TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
PUBLIC ADDRESS BY THE CEO OF THE DTA

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NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, PARKES
CANBERRA
WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2017

Dr. Martin Parkinson:

Good morning everyone, and thank you for joining us for what will be, I am sure, a very interesting and entertaining session with Gavin. Now, Gavin is someone who in many ways doesn't fit the mould of your typical new senior executive service or agency head recruit. To begin with, he is not squeamish about cutting corners. By that, what I mean is that he's built his career around figuring out how to reach a desired outcome in the most direct way possible. We've all heard these stories about the data analysts who secretly write code that effectively does their job for them, except much faster, and with less human error. Think the ambition of Wally in the Dilbert cartoons. Sorry, Gavin, it's not really an analogy we might want to push too far.

Well, Gavin has exactly that story. Gavin's first job was as a clerk in his local bank branch, and it wasn't long before his rudimentary two-finger typing skills, which he assures me have increased exponentially, became such a source of frustration that his thoughts turned to technology that might make his mind-numbing and time-consuming job easier. Fast forward to Gavin's role today as head of the DTA, it's really that same concept that we are looking for Gavin and the DTA to implement with us across the service as whole. Excuse me.

There are myriad ways in which technology helps us to do our jobs better, and by extension people increasingly expect their interactions with government to be just as easy and just as fast. They want to get online and register their businesses, lodge their tax return, verify their identity. And they want to do that, as they do if they go to immigration now, they want to move through it quickly and painlessly, and they want to be able to get on with their lives. So, placing the user first, and improving the experience of individuals and business, is one of the primary ambitions we have when we talk about a citizen-centric government, and it's one of the primary ambitions Gavin has for the DTA. He knows, far better than we do, that in today's citizens' online engagement is rising at an exponential pace.

Here's an example that we've probably all heard, but I still think is really illustrative. Twitter launched 11 years ago and took two years to build to a million users. Instagram was launched seven years ago, took 10 weeks to get a million users. We've just seen the launch of a little-known social network platform called Path. It was able to reach the same audience, that is a million users, in 14 days. So, people's expectations of the quality of their online interactions has also gone through the roof. Why shouldn't citizens legitimately expect the same, user-friendly experience from government, that they receive when they deal with companies like Google, Twitter or Instagram?

Gavin's self-confessed obsession with the customer carries over into his ambition to make our jobs as public administrators streamlined as well. We all know that government works in a much tighter fiscal environment than it has in the past. We are consistently being told we have to do more in our business practises, that we have to be more savvy with our business practises, we have to do more with less. We know the challenges that we face, because it's the challenges the Australian community faces, are becoming more and more complex.

Reconciling these two sets of issues: that increasing complexity, and the need to do more with less, really goes to the heart of the DTA's reason for being. Change and disruption, a

change the pace, scale and nature of government work, and as I have said at IPA APS addresses at the end of last year, there is a disturbing tendency in the public sector to believe disruption's happening to other people, and we can go on doing what we have always done. Well, the thing is, we can't. Just as no corner of business is immune, no corner of public administration is immune to this change and disruption. So, the way we, the public sector, public service responds to this challenge, and the way all sectors work together to present a better set of opportunities and interactions for the public, really are going to drive our productivity, our performance, and indeed how citizens and government actually views us as public servants.

Gavin and I are in furious agreement, though, that heading down the digital first pathway, and my mantra of fail fast and decide a pivot and persevere, do not mean throwing caution to the wind. They do not mean throwing good money after bad. Reaching for the closest piece of new-fangled technology will never add value unless you also think about your organisational norms. In other words, when you embark on a big IT project, more often than not, you need to be thinking about what does this mean for how I transform my business? And in fact, you shouldn't start from the ICT end, you should start from the business transformation end, and ask how can ICT help me?

Digital transformation is really about culture. It's about how we transform our selves and the process of transformation, not the end point, because that fixed end point that we see today may not be the fixed end point that we want to see tomorrow or the day after. Now, after three months in the role, it's clear that Gavin has no interest in stepping on the toes or yanking the digital reins of digital departments or agencies. What he's interested in is capacity building, lifting the digital expertise of existing APS staff, and inventing a culture of design thinking in the way we solve problems. He's interested in figuring out where our capability gaps are, and repurposing our talent to help fill them. He is interested in forging closer links with the business world, and learning from the models they use, the way they collect and use data, and the way they put their users, that is their customers, first.

