

**ICA 39<sup>th</sup> Conference  
ICA Session Five**

**CONNECTING GOVERNMENT:  
A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH**

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I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity to speak to you because it is a really excellent opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and where we are going. As I listened to Alan Webber speak I almost thought I didn't have to speak today because he has virtually given an equivalent of our presentation. In 1999 the Australian government announced its government online. In 1999 we announced our government online strategy. In February 2002 we declared victory on our government online strategy with some 1600 services online. In November 2002 we announced our Better Services Better Government strategy. We laid down some principles for e-Government and we established some new government mechanisms. It is the end of 2005 and we are about to announce our new government strategy.

So what will we say we have achieved? And where will we say we are going? Larry Caffrey used an analogy yesterday to do with driving licences, I am in the Alps, well at least Alps from an Australian perspective, from a kind of mountaineering analogy. We've said that we've reached base camp and that we want to try and move towards the summit. We know this mountain, we've tried it before. In the Australian history context we have 3 levels of government: we are a federation. We've tried abolishing one level of government, we've tried consolidating levels of government, we've tried consolidating agencies, none of these things have really worked. We've always been defeated by the climatic conditions as we have tried to get these things together. But, we are looking again at connecting government because we have, as a result of our climb to base camp with e-Government, a new set of tool kits around the digital economy. Professor Patrick Dunlavy in his new book has said "we are in the digital age – we are not on the way to the digital age but we have actually passed the tipping point of the digital economy and the digital age". And if you think about what we do in the way we do things, either in the works sense or in society, I think there is a strong argument to make that claim. It doesn't mean, as in any revolution, that old processes are not still part of what we do but that the way we predominately operate and the way we predominately interact is in the digital way.

So from an Australian perspective, why would we say we have reached base camp? We have a whole of government secure connection, we have a whole of government financial systems, we have 100% electronic payments for our businesses, we have transactional services electronically provided by every government, we have electronic files, we have electronic payment systems, we use email, we have authentication frameworks, we have electronic signature frameworks, we have cross-recognition frameworks and we have government structures. So from our perspective I think we would like to mount a case that we have designed the peaks that we need. They are roughly in the right places and they are roughly operational. That doesn't mean that we can't do them better, that there isn't version 2, or version 3 or version 4 but we would argue that they are there. From a supply side the building blocks are in place. But what about a demand side? Well, I think the Danish experience and the Australian experiences are very similar. Many of you already embark on national surveys of consumers and how they use e-Government services. We did this last year, in 2004 for the first time across all levels of government. So we asked citizens how do you use Australian government services, state government services and local government services in the one survey. What did they tell us? They said 40% of people have used government services

electronically. We started in 1999; we are at 2005, that's not bad. But it's not as good as the private sector. The private sectors are getting 70-80% hit backs. They told us that telephone is the most preferred means of communication with government. We are using the Internet to inform our telephone conversations, but telephone conversations are still the most preferred means of communicating with government.

So what do the citizens want that we are not providing them? Privacy and security? Its important but its not critical, its not the key thing. What are they telling us? Bit different to Denmark but similar; they are saying we want responsiveness, we want accountability, we want interaction and we want distributive services. And we don't think that the Internet is giving it to us. So I think that the initiatives that Sweden outlined yesterday around its robots are really important because what they do is they take some of those key features from the telephone and put them into an electronic service environment, and that is why those kind of services, from my perspective, I think are grabbing the attention and getting people engaged. What is the private sector doing that we're not doing? If you look at the way you engage maybe on a travel, they use what I call blended channels: they are not using multi-channel strategies in the sense that we have an online channel and a counter channel and a telephone channel; they are blending all of those channels in a single transaction, and they're saying at some point in this transaction you're going to go onto the Internet, you are going to find what travel you want to do, you're going to maybe book and pay for it online but we are going to give you an account manager, a transaction manager, around if you get into difficulty you can come and talk to that same people – you don't have to re-establish yourself, its not a black hole. There is a sense, I feel, from the research that we've done that citizens still feel, when they get beyond a simple transaction that the Internet is a bit of a black hole. So if we are going to get that demand up to 60, 70, 80% there are some of the issues we are going to have to deal with on the demand side, we are going to have to get much more sophisticated, much more private sector orientated in the way we deal with things. Part of that is also about connectivity.

