



# Digital Maturity in the Public Sector

## Report & Recommendations

December 2022

# Contents

<a href="#"><u>Introduction to Digital Maturity in the Public Sector</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Summary of Key Findings &amp; Recommendations</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>1. Skills and Hiring</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>2. Delivery Capability</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>3. Data &amp; Cross-Government Platforms</u></a>	17
<a href="#"><u>4. Organisational Capacity</u></a>	20
<a href="#"><u>5. Human-centred Design</u></a>	25
<a href="#"><u>6. Political and Executive Support</u></a>	29
<a href="#"><u>About Code for Australia</u></a>	33

# Introduction to 'Digital Maturity in the Public Sector'

The findings and recommendation contained in this report utilise Code for Australia (CfA)'s Digital Maturity Indicator (DMI) methodology to establish a baseline for evaluating digital maturity across six indicators:

1. Skills and Hiring
2. Delivery Capability
3. Cross-Government Platforms
4. Institutional Capacity
5. Human-centred Design
6. Political Environment

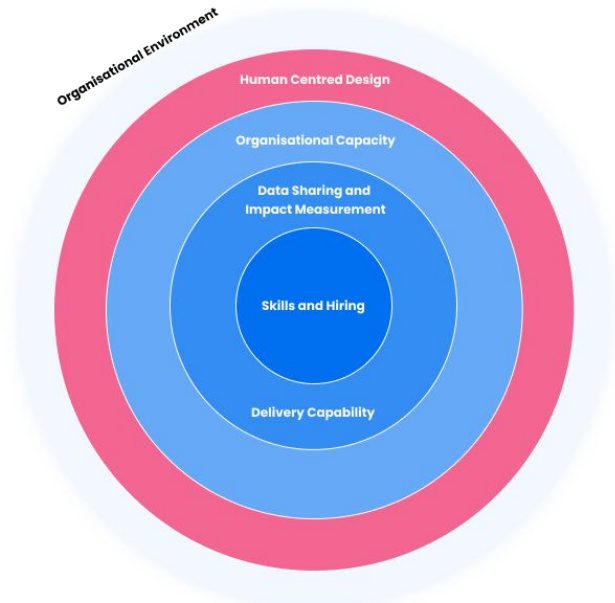
There is an interdependent relationship between the six indicators. Skills and Hiring is at the core, as it is the fundamental component that uplifts practices and enables change across the other indicators. The success of each additional layer is dependent on the layer before it, whilst also having responsibility towards the success of the layer after it. All this functions within the Organisational Environment.

The DMI was developed by Code for Australia in partnership with the NSW Public Service Commission, and is based on research from the Harvard-Kennedy School of Government.

Within this report, CfA has drawn on 8 years of experience partnering on capability building programs with all levels of government across Australia, to inform context, identify trends and recommend tried and tested solutions. The findings and recommendations contained in this report are also based on a recent DMI survey which was open to public sector employees from July - October 2022 and received 53 responses. To view the full list of survey results, [head here](#).

## How to read and utilise this report

This report has been created to support people working in government in growing their organisation's digital capabilities and raising digital maturity. Our recommendations can be leveraged to help build a business case for improvements in government agencies, or to get more impact from modern product management practices in day-to-day delivery.



# Key Findings & Recommendations

Finding	Recommendation
1 Digital skills are often undervalued, for those who already have them and as an option for further training.	Continue to grow digital skills through training and specialised recruitment. Create ways of retaining and accessing digital knowledge within organisations.
2 People's relevant knowledge and experience can't be leveraged if they're not aware of new products or services being developed.	Build digital products collaboratively, involving people across the organisation with citizen participation from the beginning, to ensure diverse input.
3 People want to make good decisions that are backed by evidence, but consistently find inter-departmental data sharing difficult.	Plan to adopt and use shared platforms across departments, and establish clear guidance around secure and ethical data sharing practices.
4 It's a good time for continued digital uplift, with strong sentiment around moving to more digital ways of working, based on momentum established during the pandemic	Keep up the pace of change, growing digital capability and embracing standards, with support from leadership and change management processes.
5 There's strong intent to centre the design of products and services around people and their needs, but a lack of organisational structures to support HCD processes.	Take organisational responsibility to embed Human-centred Design throughout all phases of project planning and delivery.
6 Existing Digital Standards are well established and fit for purpose, but awareness and governance is low.	Celebrate and share learnings from delivery where embracing Digital Standards has improved outcomes.