The big four banks, whatever you might think about them in other contexts, are some of our best digital transformation role models, and I have to say I was absolutely thrilled, as chair of the interview panel, to be able to nab someone right from the heart of the big four, and somebody who has an absolute track record in delivering large-scale transformation in response to both digital disruption being imposed on banks, but also in response to changing customer preferences.

As a senior executive at NAB, Gavin delivered a complete overhaul of the bank's technology environment. He re-shaped the bank's business model to better suit the needs of the customer base, and all-up, he's spent three decades working in the financial services sector. That is an amazing set of experiences for us to have, helping us guide the government's own digital agenda.

So, Gavin, after three months of listening, learning, meeting people from across the public service, government, and our stakeholders, you have got a refreshed set of priorities for the DTA, and we are looking forward to hearing them. Colleagues, please join me in welcoming Gavin Slater.

Gavin Slater: Well, good morning everyone, and Martin, thank you for those kind words there. There have been times over the last three months, where I am not sure whether it was good

meeting or not, whether you sold me a pup, but more about that later. Could I extend my welcome and thanks to everyone for turning up. As I said in an address last week, I was surprised people turned up, and I am truly humbled by your attendance, particularly to Rosemary and Catherine. I saw them somewhere in the crowd. They had a big role to play in me coming on board as well, and they have both been terrific in welcoming me into Canberra and helping me settle into my role.

So, with headlines like: DTA All Bark and No Bite; How Not to be a GMO 2.0; DTA Grilling; Exodus of Talent; Tech Screw-ups; Bridges Burnt and Goodwill Diminished, you might wonder why I actually took on this role, and was I of sound mind and body? Well, it all started, really, I think probably about eight months ago with a conversation with Martin. We were introduced, and it was just a casual chat, nothing more and it was a great opportunity that Martin shared with me, the government's ambitions and what government is seeking to achieve, particularly across three core areas, which is, one, how do we continue to drive a transformation programme that encourages and enables actually individuals and businesses to do more digitally, to do more online? Secondly, in doing that, how do we significantly improve the experience for individuals and businesses when dealing with government? And thirdly, and just as importantly, how do we make sure that taxpayers get better bang for buck? The significant amount of money that we spend on their behalf on ICT and related programmes.

So, three really compelling ambitions, and three that made infinite sense to me, and not too dissimilar to what I faced in the private sector, leading NAB's retail bank. At the end of the day, we knew that our customers had a bias for digital. They wanted to be empowered. They wanted to deal with us whenever and however and wherever they chose. They wanted most things, a bias for mobile. So, there was a whole orientation, and it continues to be that for the whole sector. They wanted a better outcome, a better experience as measured by advocacy, and at the same time, our investors who subjected us to a significant amount of scrutiny being a public company, wanted to ensure that they were getting the right return for the investment they were putting into the company. So, a lot of similarities there.

I think what I liked about those ambitions is that they are bipartisan in a world where everything is so political, and as I am learning, I would like to think any government of the day would have these ambitions. They are really important ambitions, acting in the interests of citizens, taxpayers, individuals and businesses. As I went through the interview panel, Rosemary Huxtable and Catherine Campbell, Narita and John Lloyd also played a critical role in convincing me to come on. One of the questions I asked of them through the interview process, was: do you see the need for the DTA? On the basis of everything I read and heard, do you think it is critical? Am I signing up to something worthwhile? They were unequivocal, and deep in their conviction around the need for an agency to work effectively and constructively across what is a very decentralised environment called the public service. That was it for me, and really I got hooked after that and literally couldn't wait to start.

My first three months, it has been all about learning. That's one of the most invigorating things. When you spend 30 years in one sector and that's all you know, you know the players, you know the known unknowns, the said unsaids, the operating rhythm. To come into a new city, a new environment and new people, I find that learning invigorating, if not

painful at times. For those of you that saw my Senates estimates performance, I now know that there are certain dinner invitations I shouldn't accept. In my defence, though, it was only my second week in Canberra, and I was excited, and it was a little bit like, well I took my daughters to the theme parks when they were much younger. They wanted to go on all the rides. All I wanted to do was go on all the rides, but a bit like those roller-coasters, I've been on it once, I don't want to go on it again. So, lesson learned.

But on a more serious note, I have literally had hundreds and hundreds of conversations, and I've had them with purpose, because I have met with ministers, secretaries, dep secs, CIOs, staff, industry, private companies, owners of small companies trying to deal with government, all with the purpose of learning and understanding context and history. I really think it's important one anchors yourself in the journey and the context and the history before you come out and make too many sort of bold predictions and conclusions.

