

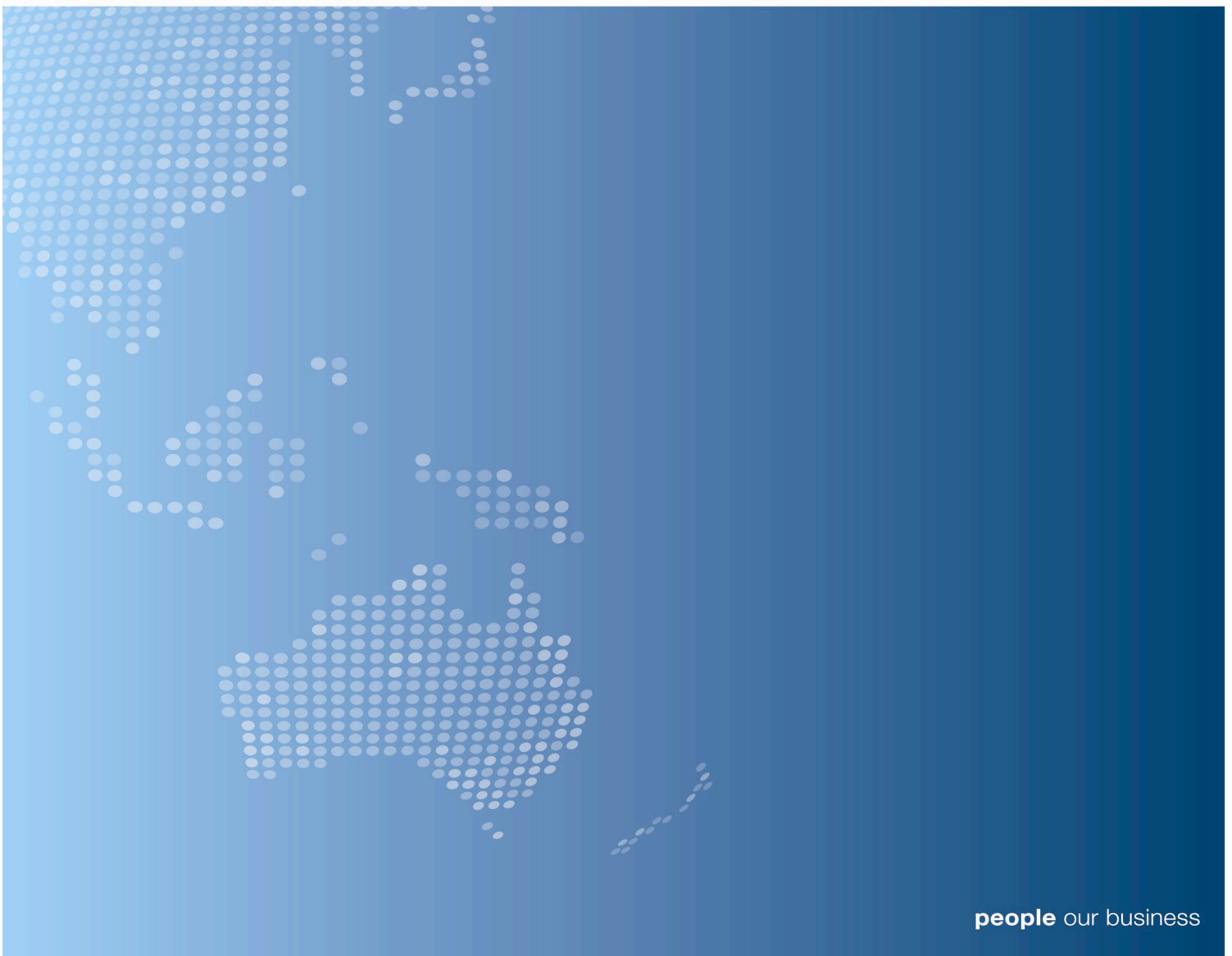
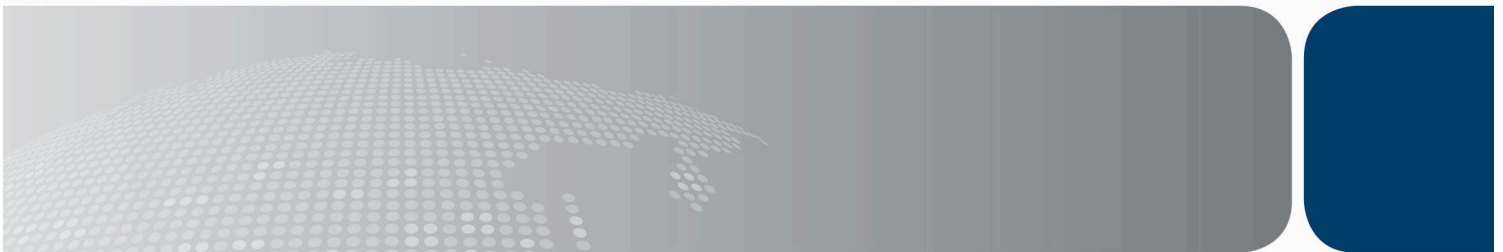


Australian Government  
Department of Immigration  
and Citizenship

# Building a common future: Global challenges, local responses

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# CAPAM 2010 Biennial Conference

Theme 7 – the changing relationship between governments and citizens

## Service delivery transformation

Understanding the relationship when customers are not citizens, when operations are global, and when technology is the mechanism for service delivery innovation and an enabler of policy.