# 1. Skills and Hiring

This topic is all about people – bringing new people in, making space to grow, learning new skills, and transferring knowledge. It also includes people's attitudes and mindsets about digital ways of working.

Skills and Hiring is at the core of the DMI, as it is the fundamental component that uplifts practices and enables change across the other indicators.

Government agencies are full of people doing amazing work, with great diversity in experience who want to deliver great service to the public. This mindset provides a strong foundation for growth in new capabilities.

Our survey asked questions about digital roles, digital skills training, career paths and organisational support.

## The key themes within Skills and Hiring are:

- [Building digital skills](#)
- [Attracting & engaging staff](#)
- [Knowledge transfer and management](#)
- [Creating digital roles](#)

*“Problems can be identified by good team diversity before they are picked up by the user.”*

# Skills and Hiring

## Building digital skills

Building digital skills with existing staff, including those in 'non-digital' roles and subject-matter experts, allows change and growth to happen from the inside. Staff education and skill development drives improvements in digital maturity, and starting with your existing workforce builds confidence, momentum and capability throughout the organisation.

### Successes:

Many public sector staff have experience in Human-centred Design, Agile and digital collaboration, sometimes from previous roles.

Individual teams are achieving success and defining processes that leadership can champion and replicate throughout their organisations.

### Barriers:

Skills training is often up to individuals to source or attend, resulting in people missing opportunities to learn digital skills and ways of working.

Training sessions or courses are often procured on a generic assessment of organisational capability, resulting in a 'one size fits most' situation. Training opportunities often leave out innovation or digital skills for more experienced practitioners.

Examples from leadership are important to set expectations around digital ways of working. An absence of this modelling can slow progress.

### Recommendations:

**Build skills in specific software and digital tools.** People may not always admit to not being fluent in common tools. Involve staff in learning sessions that demonstrate digital work processes and their value in your context.

**Support grassroots efforts to embrace digital ways of working.** Build momentum around new approaches your teams are already trying with leadership support and advocacy.

**Consider Code for Australia's [Tech for Non Tech](#) program.** It is a safe space to ask questions, learn about technical concepts and build digital fluency.

# Skills and Hiring

## Attracting and engaging staff

Finding, growing and keeping staff in the organisation supports building government-wide expertise. With recent change in the ways people work such as remote and flexible working, as well as a hiring environment impacted by shortages in digital skills – being able to attract and retain staff is vital.

### Successes:

Government has been able to change attitudes and practices around remote and digital work in a short space of time due to necessity. This presents a great opportunity to build on that momentum and continue iterating towards better ways of working.

New staff often bring digital experience from other roles, in particular when they have private sector experience. This can bring fresh perspectives, experiences and growth to teams.

### Barriers:

Organisations can hinder the progress of innovative teams and initiatives, through not providing leadership support. This can drain enthusiasm, lead to staff movement out of the organisation, or disengagement.

Public service salary bands weren't designed with digital practitioners in mind, and typically conflate people management with seniority. This is a recognised challenge that has been targeted for reform.

HR roles often lack digital knowledge and rely on input from other staff. With hiring policies resulting in multiple interviews and long timeframes, this makes sourcing and securing digital talent harder than in competing industries.

### Recommendations:

**Build a pipeline of experienced digital practitioners** to contact proactively when roles that match their interests become available.

**Consider a salary framework that can compensate staff based on their skills,** rather than their time in service or number of reports.

**Set up mentoring programs** to create the best possible environment to onboard and support new staff.

**Continue to encourage tools and processes that support remote working.** Flexibility will continue to be a key decision making factor for candidates.



# Skills and Hiring

## Knowledge transfer and management

Sharing knowledge across an organisation and creating knowledge databases helps build organisational memory and capability. This helps both in accessing lessons learned through previous project delivery, as well as onboarding and context setting for new hires.

### Successes:

Many project teams already reflect informally on 'lessons learnt' during product or service delivery, with a willingness to leverage their experiences in the future. Bringing this knowledge into a formal structure that other teams can benefit from is an obvious next step.