An important outcome of that also has been to repair relationships in many instances and to build new ones. One thing I have learnt over life, in many, many years and many different experiences, is that rank and title doesn't demand respect. Actually, what gets you respect is how you deal with individuals on a human level, having authentic conversations, constructive conversations, fact-based conversations, respecting diverse points of view, different perspectives. That's been a key objective of my approach, is to build those relationships, and I must say, I have been overwhelmed by the warmth and the authenticity and the genuine welcoming that I have received, and if there's one thing, I can leave a legacy of one thing that you point to as the DTA is how we conducted ourselves, and how we engaged with people across the APS and industry more generally.

I've been doing the typical thing that CEOs do. What do you do? You come in, and you restructure. So, I have restructured the agency, but that's really to give us and our staff a greater clarity around what their responsibilities are, and what they're going to be held accountable for. We are now going through a process of recruiting and attracting the right talent, and I am getting close on a few appointments, and I'll be delighted to announce those in the very near future.

As I think about talent, though, what I am looking for: people not only with the track record, and the experience and the expertise, but importantly with the leadership qualities. People that can engage at all levels of government, communicate with influence, and build those relationships that I think are so vitally important. So, what about the priorities of the DTA, and we've landed on five clear priorities, and as I outline them to you, I'd like you to think of them not only as DTA priorities, but our priorities, because in the context of the government's transformation objectives and its ambitions, the DTA alone can't deliver them. We are just one small part of an overall ecosystem, of which all of you are part of, that collectively we need to work on these together.

The first priority for us is developing a really clear, pragmatic roadmap of what the digital transformation should look like, and what we hope to achieve over the next 12 months, and next 24 months. So, what do I mean by that? Well, I think it's important we anchor ourselves in what do we look like today? Of those key transactions, service events, information requests, life journeys that individuals and businesses are dealing with us, at any given moment on any given day, what does that look like across the various channels: voice, physical and digital? What's the pragmatic view of our current digital maturity? Based on that, and recognising that the things we need to focus on should be those that

are most important, most impactful, and, importantly, doable, where would we like to be in 12 months' time? Where would we like to be in 24 months' time?

I think it's really important that we have a little more preciseness around the destination, and something that collectively we can hold ourselves accountable to and measure, but importantly inform investment decisions. We know with the budget guidelines that have just come out, and as I am learning the process, and by the way, this is no different to the private sector, I never went into planning process in the private sector that said, "Ah, by the way you can grow your costs by 10% this year, and don't worry about your revenue." It was always, "Cut your costs, grow your revenue and achieve the impossible." Government's no different. But what that means is, we have to be very thoughtful around how we prioritise and where we place our investments and place our bets. It's a really important piece of work that needs to be done.

But while I am on it, I don't think we do a good enough job, as a general statement, talking about all the good things that do happen. One thing that I have learned coming in, and I knew very little about the government platforms and what I could do online, and I have been going through my own personal path of discovery and signing up to things, and testing things out, there's some terrific examples of innovation and digital progress that's been made, and digital maturity, and I've called some of these out. Last week at an address I gave, I spoke about my tax, and I know there's a bit press going on around outages, but putting that aside for a second, the three and a half million citizens and tax agents can now lodge tax returns online, and that's up from 1.7 million just a couple of years ago.

In the first three weeks, as Chris Jordan will tell you, I think they were up 350,000 returns were lodged in the first three or four weeks of this tax year. And they're continuing to innovate, continuing to use analytics to pre-populate information for us as taxpayers and to use analytics to profile us and to say, well, if you happen to be late with one tax return, but you've been on time for the last 20 years, well, let's not go after you with a sledgehammer. You know, let's have better information, more personal, and make our citizens feel a little bit more valued.

You know, I mentioned some terrific stuff happening in immigration. SmartGates, the fact now that we don't have to fill out these little green forms. I always wondered about those, and I used to change my profession. Can I admit to that? I always wondered if they'd find out. I was a doctor, I was a physician, a nuclear scientist. No, not really. But anyway, I sort of wondered about those forms. But the fact they're coming back in, you know, they're going to abolish the orange forms at some point, and ultimately you won't need your passport. It'll all be through facial recognition. Even on the export side, using analytics to understand, depending on where importers are importing goods from, which countries, which cities, which exporters, have a different risk profile, and therefore all the certification that goes with that in clearing goods, you might sort of adapt based on the risk profile.

