Meeting of the Interim Services Australia Independent Advisory Board

Wednesday 4 September 2024

Members met on Wednesday 4 September 2024 to discuss and provide advice on strategies and initiatives that will help strengthen and shape future customer-centred government services. This included:

- an introduction to the Customer 360 Strategy and Customer Experience Principles
- Services Australia's (the Agency's) approach to use of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies so they can be safely used in enhancing service delivery and staff experience
- the proposed scope and approach to developing a strategy to strengthen the myGov ecosystem.

The Minister, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, welcomed the Board's ongoing expert advice on both digital and non-digital approaches for better 'connected' Government service delivery.

Embedding a focus of customer experience in decision making

The Board was introduced to the Agency's proposed Customer 360 Strategy, which was tabled for the Board's early information and visibility. The Customer 360 Strategy is designed to place people's needs at the heart of everything the Agency does. It emphasises the need for simple, intuitive, and connected government services that genuinely reflect and respond to user needs. Recent audits and inquiries, including the myGov user audit and the Robodebt Royal Commission, have highlighted the need to prioritise customer-centric service design.

Members heard about the Agency's work to embed a customer-centred approach in its operations and its new evidence-based Customer Experience Principles, informed by Australian and international best practice principles and research. The Board acknowledged these Principles will become a cornerstone of service design and delivery processes, ensuring consistently high benchmarks for customer satisfaction.

The Agency explained the development of a Customer Strategy and Service Model will also ensure future investments in improvements will be targeted to deliver the most benefit. The Agency is also exploring how it can use these models and frameworks to better support policy design. The Board noted the Agency's intent to return at the November 2024 meeting for advice on the next steps of this work.

Use of emerging technology to improve customer outcomes in Services Australia

The Board noted the significant potential of automation and AI technologies to enhance service delivery and staff experience. It was discussed that, if implemented lawfully and responsibly, these technologies can speed up payment processes and free staff from routine administrative tasks, allowing them to focus more on complex and impactful cases.

Members heard about the Agency's commitment to ensuring robust safeguards around AI usage are in place and are aligned to national standards for ethical and responsible AI deployment. This includes ensuring fairness, reliability, safety, privacy, transparency, and human oversight in AI applications.

The Agency spoke about its work to identify potential use cases for AI, including improving staff support resources, developing virtual assistants, and streamlining processing tasks.

Opportunities for strengthening security, privacy and fraud measures across myGov

Board members were briefed on the scope and progress of the Agency's work to enhance the security of the myGov ecosystem. The Agency explained its commitment to a new strategy to improve security and reduce fraud in both myGov and across its linked services, as highlighted through the recent Ombudsman's investigation. The Board heard these efforts will better protect sensitive customer information held by linked services and maintain public trust in the platform.

Members discussed the current evidence of fraud issues within the myGov platform. The Agency emphasised its commitment to improve myGov security features, such as two-factor authentication to protect against unauthorised access, while also considering how this may affect people with low digital literacy, limited connectivity or device access. The Board provided guidance on effective community consultation approaches which can help the Agency to learn about the user experiences as the strategy is refined.