### Barriers

While many staff are very capable onboarding new people to digital tools and processes, others are less confident. Understanding the reasons and methods behind established processes and tools is a good test of training and knowledge, and over 25% of respondents felt they could explain digital tools and processes "sometimes", while fewer than 10% said "rarely" or "never".

### Recommendations

**Build in knowledge transfer from digital contractors and consultants.** Codify documentation handover, training, knowledge transfer and showcases into procurement contracts and allow internal staff to shadow and learn from their processes.

**Create a database of knowledge, 'lessons learned' and how-to guides** that any member of staff can access and query. A self-service resource will allow teams to draw from established knowledge and avoid duplication of effort or repeating mistakes.

# Skills and Hiring

## Creating digital roles

Creating specialised digital roles recognises the importance and weight to digital skills. Building organisational digital maturity starts with people first – and hiring for defined digital roles will accelerate changes in ways of working and organisational capacity.

### Successes:

Digital roles do exist at all levels of Government, and we heard from many people in specialised digital roles.. Continuing to support digital roles ensures people with relevant skills can influence delivery process and policy.

### Barriers:

A lack of budget is a common reason for not hiring digital roles. However, the risk of not building internal expertise, the cost of external consultants or time lost for procurement should all be considered when weighing this up.

Relying on contractors or consultants for digital typically means that knowledge isn't transferred and digital skills aren't grown within your organisation.

Not having clear Product Owner roles (responsible for both business and user needs) can mean that no one has the mandate to iterate digital products and services towards successful outcomes.

### Recommendations:

**Plan for hiring staff in digital roles, and building digital skills with current staff.** [Some examples of relevant digital roles are available from the DTA here.](#)

**Consider Code for Australia's self-led course on [Managing Digital Projects](#).** This course builds Product Management and Ownership skills, and helps participants advocate for Agile Delivery and Human-centred Design.

# 2. Delivery Capability

Delivery Capability measures the ease of access to tools that people need to carry out their work effectively. It also considers how knowledge and learnings are shared between teams or agencies. In addition, it looks at improving solutions or services through testing them while they're being built.

It contributes to digital maturity in a number of ways:

- through making sure the right solution is being built for the problem,
- the degree to which people are enabled to use effective tools,
- and whether knowledge is being cross-fertilised to reduce reinvention on the same topic.

Finally, consideration of Accessibility is included, to make digital services available to all who need them.

The survey asked questions about digital tools, cross-team communication, prototyping, and accessibility.

## The key themes within Delivery Capability are:

- [Technology enables](#)
- [Collaboration reduces duplication](#)
- [Feedback & testing before launch](#)
- [Supporting Accessibility](#)

*“Digital design standards needs better awareness across the public service.”*

# Delivery Capability

## Technology enables

A key point of digital technology is that it enables people to collaborate and communicate. It is best used as an enabler of work, problem solving and service delivery, rather than being 'technology for technology's sake'. If agencies can prioritise the human angle of work, then technology comes in as a support partner, not the main act.

### Successes:

Staff can work remotely, and communication and collaboration is better enabled, through tools such as Teams, SharePoint and visual collaboration apps (eg. Miro, Figma)

Data integrity and version control is better supported when staff are able to use cloud storage edit documents collaboratively.

Even within the constraints of IT policies, over a third (35.2%) of respondents said that the digital tools they needed were available "always" or "often", with a further 44% saying they were "sometimes" available and easy to access.

### Barriers:

Procuring digital tools without also configuring them to address challenges, or for specific needs, can still prevent good work. Getting the most out of digital tools doesn't stop at procuring them, and requires feedback and iteration.

A common fallback for when secure digital sharing doesn't work is non-secure emails. This can be a high risk activity for sensitive information.

### Recommendations:

**Involve staff in user testing and problem identification** for any new digital tools.

**Help people see possibilities around digital collaboration.** Create concrete examples of good communication practices and build capability around emailing, sharing information and collaborating on work.

# Delivery Capability

## Collaboration reduces duplication

Sharing work in progress is about 'working in the open' and sharing lessons learned and successes when developing new products, services and programs. This allows other teams and departments to learn and work more efficiently. It also enables feedback on products in development, to help make them fit for purpose.

### Successes:

Survey respondents showed a strong response of sharing with colleagues outside their direct team, with 94% at least "sometimes" communicating or sharing knowledge. Of that, almost 63% shared work in progress and communication "always" or "often".

