



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Administration

Australian Government Information Management Office

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Anniversary Seminar

*“Maintaining accountability and transparency in
e-government”*

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SLIDE 1

- Ladies and gentlemen it gives me great pleasure to be here today as a representative of the Department Finance and Administration from the Australian Government Information Management Office to speak with you on the work AGIMO is doing to ensure accountability and transparency are at the forefront of our drive towards e-Government.
- In 2006 AGIMO launched the Australian e-Government Strategy – *Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda*.

SLIDE 2

- This strategy supports the Government's online engagement with citizens and is being implemented
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by AGIMO in conjunction with departments and agencies.

- Since its launch, significant progress has been made towards achieving the priorities of the Strategy, which include:
 - meeting users' needs;
 - building connected service delivery;
 - achieving value for money, and
 - enhancing public sector capability.

 - Progress towards these priorities has can be seen both in policy, such as AGIMO's various frameworks guiding the government's ICT development, and in practice through the many e-government initiatives implemented by Australian Government agencies.
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- Accountability and transparency in e-government is essential if we are going to gain, and maintain, the trust of citizens when they access services online and conduct transactions with government in the electronic domain.
 - This citizen trust in the end will determine the success of e-government in Australia.
 - Today I'd like to touch on three major spheres within the drive towards e-government where accountability and transparency are essential. They are the AGOSP, interoperability, and ICT investment.
 - The Australian Government Online Service Point or AGOSP is one of AGIMO's major projects and will significantly increase the online interaction that will be possible between citizens and government.
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SLIDE 3

- Since it's inception in 2001 *australia.gov.au* has gone through many guises.
- AGOSP will transform it into the central access point for government services and provide citizens with the capability to find information and carry out transactions in one place.

SLIDE 4

- A single sign-on capability will enable citizens to link their existing government online accounts with their *australia.gov.au* account, and will allow citizens to move between websites and transactions without needing to constantly reconfirm their identity.

SLIDE 5

- It will link citizens to personalised information and transactional services from across the Australian Government, and provide simple, convenient access to online information and services provided by all Australian Government agencies for citizens.

SLIDE 6

- The enhanced online service point is about creating choice for citizens. They should be able to choose their preferred method of contact with government.
- However this ease of interaction creates a great need to ensure the processes conducted through *australia.gov.au* are transparent and accountable.

SLIDE 7

- I would like to mention that there will be no requirement for citizens to use or access personal accounts, nor to conduct transactions with the government electronically via *australia.gov.au*.
- But for those that do they must be confident that their details are secure, their privacy is maintained and the transactions they conduct with agencies is done in a manner that facilitates a review process.

SLIDE 8

- In our view interoperability will facilitate accountability and transparency.
 - One of the major enablers of connected government is interoperability and it is fundamental to the success of connected government – the aim for collaborative,
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effective and efficient government and the delivery of seamless government services.

- Interoperability across government facilitates an audit trail, it is imperative that systems be able to “talk” to each other to create this audit trail to facilitate a review process.
 - However, delivering on the vision of connected government relies on the willingness and ability of agencies to collaborate.
 - Active commitment (rather than passive compliance) of the people supporting this collaboration is critical.
 - We have a number of tools to assist us in this endeavour. One of them is the Automated Assistance in Administrative Decision-Making Better Practice Guide.
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- Minister Nairn will be speaking on this in greater detail tonight, and while I don't want to steal his thunder, I will say that this guide seeks to ensure that agencies using computer systems for administrative decision-making purposes adhere to administrative law values during the development and operation of such systems.
 - If we ensure accountability and transparency are in-built into our systems from the ground up they have the potential to actually improve the accuracy and consistency of decision-making processes.
 - Another tool AGIMO will be launching shortly is the Business Process Interoperability Framework.
 - It is the final element of the Australian Government Interoperability Framework and sits alongside the
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Technical and Information Interoperability Frameworks.

- The framework has been developed by AGIMO with the support of Australian Government agencies through a dedicated reference group and the Business Process Transformation Committee.
 - It is a key enabling framework for whole of government business transformation and supports agency adoption of the recently released Australian Government Architecture.
 - The framework's role will be to promote a whole of government approach to the management of business processes and a consistent way of tackling common issues across multiple agencies.
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- Ensuring accountability and transparency while working across multiple agencies and systems or even working across functional boundaries within a single agency requires a significant investment in time and effort from agencies.
- The final area I want to touch on today is ICT investment.

SLIDE 9

- As we work towards delivering e-Government we invest significant amounts into new technology every year.
 - As we do this we must ensure that we not only achieve value for money but that the money we spend actually delivers the outcomes the government needs to improve delivery of services.
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- Rigorous business case planning ensures that ICT investment across government is well planned and managed.
 - Robust business cases improve the delivery of a project's anticipated benefits and reduce the risk of time and cost overruns.
 - Better business cases strengthen the quality of strategic alignment, project planning, financial estimates, and cost benefit and options analysis.
 - They also enable us to ensure accountability and transparency are built into any new systems from the ground up rather than being an add-on at the end of the project.
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- Tools such as AGIMO's ICT Business Case Guide and Template can help agencies to develop business cases with comprehensive cost benefit analysis and more detailed project planning.
 - We have found that agencies that have applied the ICT Business Case Guide and associated tools have realised significant benefits including the development of a common language around investment and business planning.
 - AGIMO released a revised ICT Business Case Guide and Tools for use across government for the 2007-08 Budget cycle.
 - While it was not mandatory for that budget period, it is intended that future budget processes will require the use of the ICT Business Case Guide and Tools
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for all New Policy Proposals with a significant ICT component.

SLIDE 10

- Today I have only briefly touched on a few major areas we must all focus on as we strive to achieve transformation across government and introduce new connected delivery of services and interact with citizens in the manner of their choosing.
 - If we are to succeed in our drive towards e-government we must ensure accountability and transparency are at the top of our agenda, be it policy development, project implementation or service delivery.
 - Thank you and good afternoon.
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