MyHealth I think is an excellent piece of innovation. It actually saves lives, that there's 10,000 practitioners now that can access health records. You know, I think there's five million individuals that have registered, and that number will continue to grow. What we do know, that misdiagnosis and lost lives often is attributed to poor record keeping, so something that really facilitates, in my view, a great social outcome is a terrific bit of innovation. Then we've got MyGov, the key citizen, individual-facing platform. There's up to 10 million registered users, almost 300,000 transactions. Charles is in the audience. He'll be

able to give me more accurate stats than that, but I think there are a huge opportunity to continue to leverage that platform, as we think about digitising more services.

I think we do need to sell the good news, and I do think we should be proud of what many people in this room deliver every single day, but clearly there's more to be done. The second priority for us within the DTA is about working with agencies on improving those platforms that I've spoken about. One that we've particularly focused on and we have accountability for is solving for digital identity. I believe there's no such thing as a sliver bullet, but if you wanted to pick a few things that could really unlock value, in terms of the digital experience, it's solving for digital identity, enabling citizens and businesses to identify themselves easily online, and to have their identity authenticated, and not to have to repeat the process time after time after time, and do a little bit online, and then have to go onto Aussie Post or into a Centrelink shop front, and to complete the validation process.

I think this is a really important initiative for all of us, and one that we're pretty excited about, and we're going to be working a lot of the agencies and solving for that. I think it was Alison or Martin referenced the digital service standards. That's something that the DTA has accountability for. It's as much about a standard, but more ... It's a standard, but also it's about a way of working, thinking differently, cross-functional teams, making sure we do the discovery, making sure that what we put out there is accessible.

Really the orientation for us is, I don't want this to be seen as a compliance task. I actually want it to be something that we all embrace and look to move up the curve. So, where are we in terms of our maturity around digital service standards? Are we at a five today? How can we get to a six? How can we get to a seven, rather than you either comply or you don't. So a slight sort of change in emphasis, but really important. Because research shows that if you get this right, you will absolutely ... there's a direct link between that and driving traffic to digital channels and improving the experience.

Websites and content, this gets often mentioned in the context of gov.au. There's absolutely a case for consolidation of landing sites for individuals and businesses. Depending on who you ask, I've heard numbers of anything between 1100 and 1500 different, unique websites, 15 million pages of unique content. What I can confidently say is that that's too many, and there's work to be done. And I think we all recognise that. And I think, for us, working with agencies, and currently we are working with 30 agencies on this, what are the opportunities to consolidate websites, not only do the consolidation, though. Think about how we improve the content and the way information is presented to individuals and businesses.

I'll use an example of my daughter, Laurie. She's delighted that she gets mentioned in speeches, by the way. She's not shy about it. But she's just started working. She's got a job. She's 15 years old, and wanted to know what the minimum wage was. I said, "well, I don't know. Go on the website and find out." And she did, and she's digitally savvy. But you'd be surprised how long it took her to find the right website and go through all the links. Not only that, when she got the information, she couldn't understand it. Now, I know she's my child, and I'm a little biased, but she's pretty intelligent. But anyway, she got the information in the end. I don't know what the outcome is. I've said, "you now need to take it to your boss and have conversation." I think she's still waiting. She still has a job, though, so that's pretty encouraging. But as a real example of, you know, there's always work we can do in this space, and it's important work.

Our third priority, and this is part of the broader mandate of the DTA, is the portfolio monitoring, and the advice that we are now giving government. If you think about it, there's in excess around about $6 billion of taxpayers' money being spent on projects at any point in time. It's really important that we know how they're going. Because what we do know, not everything will go according to plan, and that is life. So it's really important that we know that things are not going to plan, and where they're not going according to plan, and what we're going to do about it.

I think of this, in a little bit, if I was a venture capitalist, and every single one of these projects was a business I had invested in. So if was a fund manager and I'd invested in a range of stocks, I'd do my analysis and I'd want to know which ones were performing and which ones weren't. And to Martin's point, there will be a day when we've started out on something, it seemed like a good idea at the time, and circumstances change. Rather than resolutely just keep going down that pathway, actually having the courage to call it and say we're no longer going to do this, and we're going to shut it down, as opposed to continuing to throw good money after bad money.