### Barriers:

It is often hard to find information from outside your team, or find the right subject matter expert within a large organisation. This can result in duplication of work, not being able to utilise any lessons learnt, and can delay product development or capabilities.

### Recommendations:

**Build knowledge frameworks** (such as a searchable 'lessons learnt' database) to assist in converting experience or documented information into actionable knowledge.

**Build knowledge sharing and regular interaction between departments** to reduce duplication of work and to share good ideas and processes.

# Delivery Capability

## Feedback & testing before launch

Feedback and testing before launch is part of developing successful products and services. It allows products to be refined with real customers or stakeholders, and irons out both technical and design elements before launching.

### Successes:

Survey respondents showed a positive trend that agencies are testing products with users before launch. Almost 40% of survey respondents said their team “always” or “often” tested prototypes, and another 40% “sometimes” carried out testing.

### Barriers:

Silos of roles within teams, with digital roles and non-digital roles working apart from each other, can lead to missed opportunities to share knowledge about user needs or influence policy and business requirements with digital opportunities.

### Recommendations:

**Adopt a development framework for new initiatives** that includes user-testing; building in time and budget to carry out testing and improvements.

**Bring ‘end-users’ & staff into the process early** to identify the scope and problem as well as testing to tune the solution.

**Mandate customisation or configuration options** to ensure sufficient flexibility when procuring software from vendors.

**Encourage sharing of ideas and skills within teams** to bring a diversity of experiences and skills together.

# Delivery Capability

## Supporting Accessibility

Accessibility fills the gaps and tries to remove the barriers for those with disabilities. It is an attribute, rather than a methodology, and focuses on the qualities that make an experience open to all. Accessibility is important when services are customer or citizen-facing, however survey respondents also highlighted examples where accessibility is important within government too.

### Successes:

Over 60% of survey respondents “always” or “often” made sure their products and services were accessible. A further 22% “sometimes” did.

### Barriers:

Existing digital products and services often have accessibility issues. These are also important to fix, as well as building accessibility into new initiatives.

The survey brought up barriers to inclusive and accessible hiring. One case mentioned that the recruitment portal for applicants was not accessible. This presents a challenge in hiring for teams that represent the full spectrum of society.

### Recommendations:

**Refer to the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) for any new digital platforms or initiatives, and in improving existing services.**

**Help staff understand how accessibility benefits all customers, citizens and staff.** Normalise making it part of the core approach for Product Teams

**Assess recruitment processes for accessibility and inclusion.** If gaps exist, consider solutions such as alternative formats for applications and interviews. Consult the community for advice.



# 3. Data & Cross-Government Platforms

Data & Cross-Government Platforms relate to the use and sharing of data between departments. It also measures access to, or creation of, "whole of government" or cross-departmental digital platforms and shared services to address common needs.

These factors contribute to digital maturity by making it easy and safe to share information, and making the delivery and maintenance of technical solutions more efficient and simpler to scale.

The need for collaboration between Departments for pandemi- related reporting has helped accelerate progress in the data sharing space, but progress around shared platforms has slowed in recent years, with the Commonwealth government ending support for a range of exemplar initiatives.

We asked questions around the importance of data for decision making, availability of tools to work with data, sharing of information with other departments, and publishing data.

## The key themes within Data & Cross-Government Platforms are:

- [Evidence-based decisions](#)
- [Effective data & information sharing](#)

# Data & Cross-Government Platforms

## Evidence-based decisions

Using data to drive decisions and improvements helps give an evidence base and make a case for change. Data-led evaluation can improve products and services by helping to quantify outcomes. There is a need for tools to support data storage, analysis and interpretation, as well as building data literacy skills in staff.

### Successes:

The survey showed a positive result for evidence-based decision making. Organisations and teams encouraged the use of data to drive decisions and recommendations “always” or “often” 60% of the time, and 34% “sometimes”.

### Barriers:

Just 30% of survey respondents said they had access to sufficient systems to access and use data. Over 45% of respondents did not have sufficient systems in place to access and use the data they needed for work.

The way data is presented by decision-makers is not always consistent. The origin of data used for decisions can be unclear. Communicating decisions with transparency around data sourcing can help staff understand decisions, and increase buy-in and support.

