

Interim Services Australia Independent Advisory Board

Terms of Reference

Chair	The Hon. Victor Dominello
Establishment Date	December 2023
Terms of Reference Updated	13 November 2023
Terms of Reference Review	As required
Secretariat	Services Australia
Meeting Frequency	As required

Introduction and Purpose

The Interim Independent Advisory Board (the Board) is established with non-government members to provide guidance, consultation and recommendations on the design, delivering, and implementation of government services. The Board serves as an independent body tasked with providing advice to the Minister for Government Services on projects, policies and initiatives ensuring they are ethical, uphold human rights, have a focus on service and are beneficial to people and the Australian economy. The Board will operate until 30 June 2024.

Scope of Responsibilities

The Board's responsibilities include:

- Review and provide analysis on potential and ongoing projects, initiatives, and policies.
- Offer advice on implications of emerging business practices, service design and use of technology.
- Provide independent expert guidance and advice on initiatives being prioritised for delivery.
- Ensure initiatives are ethical and beneficial to people and the Australian economy.
- Ensure initiatives on the forward delivery roadmap for myGov deliver value for people and staff.
- Assess and recommend guidelines for the development of Government Services.
- Monitor and evaluate performance and practices throughout the process of service delivery, from initial considerations through to implementation and sustainment.
- Consider concerns raised by members of the public and stakeholders.
- Collaborate, with relevant members of industry organisations, peak bodies and members of the public to ensure knowledge and advice remains current and puts customers at the centre of design and decision making.
- Support and provide advice to strategic governance forums related to myGov and government service delivery.

Additional responsibilities may be identified and conferred by the Minister.

Composition and Membership

The Board will consist of a diverse group of individuals with expertise across industry, academia, and peak bodies in order to facilitate discussion. The Board of up to 10 members, should aim for the following attributes:

Independence: Members should not have any conflicts of interest that might compromise their objectivity. Membership will also encompass representatives who represent every day people including representatives from peak bodies.

Expertise: Members should possess relevant knowledge and experience.

Diversity: Members should represent a range of genders, backgrounds, and perspectives to ensure balanced decision-making.

Term Limits: Members will be appointed until 30 June 2024. The decision to extend this Board beyond 30 June 2024 is a decision for government, and members will be reassessed at this stage.

The Board will have representation from experts in the following fields:

- Governance and funding
- Ethics of service delivery
- Technology in the delivery of digital services
- Economic benefits and issues
- Community Advocate
- Staff Advocate

The Chair may request attendance from subject matter experts, observers and guests to support meeting outcomes.

Members will be appointed by the Minister for Government Services by written agreement on a part time basis.

The Minister will ensure appointed members are persons with qualifications, skills or experience to position myGov and government services for the future.

Members will be paid in accordance with their individual contracts.

Members must give written notice to the Minister for Government Services of all interests, pecuniary or otherwise, that the member has or acquires and that conflict or could conflict their role on the Board. If required, documentation shall be sent to the secretariat for record keeping.

Senior Advisers

An APS official as a senior adviser to the Board will attend each meeting. Senior Advisors will include at least one individual at the Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 3 level. The APS official will not be a member of the Board and will be agreed by the Chair either for a period of time (for example, a financial year) or on a meeting by meeting basis in considering the items to be considered.

Subject Matter Expertise

Additionally, as determined by Services Australia, APS officials at SES Band 2 level, may attend individual meetings or agenda items as observers or presenters. To provide subject matter expertise or insights to assist the Board with their deliberations for example to provide further insights or context on the member service experience, service delivery operations or work/projects underway with individual customer cohorts.

Chair and Member Roles and Responsibilities

Chair

In addition to the member responsibilities detailed below, the Chair should:

- provide direction and advice regarding the performance of the Board, to support the Board to achieve its purpose
- promote a person centric view and whole of systems thinking in Board deliberations
- consider risk and escalate risks and issues in a timely manner as required
- ensure that the Minister for Government Services is aware and appropriately briefed on the deliberations of the Board.

Members

Members should:

- contribute to effective board operations and achievement against its terms of reference
- be engaged in and prepared for board meetings and advise the Chair and the secretariat of any necessary absences as soon as is practicable
- be transparent about advice and risks associated with matters being considered

- engage with industry, peak bodies and academia to ensure expert advice and guidance provided to the Minister for Government Services remains relevant and well informed.

Meetings

Meetings may be called by the Chair and/or Minister. It is anticipated the Board will meet up to ten times in the period from its establishment to 30 June 2024. The Board may also consider matters out of session, cancel or defer a meeting. Advice should be made through consensus, but if consensus cannot be reached, a democratic voting process may be employed.

Secretariat

A representative from Services Australia will attend meetings in an observer capacity to assist with logistics and support Board members.

Services Australia will also provide secretariat support for the Board, including:

- organise meetings
- prepare the agenda and papers
- facilitate collaboration and engagement with government departments and agencies.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

A goal of the Board is to positively influence initiatives from their inception. It is important that consultations can be done based on publication of initial unrefined concepts. As such, Board members must maintain strict confidentiality regarding discussions and sensitive information shared during meetings. Any conflicts of interest or potential biases that might affect their judgment should be disclosed to the Board and addressed accordingly. Confidentiality obligations will be included as part of the terms of engagement for each Member.

If agreed with initiative stakeholders, the results of consultations with the Board may be made public to add to the body-of-knowledge available to future initiatives. Publication of results must not risk reputational damage, conflict with probity or procurement requirements or release any material subject to confidentiality obligations.

Reporting and Communication

The Board will reach consensus on issues and advice for the Minister. Where consensus is not reached, the Chair will provide advice on the range of positions to the Minister.

The Board will report its findings, recommendations, and assessments to the Minister for Government Services in a clear and concise manner. Records from the meeting will be submitted to members before being referred to the Minister. Regular reports may be submitted, or special reports may be provided in response to urgent concerns or opportunities. If agreed by stakeholders, the Minister and the Board, documentation may be made public.

Engagement with Stakeholders

The Board should actively engage with relevant stakeholders, such as members of the public, stakeholders, myGov member services and peak bodies, to understand their ethical concerns and service delivery perspectives better.

Amendments and Review

The terms of reference may be amended as required, with any changes approved by the Minister for Government Services. Additionally, the Board's performance and effectiveness should be reviewed periodically to ensure its continued relevance and value to the Minister.

Resources and Support

Services Australia will provide the Board with adequate resources, administrative support, and access to relevant information to enable the Board to carry out its responsibilities effectively.

Guiding Framework

These terms of reference serve as the guiding framework for the Board. The Board's primary objective is to ensure that human-centred considerations remain at the core of service design and delivery decision-making processes, promoting a culture of integrity and responsible practices for current and future initiatives for government services.