 2020 and beyond.

In recent years as the tempo of ICT delivery has increased so has the challenge of resourcing, whether at the vendor or at the contractor levels.

This is leading for the growing interest across all sectors in making use of cloud and 'software as a service' SAAS models of ICT delivery/procurement. This:

- Reduces risk
- Reduces capital requirements by using operating funds
- Reduces time to deliver and
- Enables more flexibility in scale.

## Procurement of digital services and equipment

Tighter governance around procurement facilitates better ICT outcomes. In accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, value for money is the core rule for all government procurements. To achieve this, the Department upholds the following requirements:

- Encourage competition and be non-discriminatory.
- Use public resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner that is not inconsistent with the policies of the Commonwealth.
- Facilitate accountable and transparent decision-making.
- Encourage appropriate engagement with risk.
- Be commensurate with the scale and scope of the business requirement.

In determining value for money, the Department considers the quality of the goods and services, fitness for purpose of the proposal, the potential supplier's relevant experience and performance history, flexibility of the proposal (including innovation and adaptability over the lifecycle of the procurement), environmental sustainability of the proposed goods and services (such as energy efficiency and environmental impact), and whole-of-life costs.

Specifically in relation to the procurement of digital services, the Department uses, where possible, existing whole of government panel arrangements. This includes the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Marketplace Panel (SON3413842), the Australian Taxation Office's ICT Professional Services Panel (SON3280319), and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's ICT Services Panel (SON3403954).

## Any other related matters

A key enabling element of the Department's digital delivery of services is capability management and the running of a capability management lifecycle. The Department is currently taking steps to review and assess the way it manages capability and runs its lifecycle so that preparations can be made for the machinery of government changes needed to establish the Home Affairs Portfolio. The new Department will likely have an expanded set of capability requirements, which will include a significant reliance upon technology, and the delivery of digital services.