### Recommendations:

**Build data literacy skills.** With more focus on data-driven decisions, staff may have to interpret and analyse data regardless of their role. Teach data literacy to those who will have to make decisions from data: so they can understand it, query it, analyse it and make a fully-informed decision rather than relying on the face value of data.

**Formalise shared data definitions,** so that data entry, use and communication uses standard, defined words and phrases across government departments and teams, making collaboration easier.

# Data & Cross-Government Platforms

## Effective data & information sharing

Common platforms allow for collaboration, secure sharing of data, and help support data integrity. Helping government work well across and between departments is all about effective data and information sharing, and one way of doing this is through developing and using cross-government platforms.

### Successes:

There's a good willingness and aspirations to make change for the better, and share information to help other teams and departments. Where good relationships exist across departments, good progress, experience sharing and ethical data sharing is enabled.

### Barriers:

Inter-departmental sharing often relies on relationships, so if staff do not have strong ties or relationships across departments, sharing and receiving information, experience or other data can be much more difficult, with not knowing who to contact.

Keeping data secure, and maintaining data integrity is important, and some methods don't support this - such as email - so when no other shared service exists, it limits what can be shared and the trust that data will remain accurate, along with risking data security.

### Recommendations:

**Continue to leverage any shared services** so departments can collaborate easily and securely.

**Raise staff awareness on secure data sharing procedures and methods** for sharing data and information.

**Encourage ethical data sharing:** Communicate the value of sharing data between departments. Identify data sharing champions and make them known.

**Clarify the legislative requirements over sharing data** (what, when, how, whom) and review data permissions regularly or on a project specific basis so staff understand what's possible.

# 4. Organisational Capacity

This indicator helps to measure organisations' ability to carry out new work and adopt different ways of working.

Organisational Capacity looks at budgeting for projects and products and how their performance is evaluated. It is also concerned with the potential for changing ways of working to be more collaborative (including remote and in-office work), data driven, and a process of testing and refining products that are being built.

This is an area that's seen huge growth and change over the past few years, much of it very positive and growing digital capacity. There's great momentum here, recent successes to celebrate, and a new horizon of possibilities to aim for.

The survey asked questions around budgets, governance and attitudes towards shifts to digital ways of working.

## The key themes within Institutional Capacity are:

- [Budget and plan for products, not projects](#)
- [Executive support matters](#)
- [Governance and procurement hindering iterative work](#)

*“The most common types of contracts don't easily allow for truly Agile ways of working – as contracts are safer and more palatable to clients and vendors when you can be clear and detailed about the deliverables and scope, however iterative Agile processes work best when you are most clear about the outcomes, but hold the method and deliverables loosely”*

# Organisational Capacity

## Budget and plan for products, not projects

Reframing digital 'projects' as products helps shift thinking from a time based engagement to a live service. Budgets need to be shifted so more resources and staff are available for continuous, iterative improvement *after* the initial launch.

### Successes:

Over 42% of responses said projects are funded on an ongoing basis "sometimes" or "often". This is an increase from our previous DMI findings and may be reflecting a change from established practices to product management.

### Barriers:

The survey responses showed that 50% of the time, budgets "sometimes" reflected project needs, and 25% "rarely". When budgets don't meet needs, the project often 'finishes' at launch, without sufficient resources to improve it in response to feedback. This limits the product's usefulness, growth and reliability for customers / citizens and staff.

### Recommendations:

#### **Budget for continuous improvement.**

New initiatives should embrace a 'launch and learn' model, based around deployment of an MVP (minimum viable product) solution, with ongoing funding for continuous improvement.

#### **Use change managers to involve staff in new concepts and delivery models.**

Remove the perception of risk from innovation in delivery.

#### **Consider Code for Australia's self-led course on [Managing Digital Projects](#) to**

build product management and ownership skills, Agile Delivery and human-centred design.

# Organisational Capacity

## Executive support matters

Executive support, role modelling and advocacy can help or hinder change. Supporting grassroots initiatives, as well as visible strategic direction and communication, sets the tone for change and impacts how staff take up new ways of working.

### Successes:

Over 60% of survey respondents feel they are involved in a shift to a digital way of working. This is a much stronger result than we've seen in DMI Surveys from before the pandemic.