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# 1. Immigration – a history of nation building

## 1.1 Background

Over half a century ago, Australia's 16th Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, established the Department of Immigration on 13 July 1945 with 24 officers – six each in Canberra and Melbourne and 12 in London.

When the new Minister, Arthur Calwell, made his first Ministerial statement to Parliament, Australia was emerging from World War II, he spoke of the need to “greatly increase our numbers” to “hold our island continent for ourselves and our dependents”.

In the sixty five years since then the Australian population has grown from seven million to over 22 million people. The department has facilitated the entry of over seven million people, and the conferral of citizenship on four million people. The ‘populate or perish’ concept drove the expansion of a small population to fill our sparse continent and drive economic growth. Of the seven million who have come to Australia as new settlers since World War II, some 750 000 have arrived as displaced persons or refugees. Nearly a quarter of all Australians were born overseas, and nearly half of all Australians were born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas.

The contribution of these people to Australian society, culture and prosperity has been an important factor in shaping our nation. One of our greatest successes as a nation is the way we have welcomed so many people of different ancestry into our society and valued their cultural backgrounds with relatively low levels of discrimination, social tension or disharmony.

Today more than 7000 immigration staff, in every Australian state and territory and more than 60 countries:

- ensure Australia's future through managed migration
- protect refugees and play a key role in humanitarian policy internationally
- contribute to Australia's security through border management and traveller facilitation
- make fair and reasonable decisions for people entering or leaving Australia, ensuring compliance with our immigration laws and integrity in decision making
- support migrants and refugees to settle in the community and participate in Australian society
- promote Australian citizenship and a multicultural Australia.

Over the sixty five years since our inception, the department has deliberately set about being innovative in the delivery of migration, visa and citizenship services. Indeed we have a proud history of this from going forward with an extensive electronic media (advertising) campaign in the 1940s, delivering mobile citizenship services in the 1960s in caravans directly to where our clients were, through to the introduction of a world class electronic travel authority system in the 1990s. This history and culture of innovation is a value that is fundamental to our future.

## 1.2 2010 and beyond

The year 2010 marks the commencement of a far reaching transformation of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to a technologically sophisticated and globally integrated, risk-tiered, electronic operation encompassing networks of government and non-government service delivery partners.

The timing and reasons for the transformation can be found in the convergence of a range of strategic demographic, economic, societal and technological trends to which the Australian Government is responding to through an extensive range of policy, service delivery and administrative reform strategies.

The increasing concerns of terrorism and border security mean a continued focus on strong controls at the border. The increased number of people travelling to Australia as a result of discount airlines and globalisation has heightened risk exposure. The travel patterns of clients are continually changing with an increasing number of flights coming from higher risk locations.

Immigration and visa services around the world have to achieve both better travel facilitation and stronger border controls. This has involved more sophisticated targeting of risk with other Immigration departments around the world transforming the way they do business to better manage risk and facilitate both humanitarian and migration movements.

Australia seeks to ease the distress of refugees and displaced persons, offer settlement options under the humanitarian program and services to those who are resettled in Australia. To do this the department works with international organisations to develop suitable temporary options and provide long-term solutions for those in need, and with other governments to facilitate our humanitarian program.

Changing demographics mean there will be increased labour and skills shortages. Migration will be critical in addressing this issue. With the ageing population globally Australia will need to compete for scarce resources and skills to meet ongoing demand for skilled workers.

At the same time, economic measures taken in the face of the global financial crisis have placed greater pressure on public sector budgets. The cost of migration and visa services, like a broad range of public expenditure, needs to be reduced.

To meet the demands of the decades ahead, Australia needs a migration, visa and citizenship service that is simpler, easier to access, assures integrity, is lower cost and better targeted to migration needs. In addition, the services must be agile and able to adjust rapidly to changing labour markets and policy needs.

## 2. Our clients and global operations

Today, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship offers over 120 visa and citizenship products to a diverse client base. These products are primarily delivered using a complex and geographically dispersed service delivery network, composed of both department staff and service delivery partners. Visa and citizenship products are also supported through other channels such as mail, call centres and online via the website at [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au).

Uniquely to Australia, the department's operating environment comprises the interaction of policy development, service delivery, program management, investigation and enforcement functions. With economic, social and security policy responsibilities, DIAC administers legislation and promotes the benefits of a unified and diverse society. In 2009–10 the department conferred 118 196 Australian citizenships and served 171 318 people who received a visa to migrate permanently to Australia.

The department manages the entry and departure of people crossing the Australian border. Last year there were 26.1 million passenger and crew arrivals. We also authenticate the identity of people entering Australia. Maintaining that foundation identity for use in the Australian community is also a key role.

With an increasing focus on streamlined and technology enabled service delivery, the department has a critical role at the centre of delivering government services, to both Australian citizens as well as to people who are not, or not yet, citizens.

The delivery of services to some of our clients can often take on the form of a long term relationship spanning many years from an initial interview offshore to settlement, beginning a new life in Australia and finally citizenship. Valuing this relationship from the beginning means getting the process right at every step along the way.