What are those other initiatives that, perhaps, are encountering some difficulty and need a little bit of intervention, just to remediate them, and, importantly, what are the opportunities where we can look across the board, finally, and say we've identified five agencies or six agencies working on something that's quite similar? Is there an opportunity to work together on this, to collaborate and leverage platforms, move things into the Cloud, and to provide meaningful insights and advice? And included in this is setting projects up for success, doing the discovery work, doing the prototype, really thinking differently about how to construct business cases before we spend too much money on, I guess what I'd call the power point thinking, and really doing more around don't tell me, show me, to inform our thinking to create better business cases, better decisions, and set these things up for success.

So there's a lot of ongoing data collection, and many of you in the room might be asked for data, but that's why we ask you for the data. Our ambition is to present that in dashboards and play it back to you so you can see the same insights that we're deriving.

Our first priority's all about the transformation or procurement, and this is an ongoing journey. This pre-dates me, obviously, and many of us. But actually, there's this ongoing desire to improve the way we procure services for government. There are a number of dimensions to this. One is negotiating whole of government agreements, and I think this is a great opportunity, and we're working with one at the moment. I must say, I've been delighted by the level of collaboration and participation by CIOs and CFOs of the agencies, with a mindset of saying, "let's not only think about what's good for my agency, but let me think what's good for the whole of government. And let's come together and negotiate better deals, better value for government, and therefore for taxpayers with some of the larger suppliers."

Another aspect of this, though, is really making it easier for small or medium Aussie companies to do business with government. We know this is a contentious issue, and we know it's difficult. I've caught up with a number of owners of companies to find out what it's like. There are some significant barriers to entry, and some of them will be difficult to overcome, but I think we ... at least we need to face into them and try and do something different. Interesting, I think part of it's the mindset. It is quite easy for all of us, when we

have long-established relationships, incumbency, to defer to those and roll those over, and there's often good reason for that. I'm not being critical of that. But I really want to encourage all of us to think about what are those opportunities to give some of these smaller companies a go. It's not an all or nothing approach. Give them a go in a small part of the business and see how they go, or try it out on an agency and see what happens.

What I do know from these small companies, they would rather get a little bit of government business than a grant, because in terms of their evaluation and their being able to finance their business and deal with the banks, their leverage factor is seven times, if they actually have contract with government.

The other aspect for me is transparency, and one of the things I would like to drive is great transparency in the marketplace around what different vendors are charging and their list prices. You think about it in your personal life, you can price compare on just about anything. It doesn't mean that's exactly what you pay in the end. I mean, that's what you negotiate, but allowing vendors to see, and system integrators and everything else, software to service, what others are charging. Now, this might be uncomfortable for some and some of those organisations. But I think transparency is an important enabler in driving competition and increased participation.

The other one is an interesting one, which is all around security. The feedback I get from these organisations is, "we got to get our product certified, we got to get our staff security cleared." And that costs a lot of money. For a small business, sometimes, their prohibitive. I'm still on my learning journey, and I'm not yet sure what the risk parameters are and how we profile different product types, different service categories and all of that. But perhaps there's an opportunity to change our mindset around risk, and make it a little bit easier for these organisations to participate.

And our final priority's all around digital capability uplift. We are the Digital Transformation Agency for the Commonwealth government of Australia, and I think we should behave like that, and what do we bring to the party. One is the training that we are rolling out. We've trained out about 130 people across our agencies around the digital service standards. But I really want to broaden that, and we have a mandate working with ... I think I saw Steph Foster in the crowd ... Working with Steph and a team ... Hi, Steph ... with the APFC around a broader digital capability uplift programme, and what does that look like.

I think there's an amazing opportunity, particularly to participate with the private sector. What would a service catalogue look like, and how could we create a programme, virtual, real, classroom, and a variety of aspects that enable all of us, from the most senior people in the public service to the most junior people, to be able to sign up and go and to learn, what's this thing called digital. Because it's a lot more than programming and building prototypes, it's actually a way of working. It's the way you think, it's the way you approach things, new skills and capabilities. And I think there's much we can do.

We are leading the process for recruiting grads and cadets into the IPS, and I think we have a target of about 200 places we want to fill next year. I caught up with the team last week that are leading this, and they were massively enthusiastic. They said the quality of the young people that we are attracting is simply amazing. So how do we get them into this environment, but, importantly, how do we allow them to grow and thrive and inject new ideas in thinking? So much to be done, but one that I'm particularly excited about, and

linked to that is building innovation labs in the DTA, both here and in Sydney, and to create dedicated work areas where you can send your staff to come in and work on real issues, and at the same time, then, grow skills and capability. The bigger agencies have the resources to do that already, and I'd encourage those to continue to do that. I think any agency, if you're thinking about innovation, create some dedicated space where your staff can go in there and work on real issues in a new way.