Over 82% of respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" their organisation should develop a more digital way of working. Attitudes towards digital ways of working often lead the way to change, and organisational readiness. This is a good sign to move on this momentum to bring about change.

The pandemic has positively changed both attitudes and permission to work remotely and digitally.

### Barriers:

Survey respondents mentioned the impact that leadership has. Lack of involvement or ambition strongly impacts the culture and makes change difficult. When there is supportive leadership, digital is made a priority for change, and clear communication, the organisation is much better equipped to try new things and change ways of working.

### Recommendations:

**Lead digital changes through example, with clear communication of organisational support.** Having executive level leadership visibly supporting initiatives helps shape the organisation's response.

**Seize the opportunity provided by the shift to remote work and digital collaboration.** Build on this momentum to continue introducing more digital ways of working.

# Organisational Capacity

## Governance and procurement hindering iterative work

Governance and procurement are widely still structured in ways that reflect traditional project management. Truly embracing digital ways of working will require appropriate governance and procurement processes based around product management concepts. This means a shift from mandatory requirements and fixed deliverables to goals based on outcomes supported by iterative delivery.

### Successes:

Pockets of digital capability and support exist. The survey showed there are teams who are enthusiastically working in digital ways and are digitally enabled and keen to spread this throughout their organisation. However, without support from leadership or policy changes, these teams find it hard to influence the practices of others.

### Barriers:

Traditional models for project governance and vendor procurement are still barriers to working iteratively by default. Tender processes tend towards fixed budgets and predetermined milestones. Continuous improvement and iterative delivery are often seen as risks compared to a fixed budget, timeframe and predetermined deliverables.

### Recommendations:

**Plan for digital methods before you go market.** Business cases are the ideal place to define a delivery approach based around community outcomes, design research and Agile delivery. Templates based around digital approaches are a useful tool for change.

**Use a Discovery phase to centre work around user needs.** Even if you can't get your organisation to commit to iterative delivery, a standalone Discovery phase with requirements to define principles and outcomes for subsequent delivery can help steer things in the right direction.



# 5. Human-centred Design

Human-centred Design is a method of problem solving that can be used in product or service creation.

Human-centred Design actively involves the people will use a product or service in problem identification, product creation, refinement and ongoing improvement. It involves User Experience (UX) design and testing, but goes beyond digital interfaces to people's daily experiences, and is often an ongoing cycle.

It contributes to digital maturity through using research to build the right solutions, finding the right problem to solve, and involving citizens and staff in the process.

The survey asked questions about people's understanding of HCD and its value in their organisation, problem solving methods, and involving end-users, or citizens, from the beginning stages of problem identification.

## The key themes within Human-centred Design are:

- Awareness raising & valuing HCD
- Build, in collaboration with delivery
- Creating a common experience

*“I think we need to redesign the employee and citizen experience for a human-centric way of working and move on from a digital/tech-centric way of working. Human-led, digitally assisted is how we rock-and-roll in our department.”*

# Human-centred Design

## Awareness raising & valuing Human-centred Design (HCD)

Human-centered Design is a methodology for problem solving, and creating products and services that address customer, citizen and staff needs. Through considering the people a product or service is being made for, and involving them in the problem identification, design, and testing, the outcome is more likely to support their needs and deliver effective, well received services.

### Successes:

There's strong awareness of HCD, with 88% of survey respondents agreeing they knew what HCD was and how to implement it when appropriate.

Some teams are using HCD effectively, demonstrating how other teams across the organisation could operate.

### Barriers:

Even with high awareness of HCD, about one third (32.1%) of respondents were "neutral" or "disagreed" that HCD was valued in their team. Without organisational support, people's willingness alone will not be able to operationalise HCD practices.

There are some misconceptions of co-design and HCD as being just 'user testing'. This may be because of time or budget constraints, or phased approaches to delivery that separate design and implementation. For participatory design to succeed it needs to be embedded throughout and supported by iterative delivery.

### Recommendations:

**Structure in time and budget for HCD processes.** Communicate the value it brings as a methodology that is used from the ideation phase (beginning of product / service design) onwards throughout delivery/

**Build awareness that HCD is about problem solving as well as designing the solutions.** Staff in non-digital roles can absolutely use HCD in a variety of contexts.