Australia meets international protection obligations and contributes to the resettlement of refugees and those in humanitarian need. Departmental officers visit refugee camps to interview and assess people on humanitarian grounds. These people may live in exile with no hope of returning to their home country, and be among the most underprivileged on earth.

During 2008–09, the Australian Government granted 616 visas to Bhutanese who had been in camps in Nepal for many years. Australia is actively engaged in the resettlement of Burmese refugees from camps along the Thai-Burmese border, from India and other countries in the region. Two thousand four hundred and fourteen visas were granted to Burmese refugees. As part of an international effort to address protection needs of Rohingya refugees from camps in Bangladesh, 113 visas were granted to Burmese Rohingya.

In 2009–10, around 13 500 visas were granted for humanitarian and refugee settlers, and approximately 12 000 clients received help through the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy.

Statelessness adds a whole new dimension to delivering government services, particularly in this age of joined up or whole of government services, and with a focus on 'citizen-centred' service delivery. How then does the Australian Government engage and deliver services to people who are not our citizens, who may never actually be citizens and many of whom are stateless?

Contrast this long and complex end-to-end service delivery process and client experience with the seamless service experienced by around two million clients, who each year visit Australia after being automatically granted an Electronic Travel Authority in Australia. What is not apparent to these

people, all of whom are not citizens, is that at the time they purchased their return airline tickets they completed a transaction with our department albeit via technology and through an intermediary.

Clearly the description of citizen or citizen-centric is inadequate in this context. In migration, visa and citizenship services, the terms client and client-centric are more apt than citizen and citizen-centric.

## **2.1 Demonstrated innovative service delivery over the past 65 years**

In discharging our key nation building role, the department is responsible for the well managed entry and settlement of people.

Over the 65 year history of the department the way this responsibility has been fulfilled has necessarily evolved. One thing that has been constant throughout is the innovative approach that has been taken to that evolution, and leveraging emerging technology along the way.

Since 2006 mobile offices have been travelling around rural Australia to inform those communities about services available to them, and give residents affected by remoteness and isolation the best possible access to government payments and services. This mobile service was a key feature in a strategy to support rural Australia released in 2009. Yet as far back as 1969, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship actively sought Australians to sponsor migrants using mobile offices—yes, caravans.

Electronic media has also been used to convey strategically important calls to action over the history of the department. Moving pictures have always played an important role in telling our stories and broadcasting our messages. As far back as the 1940s, our first Minister, Arthur Calwell, used newsreels to communicate with Australians at the cinema. Later a series of four United Kingdom television advertisements enticed more than a million British migrants to 'Come to Australia for ten pounds'. One such family was that of our first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

Today, the department broadcasts its messages to a worldwide audience with its very own YouTube channel ImmiTV. This innovative communication channel allows us to showcase our work, programs and events, announce new policies and provide *how to* instructional videos to guide clients through our online services.

Launched in May 2008, a year ahead of the Australian Government's Government 2.0 Taskforce, 56 videos are now on ImmiTV. There have been over 75 000 hits and the department has developed a mature in-house production capability to support this capability. The most viewed video features the Visa Entitlement Verification Online service, a service which lets thousands of businesses verify the immigration status of prospective employees.

The department's website is in the top ten of Australian Government sites. It hosts the department's award winning Visa Wizard and Citizenship Wizard products. These are interactive self service tools designed to provide prospective travellers, migrants and citizens with tailored information about their options. Previously clients had to know what information they were looking for – now the wizards present tailored summary information to clients based on a series of questions. Once a client has determined a suitable visa, they may then have the option of submitting an online visa application. The department was the winner of the Australian Government's 2009 Excellence in eGovernment Award, and a Government Technology Award in 2009, for these wizards.

DIAC granted 4.3 million permanent and temporary visas last year. Of these two million were Electronic Travel Authorities, and one million were lodged through our eVisa system. Whilst the remaining 1.3 million were paper based applications, and some of the application forms and supporting evidence can number hundreds of pages, we have commenced the journey towards a

single processing platform that will enable 99 per cent of applications to be processed electronically in the future.

People's expectations are increasingly influenced by non-government sectors, in particular banking and financial services, and retail. As new service delivery channels and service offers emerge, governments are expected to provide similar, if not better, quality and personalised services to meet people's changing wants and needs. In our Web 2.0 society this will increasingly be through social networks, which will have a unique application in future service delivery environments.

Australia's investment in a National Broadband Network is complemented by a newly established digital productivity ministry. Together these will have significant impact on service delivery, with social, economic and productivity benefits.

## **2.2 Service delivery today**

Australia's layered approach to border management is based on secure immigration processing systems delivered by leading edge technology. Anyone wanting to travel to, enter or remain in Australia must pass through each of these layers. Ahead of people reaching our borders, the business of immigration service delivery by the Australian Government is in play.

For people seeking to come to Australia their relationship with the immigration system begins at the moment they decide to seek information about our entry requirements. This may be through a government representative, via our website, through a travel agent or perhaps a tourism advertisement. Increasingly this interaction will be electronic and seamless, and issues of access to information and authoritative source of that information are paramount to meeting the needs of both the person and the government.