So what does that mean? If I sort of take it up a level, more broadly in terms of the government's overall ambitions around improving digital maturity, so channel migration, digital uptake, improving the service outcome and effectiveness of ICT spend, Martin alluded to this a little bit in his opening remarks. Being an economist, I did my research, my discovery work, and knowing who I was meeting, I thought, well, I better come with a formula for my interview because that will get me the job.

So I did come with a formula. Martin will recall this, as will Rasmi and Catherine. I said, "NT plus OO equals EOO," new technology plus old organisation equals an expensive old organisation. And it was a formula that I used when I did a bit of advisory work from about 20 years ago, and I continued to use it, really to make the point, and Martin made this very well: simply replacing old kit with new kit doesn't transform anything. It's got to start with the business transformation, and how you think about the outcomes you want to achieve and why you want to achieve those outcomes, and work back from that. Technology is, obviously, a critical enabler. And when I used to use that formula, the word culture wasn't really that explicit. It was probably more implied.

But, Martin, you'll be pleased to know I have a new formula now: CC plus CT equal VC. So what does that stand for? Well, customer centricity, CC, it's all about the customer. What we do know, across private sector and the public sector, what do we want as individuals, as business owners, comes down to four things. In everything I want to do, I want it to be simple and easy, take the hassle factor out of it. I want it to be safe and secure. I want to be empowered, 24 by seven, I want to be able to get stuff done when I want to do it, how I want to do, wherever I want to do it. And finally, I want to feel valued. In this world of mass digitization, I'm still a human and I still have feelings, I still have emotions. I want you to know me, and I want things to be personalised.

And those four themes, I think, present themselves in all environments. If I'm paying my taxes, I want it to be easy. I want it to be safe and secure. I want to be able to do it Sunday afternoon, if it works for me. And, by the way, when I sign on, gee, it would be helpful if you knew who I was and didn't ask for the same information again, and you can present content. So, just a simple example.

Interesting, I did a bit of research, and there's also research around culture, and the word gets used a lot. But some research, recently, across 40 countries and 60% of cases said that culture was the number one hurdle to affecting meaningful change. And the other interesting part of that research was, there is a disconnect between what us as senior leaders thought was going on and what staff at the more junior levels thought, and often that disconnect.

What I've learned is culture's all about role modelling, and it starts at the very top. At NAB, not a day went by that I didn't think about the customer and the competition. So it was one thing for me to say customers are important, but how did I demonstrate to my staff that I

meant what I said? For me, it was the simple things. Every management meeting I had, I had a customer turn up. Number one on the agenda item, voice of customer, real customers coming in to talk about their business and how they experience NAB so that we could learn.

In the performance metrics, I had my financial metrics that were really important, my people metrics that were really important, and I had my customer metrics. What was our advocacy score, and what was the specific feedback that customers were giving us on how they were experiencing dealing with NAB? So it's all about the role modelling. And I think the challenge for us, as senior leaders, is how do we role model that to our staff in the questions we ask, in our performance reporting, in how we turn up. Don't underestimate the length of the shadow that we all cast, and the vital importance of that role modelling.

So that's the customer-centricity aspect of it. The CT, the connected technology part of it, second part of that equation ... It's all about platforms, ecosystems. At the address I gave a couple of weeks ago, I used Uber as an example, and I use Uber because it's a good example. Notwithstanding, I had someone write back to me and say not to say that what they're doing is illegal ... Anyway, putting that aside, I use Uber, and it's a great experience. But if you think about it, they've taken a maps application, a booking, a reservation application, a payments' application, a customer feedback application, and a driver network established, and a passenger network established, and they've connected it. They've created an ecosystem. And if I compare that to the Melbourne taxi industry ... I could get into trouble for saying that, but anyway, it's a better outcome. And it's their customer centricity that has manifested itself in a way they think about connecting platforms.

Data, though, is where it all comes home. If I think about new ways of thinking and new business models, which is all about this connected technology, I think this is where it really comes home. I think that's something that, for us, I mentioned digital identity, but clearly data is a core component of that. It's pervasive, as we think about it more broadly, as we think about our changed agenda.

I have now read the data, the Productivity Commission Report, which I admitted to not having read a few weeks ago and I got censured by the chairman of the Productivity Commission. So there we go. But I want to read you one key extract: "Extraordinary growth in data generation and usability has enabled a kaleidoscope of new business models, products and insights. Data frameworks and protection, developed prior to sweeping digitization, need reform. This is a global phenomenon, and Australia, to its detriment, is not yet participating."