# Human-centred Design

## Build, in collaboration with delivery

Building, in collaboration with delivery, means using an iterative approach to creating new products and services. It helps organisations get products released as pilots earlier to guide their development to meet real needs, and it helps continually improve them.

### Successes:

There are [some fantastic examples](#) of various departments and teams in the public sector building in collaboration with delivery.

### Barriers:

Some traditional project management or organisational processes go against HCD principles. Where there is a clash between organisational procedures and HCD, it can be hard to realise the benefits of HCD as a problem solving and design methodology.

### Recommendations:

**Create multidisciplinary product teams**, to bring together roles from policy, design, developers, and subject matter experts, so that delivery is informed by many perspectives.

**Release early and often** when building products and digital services, get a beta or MVP launched early as a foundation for feedback and iteration.

# 6. Political and Executive Support

This indicator involves the overall environment that all of the other indicators sit within - the ecosystem of the organisation.

Political and Executive Support is about the degree of support and advocacy given by executive leadership and the degree of political influence over how work is directed. This topic also explores the use of standardised practices when creating digital products and services.

Within this topic is acknowledgement that government is constantly adjusting to new priorities and leadership, and aims to operate within these conditions with the right support and structural preparedness.

The survey contained questions around executive & leadership support and advocacy, government priorities, and digital design standards.

## The key themes within Political and Executive Support are:

- [Supporting digital standards through governance](#)
- [Building agility to respond to political changes](#)

*“Top down advocacy is essential to best practice.”*

# Political and Executive Support

## Supporting digital standards through governance

Design and Digital Service Standards are a powerful tool for applying good practices across digital delivery. But in the absence of sector-wide mandates, there is a reliance on leadership to recommend their use and operationalise compliance across individual organisations.

### Successes:

Over half of survey respondents (54.3%) said their organisation “always” or “often” had visible executive support and backing for projects. A further 35.6% “sometimes” showed visible support.

Over 80% of survey respondents were aware of digital design standards. Over 40% of respondents used digital design standards “always” or “often”.

### Barriers:

While there is awareness and in some teams intent to follow best practices, we hear of challenges due to timeframes, budgets or lack of leadership support.

### Recommendations:

**Don't just recommend the use of standards, audit and report on their application.** This could be as simple as adding a compliance checklist to existing project governance, or formalised and shared in public.

# Political and Executive Support

## Building agility to better respond to political changes

Disruption from political and legislative change is a reality across the public service – whether as a result of unexpected global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, or “business as usual” events like caretaker periods and machinery of government changes around election cycles. Embedding good digital practices across an organisation builds resilience and adaptability when operating in this environment.

### Successes:

When the pandemic forced a shift to working from home, organisations were able to quickly adapt using technology that was already in use. It’s hard to think of a more dramatic shift in ways of working for public servants and they overwhelmingly embraced the “new normal”.

Pandemic response also required departments to collaborate, share data and spin up new digital services at an unprecedented pace. It wasn’t always easy but the results prove what’s possible.

### Barriers:

Political or government priorities affected over 68% of survey respondents “always” or “often”, and another 18% “sometimes”. This backs up our anecdotal observations and makes a case for more responsive ways of working.

### Recommendations:

**Use methods like HCD, Agile showcases and working in the open**, to build visibility, momentum and buy-in for your work. When priorities shift, that presence and awareness of your work will be of benefit.

**Ship early and often.** By releasing features throughout delivery rather than at the end, you’ll still be able to help your users if timeframes or funding are disrupted by emerging requirements elsewhere.





CODE for  
AUSTRALIA

# About Code for Australia

Code for Australia are a for-purpose organisation, working in collaboration with public sector teams and the tech community to help create a world class digital government.

We've spent the last 7 years helping transform over 80 teams and empowering countless individuals through our programs, educational offerings and research. We believe that meaningful change takes place when people come together to design, develop and deploy solutions that meet everyone's needs.

We run programs that empower governments to tackle social issues and allow the general public to meaningfully contribute to civic change. We also ensure that members of the community that may not often be heard are represented and included.

Code for Australia have also recently launched Future Practice: a new suite of educational offerings designed specifically for public servants, each of which play a role in increasing digital capability.

[Get in touch to find out more about our programs and educational offerings.](#)



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