For people arriving in Australia, the immigration system is the window to Australian Government services, programs and information. Even before many of these people become citizens – and some never do – relationships with an array of Australian Government agencies have commenced.

The current structure of service delivery requires these people to commence a new relationship with each government portfolio on a largely individual basis, retelling their story and supplying documents previously given to other arms of government. The department's 'window' to Australian Government services presents a holistic picture of government services for people coming to Australia. Importantly, for people requiring support or who have other special needs, the citizenship and settlement services provide personalised support through a range of service providers, such as our unique Translating and Interpreting Service and Adult Migrant English Program.

The benefits of immigration to the Australian economy are significant. The skilled migration program supports Australian economic growth through sustainable population growth, targeted to enable workforce growth and productivity, direct financial benefits and regional economic development.

Sustainable population expansion is a key driver of economic growth and, in developed economies, immigration is an important component of this growth. In Australia two-thirds of population growth is from net overseas migration. Ninety five per cent of migrants are aged under 45, mitigating the impact of Australia's ageing population.

Australia's migration program works to address key and emerging skills shortages. The contribution it makes to regional areas that cannot fill skills shortages locally provides both economic and cultural benefits to regional Australia, and offers migrants an alternative to big cities.

Due to the complex nature of the migration program, client interactions are often unnecessarily confusing and require follow-up to resolve. For example<sup>1</sup> 56 per cent of visa applicants are required to submit additional information after lodgement. Limited information transparency drives client confusion and uncertainty.

There clearly remains significant opportunity to streamline service delivery.

## 2.3 The client experience

The department has an ongoing commitment to ensuring that client needs remain central to the development and implementation of client service improvements. Our commitment to be a recognised leader in service delivery puts the client firmly at the centre of service delivery principles that focus on knowing our clients, designing our products to meet client needs, managing our service channels, and building our service delivery model to deliver client excellence.

To measure our client's expectations and satisfaction with our services, we have instituted a new and comprehensive, twelve month long client attitudinal research program involving a combination of qualitative and quantitative research including an online survey of 30 000 clients, 600 phone interviews, and many focus groups – we call this our client experience program.

In addition to the large client survey, the client experience program includes the aggregation and analysis of a broad range of client experience data – web stats, information from the department's Global Feedback Unit, media reports, volumetric data, and letters to the minister and department. This research program is providing some extraordinarily valuable insight into the client experience to help shape our service delivery reform strategies.

In undertaking such a comprehensive client evaluation, the department has been able to identify key initiatives for improvement to be included in the Client Services Transformation Strategy. Finding out how clients feel about the department now, will enable us to continue to transform and improve into the future.

The results of the first phase of the client experience program, conducted in February and March 2010, show that the overall satisfaction with departmental service delivery was 82 per cent. Levels of satisfaction across each service delivery channel were also high.

- 94 per cent of clients were satisfied with the online application process, and 90 per cent said they would use that system again.
- 87 per cent were satisfied with the in-person channel
- 84 per cent were satisfied with the email channel
- 77 per cent were satisfied with the telephone service channel

Email was identified as the preferred method of interacting with the department, with the website the second most preferred channel. The survey also highlighted that a large proportion of clients visit the website and then phone a service centre or visit an office because information was hard to find or was inconsistent. A sizeable proportion of clients will email, call or visit the office to simply check on the status of their application. These results continue to inform initiatives as part of the Client Services Transformation Strategy, such as the website and web services strategy redesign, the expansion of our service centres and improvements to client self-help channels.

Phase two of the client experience program will commence later in 2010 and conclude in early 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> Orima Research, "Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009-2010 Client Experiences Research - Main Report of Findings", June 2010



### 3. Global challenges and local responses

Globally, immigration and border control portfolios are confronting significant challenges:

- increasing demand for immigration services (temporary and permanent)
- increasing global competitiveness for overseas visitors and skilled migrants
- a shifting client mix towards more complex risk profiles
- increasing emphasis on border protection in the context of global terrorism.

In this context, the department needs to achieve a balance between improved travel and immigration facilitation (to support economic growth) and stronger risk management and border controls (to protect Australia).

Managing this balance requires the need for a more flexible, adaptive and scalable operating model. An operating model that provides sophisticated risk management tools to further align processing effort to the emerging higher risk caseload and continues to provide world class client service is also required.

The World Economic Forum Report, *Global Risks 2010*<sup>2</sup>, identifies 36 global economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal and technological risks with strong links to significant, long term trends. One of the global risks identified is changing migration patterns and the linkages this has with other trends. An increasing number of people travelling as a result of discount airlines and globalisation have changed this risk exposure. Chris Patten memorably wrote that ‘money, goods, tourists and technology flatten borders’<sup>3</sup>.

Australia’s national science and research agency, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), identified five inter-related mega trends in its recent publication *Our Future World: An analysis of global trends, shocks and scenarios*<sup>4</sup>. Getting more efficiency from finite resources, demand for tailored and targeted services, divergent demographics, increased mobility and ubiquitous connection to the internet with everything in the natural world having a digital counterpart, are all global trends influencing the future. Societies are making adjustments to this shift in economic activity.

From the perspective of electronic service delivery and the changing relationship with clients, these mega trends present both great opportunities and some profound challenges. Let’s look at two of these trends – personalisation and the meteoric rise in the use of the Internet and Internet technologies.