There's a lot of good stuff in there, and if you haven't read it, you should read it. But basically, what are the points that it's making? A lot of the legislation and the secrecy acts, I guess, our risk tolerances, our mindset and all of that, need to change, unlocking this thing called data. What we do know is that citizens and businesses want their data to be used productively. In the social sense, social media sense, we're far more free with our data. We probably care less. But when it comes to government, there's a natural aversion, as we know. Why do you want this information on me? How are you going to use it? Is it safe and secure? And are you going to use it to my detriment?

So I think there's much that we need to do around the technical aspects of data, and

there's some of these tougher issues that we need to solve around legislation and privacy acts, and our own risk tolerances. We need to lean into that, and I think the DTA would love participate in that with others. But, importantly, I think there's a huge change management task ahead for government, convincing citizens and businesses that this is important and it's to their benefit. This is what we want to change, why we want to change it, and what it means for them. So I'll leave that floating out there.

But I think if you get this customer centricity right, and this platforms, new way of thinking connected, then the conclusion is you create value, the whole value creation. If I think about the government's ambitions and its transformation, ambitions particularly in the context of digitization, there's already good things happening. But if we want to increase the rate of change, for me, it's the customer centricity and that platform piece, bringing those two together will absolutely have direct impact on the rate of change.

In finishing up, the role of the DTA, as I mentioned, these priorities are not ours alone. These are specific areas we will focus on, but we really need your help, and we want to work with you and engage with you productively. And those relationships are really important. I think there's two areas we can help. One is collaboration. I do a lot of swimming, and when I'm swimming up and down lanes, I'm not looking across lanes left and right to see what's going on, I'm just trying to get to the other end. And that's for all of us. We're all busy, and we all have our priorities, and that's natural. I think the DTA can play a really meaningful role in fostering collaboration on those few things that matter: digital identity, whole of government agreements, data, leveraging platforms, just a few half a dozen and working together on those that will have the biggest impact. I think that's one area.

The other one is, I want us to show some leadership as the DTA. I think it's pretty cool, Digital Transformation Agency. My mates think it's great ... Gee, that's an impressive job title. But it is. On a serious note, I want us to behave like the Digital Transformation Agency for the Government of Australia, and bring thought leadership to the table and new perspectives, and encourage new ways of thinking, and lean into a few things like that. That's where I'm at.

If I think about those headlines that I started off with this morning, I don't want to be so bold as to predict what they'll be in future years, other than to say I want them to be positive headlines, that people see the DTA as playing a meaningful and productive role, and a critical role in helping the government achieve its overall digital transformation agendas.

For the people within the DTA, I want to have a culture that's vibrant and fun, but highly accountable, and we work productively with other agencies. And I want a big talent drive. I want to attract the very best people to the DTA, that on your career pathway or the career pathways of your staff you say, you know what, you've got to spend a couple of years in the DTA, you're going to have an opportunity to make a big impact, a disproportionate impact in the context of the size of the agency, and you're going to learn some great skills and great capabilities, and it will be a springboard for future career success.

So thanks for listening. I really appreciate it. And Alison, obviously, we'll have you take questions.

Alison Larkins: So, Gavin, I think, as you can tell from the turnout today, people were eagerly anticipating your first thoughts. And I think we were richly rewarded in that address. And I think people, in reflecting on your first three months, the sense of your collaboration and willingness to engage and listen's been a key feedback that I've been getting.

You didn't really talk about how you found us. So, I wondered if you wanted to start by reflecting on the capability. How have you found capability, where do you think there are strengths, and in your dark drive for talent, what are you going to be looking for that you don't see there at the minute?

Gavin Slater: I found that, and not surprisingly, when you come into a very large organisation, there's no shortage of talent. And I'm not saying ... I say that genuinely. In all interactions that I've had with people at all levels, I found a couple of things. One is, there's a real conviction around why people are here and what they're trying to achieve, and working, really, for the good of the tax base, for the good of the citizens. In a sense, the motivation is there and the intent is there.

As I say, in all the conversations, there's no shortage of talent. There's plenty of talent across the APS. I think the challenge is, and we have this in the private sector as well, is that it's more around how you get alignment. There's so much that needs to be done. The phrase eating an elephant ... Where do you start, one bite at a time. In the context of what government wants to achieve with its digital transformation ambitions, I think the key to it is to say, alright, how do you make meaning of that? What does that really mean? And therefore, what are we going to focus on? What are the most important things, most impactful, doable? And you can get things done regularly, and get greater alignment around those.