So how are we changing as we look to what our new strategy might be or our new business of government? I don't think customer service is an issue any more, I think that's in the kitbag, we all take a customer service approach. If you go to any meeting in any government agency at any level in Australia people are saying, we are concerned about the customer. They might define the customer as a citizen, as an individual, as a client but primarily they are focused on the customer. Connected, open systems, I think that is in the kitbag. I think that most people would say we want to connect across government, we want to connect with the private sector, we want to use private sector agencies as part of our delivery, and we want to have modularised, standardised developments as part of our process.

The really big change for me in 2005/2004 has occurred because we've changed the perspective of the key decision makers around what they want to do. So, in an Australian context in 2004 we produced a report called "Connecting Government". And it was really interesting because for me, I sat on that report and wrote one of the chapters. It was driven by a bunch of secretaries: they were the same secretaries that sit on our information management strategy committee, exactly the same people. And here they were, writing a report on connecting government. There were a couple of differences but primarily it was the same people. When we spoke to them, as part of the CIOC information management strategy committee, we spoke about the need to connect, the need to engage with citizens, the need to change our structures, and they heard with us with their ears, and with their gut. So they knew what we were saying and they knew intuitively that it was what they had to do. When they looked at this as connected government, they took a step to the left, and they looked at these issues totally differently. They heard these issues with their head and with their heart, because they meant something to them that was real. These connected government reports were driven out of policy business decision-makers' view that we weren't doing enough. It was driven by the Bali bombings, it was driven by our indigenous problems, it was driven by our health-scare problems, its continuing to be driven by international examples of crises but

people looked at those issues differently. So what happened in Australia this year, in my view and there will be others in Australia that would say, mmm maybe, but in my opinion we have reached the switching point. The business people are in the driver's seat. They have taken ownership of the issues and they took ownership of the issues because they considered them in their own context, in their own realities and not in the realities of a technology agenda. Technology is still seen as enabling those issues but they are not the main driver.

I just like to use a couple of examples that would articulate to you why I think this is happening and what is the role of the GMO and CIO councils in this kind of environment. The national data network – this goal is to create an access for a national database of research databases. Its driven by the bureau of statistics it will combine geo spatial data networks across all Australian government bodies so with a single enquiry you will be able to access all Australian research. And this national data network, the role of GMO is to basically to assist with the same kinds of things Alan spoke about. Getting the meda data standards right, getting the techno interoperability standards right, but the real issue is around the business processes in the custodial issues around custodial data networks and when data can be released and when it can't be released and how that will operate interoperately amongst the business groups.

But where in the background we have a seat at the table but we are not driving it. The bureau of stats is driving it with the other research bodies.

Health connect, most of you are doing something similar here. We have a council for straying governments which is leading health ministers to deliver electronic patient records together with the Australian medical association and to improve remote and regional health services and tele-medicine services and smart card initiatives. There is a series of trials operating all over Australia and the pace of interoperability hasn't been fast enough. So what they have done is establish a new body, its not the government CIO office, it's the national electronic health transaction authority to try and speed up the interoperability to work with that cluster of health officials because of the politics of the health market is such that you can't do it from outside the health sector. We work to ensure that the standards developed in the health sector are interoperable with the standards developed elsewhere, but it's a health initiative. May of you are doing the same thing.

Medicare smart card. This is again, I think the EU has a similar initiative around health insurance driven from different political imperatives but we have in Australia at the moment trials for Medicare health insurance smart card. But we are considering at the moment is should we do more, should we do that from the whole of government perspective. At the moment we issue something like twenty-three government cards whether you are a disabled veteran, single mother, pensioner, old age you get different cards. So what we are saying is well if we issue a government smart card for health insurance should it actually be a government services card and should it be backed up by a single enrolment process.

So who's sitting at that table? Is it the CIO's? Not a one, just ourselves representing the ICT sector. Everybody else who sits at that table that's creates the business case is a business person, from the Attorney General through to the community services agencies, we're there to enable and to ensure what is selected is interoperable covers off the standards and can be sustained over time. I think the key for us about the business of government is that crisis has acted as a catalyst for change in Australia. As we go forward we are going to have many of the same tool kits that we had for e-Government, but we are not sitting at a separate table. We, like the private sector, are at the table but we are not the driver in terms of the Forrester presentation. We are the enabler of what the business wants to do, and what they want to do is to be customer focused and to be connected from the supply side. We will continue to build on the building blocks that we had before. From the demand side we will know when we get it right if people are using the services. Thank you.