Personalisation involves innovative means of understanding, and supplying, the intimate needs of individual customers en masse. Ball, Coelho, and Vilares discuss new capabilities for personalisation in a paper published in the *Journal of Services Marketing* (2006, p393)<sup>5</sup>, writing that “The vast increases in computing power, manufacturing robotics, and the rise of the internet over recent decades have now given marketers the power to customize offerings to ever more demanding customers, in ways they could not before”.

Over the last twenty years the globe has seen rapid growth in internet usage accompanied by a skyrocketing number of connected devices. As the functionality of the internet increases this trend points towards a convergence between the natural and its digital counterpart as social interactions,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/globalrisk/globalrisks2010.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Chris Patten Not Quite the Diplomat: Home Truths About World Affairs

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.csiro.au/resources/Our-Future-World.html>

<sup>5</sup> Ball, D., Coelho, P.S., Vilares, M.J., 2006. Service personalization and loyalty. *Journal of Services Marketing* 20(6), 391–403

information systems, transactions and sensory systems are replicated on the internet. As more things connect to the internet, the opportunity for targeted personalised services from government expands and we need to understand the client's appetite and expectations.

Managing a highly responsive immigration system requires a balance to be struck between managing these risks and balancing equally important factors including:

- serving economic and trade relationships
- meeting reciprocity expectations of other countries
- attracting appropriately skilled candidates to fill employment gaps
- meeting the need to reunite families
- facilitating the entry and stay of students and visitors.

Investment in migration infrastructure is key to the mitigation of these risks and ensuring Australia's future prosperity. Significantly there is a range of strategic reform agendas of government coupled with infrastructure investment which provides added support for such investment now.

### 3.1 Australian Government reform

The Australian Government is responding to the convergence of the range of strategic, demographic, economic, socio-cultural, societal, and technological trends with a number of policy, administrative service delivery reform strategies and investment in infrastructure, such as the National Broadband Network.

An ambitious reform agenda has been outlined for the Australian Public Service (APS). *The Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration*<sup>6</sup> clearly states key challenges that must be addressed in future APS strategies, the main one of which is about better service delivery.

These APS strategies are also aligned to the broader problems of issues such as population ageing which will increase the demand for health, social and other government services. As recognised in the *Intergenerational Report 2010*<sup>7</sup>, demand for services for seniors, carers and the disabled are complex and may require in person dealings.

Service delivery infrastructure will be under increasing pressure, as will the tax revenue base which will need to support this increased demand with fewer people of working age able to make a contribution. *Australia's Future Tax System*<sup>8</sup> anticipates a wide range of reform that will be needed to deliver a 21st Century system that will be able to respond to various pressures including some of those outlined in this paper.

The government has also commenced a major program of service delivery reform in human services agencies delivering health, welfare and social services to Australians. This reform program has been established to simplify people's dealings with government through improved access to services through co-location of offices, a single telephone number and website.

At the same time, the APS must deliver other individual reforms underway, in particular those in deregulation, innovation, taxation, third sector and information policy – including Freedom of Information and Government 2.0.

This reform agenda emphasises the need for collaboration across government agencies, the importance of technology in service delivery, and the need for the efficient and effective utilisation of

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.dpmmc.gov.au/publications/aga\\_reform/aga\\_reform\\_blueprint/index.cfm](http://www.dpmmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/index.cfm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://taxreview.treasury.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=html/pubs\\_reports.htm](http://taxreview.treasury.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=html/pubs_reports.htm)

public funds. Delivering on this agenda requires each agency to reassess its operations both from a policy and delivery perspective and deliver a sustainable, evidence based strategy.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is one of few Australian Government agencies with a global and domestic service delivery network and, as such, has a leadership role in the service delivery reform agenda.

From the context of electronic service delivery and the changing relationship with our clients, there are a number of pervasive themes resonating through these policy, service delivery and administrative reform strategies:

- utilising service delivery networks across all levels of government, the private sector and third sector
- the notion of a 'client account' which can provide the client with a single view of their dealings with government. This is where architecture and standards are critical – it would not be in the client's interest or the government's interest to have a number of client accounts being developed by different agencies or agency groupings without an appreciation of the client experience. Such a capability is being explored in the private sector, which is really the client's own portal to an array of service providers and services with which they interact
- government 2.0 technologies and web enabled service delivery models
- an appreciation of the impacts of an ageing population and shifts in the workforce demographics of the Australian Public Service.

Balancing these requirements demands a more flexible, adaptive and scalable operating model. Managing the transformation of this complex and global operation over the coming years and in a defining time in history inherently means building on our history of service delivery innovation.

## 4. Transforming client service delivery

### 4.1 DIAC transformation – ‘strengthening Australia’s borders through the delivery of world class migration, visa and citizenship services’

The department’s transformation is about renewal - a strategically planned transformation that will allow the department to create our own sustainable, long-term future and to be a globally-integrated organisation.

One of the cornerstones of the transformation program is our commitment to improving client service and integrity, while improving our efficiency and sustainability. The Client Services Transformation Strategy is one of three major initiatives that include a series of activities to deliver on this commitment and is supported by the other two major initiatives – Visa Simplification and Deregulation and the Business Services Transformation.

