



AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ 7 DECEMBER 2018

Today, the Australian Digital Council met in Adelaide, where the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers considered the range of digital transformation priorities underway nationally and identified key data collaboration projects to improve services to the Australian public.

The meeting was chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation, the Hon Michael Keenan MP. The following State and Territory ministers also attended the meeting:

- The Hon Victor Dominello MP (NSW)
- The Hon Gavin Jennings MLC (VIC)
- The Hon Mick de Brenni MP (QLD)
- Chris Tallentire MLA (WA)
- The Hon Steven Marshall MP (SA)
- Mick Gentleman MLA (ACT)

Through discussions about common priorities, jurisdictions are working together to take a holistic approach to designing digital services, and solving complex policy problems through Commonwealth-State data sharing.

‘State of the data and digital nation’ report

Ministers considered a paper on the ‘State of the data and digital nation’, which highlights the key digital and data initiatives underway across the nation. Ministers asked senior officials to prepare a report on the ‘State of the data and digital nation’, to be published early in 2019.

Ministers agreed Australia’s collective digital success could best be achieved by working together, collaboratively across all levels of government. Ministers agreed to establish cross-jurisdictional teams to drive the delivery of two initiatives: streamlining registration process for the birth of a child, and the shared digital identity solutions.

Streamlining engagement with governments

Ministers considered the early findings from a pilot project to simplify how new parents register the birth of a child. This project is exploring how new parents could avoid extensive form-filling associated with advising multiple levels of governments when they have a baby. Instead, governments could use hospital records to automatically create a birth certificate, Medicare registration and potentially a Centrelink record.

Noting the early successes of this pilot, ministers agreed to a second pilot to streamline the process to notify governments about the death of a loved one. Ministers noted that streamlining these process can only be beneficial for families during this difficult time.

Ministers also identified a further project to streamline engagement associated with ‘getting a job’.

Ministers also discussed the current challenges businesses face when dealing with governments, such as when starting a business, registering a business, and applying for work and business licences. Ministers noted the great work already underway across jurisdictions to simplify businesses’ engagement with government without weakening the integrity of regulation. Ministers agreed there would be merit in each jurisdiction leveraging the work underway in other jurisdictions.

Ministers considered a presentation on the Commonwealth's *myGovID* and noted for the first time, people could verify their identity online, and work is underway to test the reuse of this digital identity across multiple Commonwealth government services. All ministers noted the benefit for the public if this service could also be re-used for State and Territory services, and agreed to explore further collaboration on this initiative.

Generating better policy insights through improved data sharing

Ministers agreed in principle that improving data sharing between governments to generate greater policy insights to improve government services to people and business, was a key priority for this Council.

Ministers agreed to explore a pilot project between the Commonwealth and Western Australia to share data on children born with birth defects and the pharmaceuticals prescribed to mothers while pregnant. This project would bring data out of government silos to provide opportunities for high impact analysis, which is currently not possible.

Ministers concurred with the Commonwealth, New South Wales and South Australia to progress a pilot to build a longitudinal and enduring cross-jurisdictional data asset to improve services for people with disability. By bringing together data from across jurisdictions, governments will have access to the data they need to be able to improve service planning and resource and funding allocations for disability services. Initially the pilot will integrate South Australia, New South Wales and Commonwealth data. Other jurisdictions can choose to opt in as the project develops. Ministers agreed the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare was well-positioned to deliver this work, and ministers noted the importance of working very closely with the Disability Reform Council and the COAG Health Council as this project develops.

Ministers also noted the extensive work being undertaken by all jurisdictions to improve data sharing, use and release. Ministers agreed to work together to aim for a nationally consistent approach to data management and use, including opportunities to share best practice and reduce duplicative data investments.

Building a sustainable digital future

Ministers all agreed the digital transformation agenda presents a wealth of opportunities, but discussed the need to ensure these opportunities are harnessed in a safe and secure way, and in line with community expectations.

Ministers agreed further consultation is required with the Australian Building Minister's Forum about the issues of secure building management systems and related infrastructure and cyber security matters.

Ministers are critically aware that the benefits of digital transformation may not evenly accrue to all parts of the population. Ministers agreed to collaborate to improve digital inclusion, with a focus on improving access, affordability and ability for people and businesses across Australia.

Ministers agreed that transparency and building and maintaining community trust are critical in digital and data activities, and asked senior officials to work together on a joint approach to community engagement.

Governance

The Senior Officials Group has been established to support the Australian Digital Council and drive the delivery of these data and digital initiatives.

Ministers agreed the Australian Digital Council will meet again in early 2019.