The aims of the DIAC transformation are to:

- significantly improve our strategic policy and evaluation capability
- improve the consistency, efficiency and level of client service
- advance the quality and efficiency of our internal business support services
- urgently improve our budget position and move the department to a more sustainable funding base.

Across each of these benefit areas consistency is a key underpinning feature. Consistent decision making and standard global processes will improve integrity and also drive efficiency benefits. Consistent client service experience will drive improved satisfaction across all client groups.

As part of the transformation journey, the department has also developed a new business operating model and established a network of global managers. For the first time in the department’s history, client service delivery is being managed end-to-end, in one group. This is delivering a better and more consistent client experience, while harnessing synergies across different programs to maximise efficiencies.

As the transformation is implemented now and over the coming years, the department will continue to focus on improving the way we deliver our services to all clients and ensuring that the client is placed at the centre of all our work.

### 4.2 Client Services Transformation Strategy

The Client Services Transformation Strategy (CSTS) sets out a long-term vision for client service delivery reform for the department and includes a series of initiatives to deliver on our commitment to client services and integrity, while improving our efficiency and consistency.

The multi-year strategy will deliver globally integrated and enhanced services to our clients, maintain the integrity of the migration program and contribute to Australia’s economic growth and prosperity.

The overall aim of the CSTS is to shift client enquiries from higher cost channels (for example, counter services) to lower cost ones (for example, eBusiness) by expanding, simplifying and increasing the integrity of the department’s electronic processing environment.

The CSTS is underpinned by four goals, to:

- improve our client service performance

- deliver services more efficiently and effectively
- increase the integrity, decision accuracy and consistency in our programs, and
- achieve global process consistency.

The CSTS aims to rebalance activity across and within channels to focus staff on core activities by:

- migrating simple enquiries and activities to electronic channels, client self-help tools and service centres
- capturing biometrics and eliminating paper processing through the use of service delivery partners
- migrating processing of lower risk products and cases onshore to centralised locations
- focusing offshore staff on sensitive and integrity-related activities requiring proximity to clients and/or local knowledge.

The strategy encompasses four major initiatives— enhanced electronic lodgement and online self-help channels (eBusiness), expansion of service delivery partner arrangements, expansion of the role of our service centres and changes to where we do our work (work placement).

#### **4.2.1 eBusiness**

The eBusiness vision is to ensure that the global online and digital channel strategy delivers the organisational capability to be flexible, responsive and adaptive to client and stakeholder needs while upholding integrity. This will create a global client service with more accessible online services and information, giving clients more choice through sophisticated functions with improved consistency.

This vision will be achieved through the provision and promotion of innovative client self-service tools and services that make relevant information, services, transactions and assistance available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through a range of digital mediums.

The strategy aims to deliver innovation in client service, built on integrity, to foster and promote client relationships while providing efficient and effective service delivery. The strategy incorporates multiple improvements (for example, web redesign, content management and online accounts with advances towards digitised workloads, improved document management and new communication media) to improve our client relationship and address some of our challenges.

The strategy has been developed by building on existing products, identifying key areas within each client service channel and ultimately improving the client experience. It covers all electronic channels for client interaction across all the client lifecycle stages – including upfront queries on product selection, application lodgement, post-lodgement status checks, and notification of upcoming status changes (for example, visa expiry). In the future, clients can expect to be offered a comprehensive suite of electronic based products across all stages of their interaction with the department.

Web 2.0 technologies are integral to the government's objectives, including public sector reform, innovation and using the national investment in broadband to achieve an informed, connected and democratic community<sup>9</sup>. The use of social media technology is a key component of the CSTS eBusiness strategy will enable proactive and strategic communication and engagement with our clients especially at key life cycle points.

#### **4.2.2 Service delivery partners**

Expanding and improving our service delivery partner arrangements will allow the department to streamline current business processes and focus on more complex work by shifting transactional

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/govresponse20report/index.html>

work (such as receipting, data entry, etc) to outsourced arrangements. It will also improve client access to DIAC services, by extending the department's service points to more locations.

Historically, the department has deployed service delivery partners (SDPs) as an alternative channel for clients to lodge their applications in limited locations only, either to meet high local demand for the department's products and services or to address security concerns in specific locations where access to Australian missions needs to be restricted.

The relationship clients may have with SDPs varies across the globe, dependent on geography, volume of activity, the range of services provided to clients and the range of services provided to the department.

As the department implements the CSTS, SDPs will be critical in filling key gaps that emerge. These include conversion of paper applications to an electronic format where clients are either unable or unwilling to use electronic lodgement tools and biometric collection for visa applications where it is not desirable or cost effective to have clients visit departmental offices.

The rollout of offshore biometrics collection is being phased in as part of an Australian Government initiative to introduce biometrics collection into the offshore visa application process. Under the program, all clients who lodge paper-based visa applications at designated locations around the world will have to provide biometric data such as fingerprints and digital facial image, regardless of nationality. Biometrics is an important tool in the fight against identity crime and is rapidly becoming a mainstream part of identity management processes globally.

SDPs will also expand the department's geographic footprint through increased global reach. Onshore, this may mean other government agencies undertake business on behalf of the department. Utilising the government's existing investment in this network means we will be better equipped to cater for people in regional and remote areas. This could be extended to Government Business Enterprises, which also have the ability to provide secure services.

Offshore, SDPs will maximise staff efficiency by reducing low value client contact and transaction processing and extending reach cost effectively. Co-deployment of SDPs with other countries may allow reduced cost by using services already in place, as well as provide a utilisation benefit for existing SDP services by opening these up to other countries.

The importance of providing a consistent set of services allows the performance of SDPs to be compared and evaluated, improves the client experience and the integrity of our operation.

### **4.2.3 Service centres**

The service centre vision is to build a globally integrated service centre network that delivers multi-channel support, consistent information and expanded range of services in a timely manner.

The long-term aims are for a globally integrated network (or virtual global network) that seamlessly links service centres across several time zones and geographic areas through global call routing, enabling the department:

- to handle peak times effectively by drawing on staff across multiple locations
- to tailor the hours of operation using centres in different time zones.

Historically, the department's contact centre operations have been both geographically and functionally dispersed. Geographically, formal contact centres operate in three locations onshore and three offshore, as well as informal centres in other locations. Functionally, calls are received through formal contact centres, informal contact centres in all offshore posts and through case officers directly

responding to client queries. The dispersed nature of these current operations, and inconsistent information and service offerings across geographies and across client lifecycle contribute to inefficient contact centre operations. A large number of routine client contact activities could be handled by more mature self-service channels.

To address the current operational and client service issues, service centres will become the secondary point of contact for the department, after the web, providing quality, accurate and consistent information regardless of location, agent or channel (for example, phone, email, sms).

The role of service centres will be expanded, increasing first contact resolution, improving the client experience and reducing the level of enquiries handled by case officers, assisting in the development of the client relationship. Service centres will promote online channels and decision ready applications, and support clients who wish to self-service.

A single global knowledge management system will be developed to provide comprehensive, current, accessible and easy to understand information to service centre staff, ensuring consistent information is provided to all clients. This will be supported by improved online content and uniform agent training.

Expanded implementation of queue management through interactive voice response systems as well as improved management of hand-offs to case officers and specialist agents will also ensure that clients are able to speak with an agent or case officer with the skills to handle their specific enquiry.

The transformation of the department's service centre network will lead to improved integrity and consistency, increased efficiency, and improved client service.

#### **4.2.4 Work placement and risk analysis**

A major initiative of the strategy is looking at where we do our work (known as work placement). This is in light of the reduced need for face-to-face client service as we enhance other service channels such as service delivery partner arrangements, online services and service centre functions.


The main principle of work placement is to balance integrity, client service excellence and resource efficiency – centralising low to medium risk workloads and decentralising high risk clients and workloads.

A review of where visa and citizenship processing is being undertaken, to allow applications to be processed in the most appropriate location, be flexible in where electronic work is performed as the demand for DIAC services change, improve the integrity and consistency in the application assessment process, reduce operational costs and refocus resources to core decision making activities for higher risk activities.

Work placement aims to improve integrity, responsiveness, agility, client service excellence, and efficiency. Onshore it is focused on centralising high volume, low to medium risk caseloads to drive service consistency and efficiency. Globally it is focused on decentralising the processing of high risk and/or high touch clients.

The principles which guide work placement are:

- centralised processing is preferable to decentralised processing when the degree of client contact and need for specific local knowledge is low
- where processing can be centralised it should be brought onshore, where this makes sense
- centralised onshore processing of products should be to a limited number of locations.



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Work placement is supported by the drive to improve and increase usage of online services for clients.

Establishing strong analytical capabilities to define risk profiles will drive the risk tiering of caseloads, and enable decisions about where work is done and where automation can be used to reduce the cost of processing.



## 5. Future view: client, context and convergence

The Client Services Transformation Strategy sets in place a transformed service delivery operating model over the coming five to seven years. But this is not about a singular strategy and a singular implementation.

Fundamentally, the strategy is about setting in place the environment, capability and rhythm of service delivery innovation to progressively enhance service delivery for our clients. It also opportunistically positions the department to leverage new capabilities, technologies and social trends.

Service delivery innovation is made possible through the convergence of social trends, standards and commoditisation of services and devices.

Given the service delivery history presented in this paper which tracks our history and service delivery innovation, the following are reflections of possible electronic service delivery futures.

This is not saying that this is what the department or even the Australian Government will be doing in the future, and certainly is not policy or strategy at this point.

The most profound change occurs where services and service delivery access is commoditised, miniaturised and accessed seamlessly – and in our every day interactions this is what we are seeing with the convergence of standards, platforms, and devices. Think about mobile technology where the handset – the mobile phone for example – is a data terminal for the capture of data (such as photos), the execution of transactions (such as mobile banking and mobile payments) and collaboration with friends and community interest groups.

What does this say about the kaleidoscope of services, service innovation, service delivery, and how, where and when services are consumed? What does this say about the changing expectations and demands of customers? And what does this mean for the way in which government delivers services, and the expectation of people interacting with government?

The first thing is that interoperability and standards drives and gives rise to a whole range of service futures – both from the service consumer perspective of clients interacting with government, as well as from the service delivery perspective of both government agencies and service delivery partners delivering services. Obviously, given the spectrum of immigration clients and environments that our services are both delivered and consumed in – there is no one size fits all. Indeed we are witnessing a change in the way people are seeking to access information and services. The question is, is this a watershed?

### 5.1 Future service delivery scenarios

Could YouTube, twitter, podcasts, Wikipedia, and mini applications such as iphone apps be considered – or even be – serious service delivery channels?

Yes, and they already are.

In the commercial world, there is a strong application of social networking technologies such as Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) to collaboration and service delivery to customers.

Social networking presents some significant service delivery opportunities for governments. But first, the case of Orange, the UK mobile phone company is an enlightening example of how these technologies are utilised by both customers and the organisation.

In the Orange case, a customer purchased an Orange mobile phone and a Bluetooth earpiece (which was not an Orange product). The customer had trouble getting the phone and the earpiece to work together – although he had read both the user manuals about how each individual product worked, he could not find how to make the products work together.

The customer posted his frustrations on Facebook and Twitter – which was read and passed on by his friends to the broader network. Very quickly several responses were received from people who had experienced the same problem with the same products – the suggested approach worked and the customer got the phone working with the earpiece.

Orange became aware that customers were using Facebook and Twitter in this way – this was not only an issue for the protection of the brand but also seen as a customer service and retention issue. Orange now uses key words to systematically search Facebook and Twitter. Discussion threads that reveal product issues are used to update the frequently asked questions on the Orange site, provide feedback into sales training, and enhance product research and development.

Orange also has a Facebook site and Twitter account. Now, when customers post similar discussions or frustrations regarding Orange products, then Orange automatically post a response. Furthermore, if queries (for which there is not an answer) come through the Orange call centre, the call centre operator can post a query on Facebook and Twitter. The Orange products and services knowledge database is updated from all sources and is used to communicate through all channels, including the social networking channels.

Can you imagine a future, where a government client poses a question about what to do and where to go – not knowing or needing to know that the question potentially involved multiple levels of government and contracted or private service delivery partners? Can you imagine the client posing such a question in their own language, and for that question to be seen in other languages and responses made back in the clients own language or in any language?

Can you imagine a government agency or service delivery partner similarly posing such a question? Obviously, searching for information and services does not involve the secure exchange of confidential information – but the search process can be time consuming and resource intensive for both the client and the service delivery agency or partner. However, the secure exchange of information and interoperability of services is similarly made possible through the adoption of standards and mobile banking is a case in point.

And what about YouTube? As we have seen, YouTube has become a very effective communication channel for the department and is a key part of our social networking strategy in enriching the relationship with our clients. We are also seeing other innovative examples of how government is using YouTube.

The Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States has an entire presence on YouTube. This is not just videos on YouTube. On this site, the government services have been developed as widgets – these government widgets are customized, moveable shareable mini applications which provide real time updates to government information such as lottery results and storm warnings – and automatically delivered to the customer's personal web page and embedded in various social networking sites and devices such as mobile phones.

So, this causes us to not only think about the changing relationship with clients but to think innovatively and reconsider the very fabric of service delivery. In this instance is YouTube a channel – a service delivery platform, a presence, or a repository of consumable moveable government services?

The paradigm change is that the client's interface with government is not only the government's web site but via their own web site or social networking site or device through the widget.

There is also Wikipedia. Could Govpedia be a next iteration of electronic government service delivery? We are already seeing in blogs contributions from subject matter experts who, whilst they may not identify their professional qualifications, demonstrate that they are authoritative sources on the subject that they blog about.

Podcasting and Syndication differentiate internet access as we have previously known it, just as syndicated content of traditional media gave access to print media, radio and television broadcasts to a wider audience decades ago. Episodic release of content to many simultaneous users at multiple other sites than the hosting website offer a new paradigm for government to truly engage with people. Govnet broadcasting is an alternative to a digital gov tv channel and challenges the marketplace of the future.

3-D barcodes embedding a hyperlink to a web page accessed via a mobile device shift the paradigm even further. Benefits move from bringing supply chain style faster, more reliable and cheaper processes into a new realm for government. Richer and more targeted service offers, leading to better outcomes, is a real opportunity for government right now and will only intensify in the future.

The commoditisation of services, the development of miniaturised government apps or widgets and the imbedding of these widgets in government websites, personal web sites, social media sites, and mobile devices gives rise to a pervasive service delivery ecosystem where the client's context defines the relationship.

## 6. Summary

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is built on a long history of innovation in government service delivery.

Societal expectations of streamlined and personalised service offers to address changing needs continue to evolve. Yet personalisation in itself poses additional challenges. If the people we are dealing with are not citizens, it challenges the current focus on whole of government initiatives to serve them as citizens of a country. Client centric, then, is a context centric relationship and of more resonance in the migration context than citizen centric.

However, this cannot be considered in isolation of the relationship people have with the rest of their world. Emerging technology powerfully enables continued innovation and new standards to be achieved in service delivery. Our service delivery model continues to evolve and adapt to the rhythm of global changes including technological trends.

At the same time we must be cognisant that what is needed today will be vastly different to what is needed tomorrow. The future is not something that we get to in five years time – progressively every quarter, every year – the transformation unfolds. So to do the risks, challenges and opportunities that will shape our environment, and therefore our response. “Business as usual” is no longer an option.