So I think it's more of an alignment issue, rather than a talent issue. But what we know in a broader sense, these are shortage of digital skills, generally, across public sector, private sector and just generally. That's a trend that's playing out across all economies in the world. I think that's one of the reasons that I'm so passionate about this capability uplift. I think there's better we can do there.

Question asked by Margo McCarthy, Department of Health

Thanks, Alison. Good morning. Margo McCarthy, Department of Health. I'm responsible for the ageing and age care programme. Thanks, Gavin, for a terrific address.

We're really fortunate to live in a country where people are living much longer, and there's a lot of talk about the challenges associated with that, but not nearly enough about the opportunities. Reflecting on your past and current experience, I'd like to hear your thoughts on connecting older Australians, not only to government services but more generally, and the opportunities that provides us as a nation.

Gavin Slater: Thanks, Margo. I think there's a couple of dimensions to your question. And it's one that we face in the private sector because when you looked at the customer base of a bank, you're going from the very young to the very old. And what we were faced with was proprietary networks, branches, versus call centres, versus digital. Actually, the reality is, it's not either or, it's a combination of both. And people talk about omni-channels or connected channel experience ... The way we thought about it is we had a bias for digital, and particularly for mobile, and we wanted to enable more of our customers to do more online, because all the

feedback we received was that that was their preference. Generally, it was a better experience because it was more predictable, because on one level you're taking out the human element, but not on all things, and I'll come back to that. And they could do it whenever they wanted, and it was really easy and convenient.

That didn't mean, though, that we didn't offer the alternatives, kind of respecting where our customers were in terms of their digital journey. I do think it's a slight misnomer, though, that older people don't like digital. Actually, what I found is that they embrace digital. I think what I found with a lot of ... and I can speak for my mom and dad, they have a real curiosity. Sometimes they're confronted by it, so you got to think about your change of management effort and how you educate and deal with that. But once they're empowered and know how to do it, they're away. I'd encourage all of us as we think about what we're trying to achieve here for citizens and businesses is that we don't think about old as non-digital and young as digital. I think it's the full spectrum.

The other aspect of this, and it's a true story around accessibility. I remember one of the most contentious issues we've always had with branches was every now and then we had to contemplate closing a branch in regional areas. And there was never a popular outcome, as you can understand. I was chatting to a farmer one day on the phone, really trying to explain to her that it's okay. "Look, the branch was only ever open for two hours a week. We're a combination of both Aussie post and online banking, and you'll be alright." In a very direct way, she said, "well, if you can get me internet connection, that would be great."

So my point is there, my serious point is, we can think about digitization and in opening more things, but also we got to also think about it more broadly in the context of remote areas, and making sure that those remote communities actually have access and connectivity to the technology, and access to all of the equipment that's required.

Question asked by Fiona Buffinton, Department of Health:

First of all, thanks for a really inspiring address. As a woman in her 50s who's had a career involved in service delivery and policy, and only two and a half years ago there was this small thing, and it's an aged story, it's My Aged Care, that I came to lead. It's been one of the highlights of my career. And your point on, I think, the fact that all services are turning to a digitised basis, that rather than people seeing the risk, but absolutely seeing the opportunity ... it's something that I've spoken to our grads about, is that everybody who's a grad needs to get involved with a digitised platform early on, because in their career lifetime it's absolutely how we're going to be delivering it.

And your point, again, coming into the world of accelerated design and sprints and so forth, the opportunity that we've taken from using those parts of my division that look after the more digitised platform, as to actually how we're developing our policy. Now, we're using Canben boards where, sort of, talking about what we're going to do, what's our sprint for this six weeks, absolutely using that methodology, which is making us much better as policy makers as well as digital.

That's a comment to thank you for a really inspiring address, and we're really excited that we're part of something bigger than being ... sometimes feeling a bit lonely doing our aspect. So it's not because we're not prepared to be accountable and link up, it's just sometimes unclear.

But can I just ask, now that we're moving to, with the Prime Minister, we're moving to the digital ... In terms of digital, we now have the Cabinet with their Digital Transformation Committee. Do you have any insights on either how they're travelling, what they're looking to? Many of us are now doing pitches to Digital Transformation Committee. We may be using some old methodologies, missing the point, or it's a great opportunity for us to present in a new way. So any insights you might have for DTC?

Gavin Slater: Great, thanks for the feedback and for the question. Yeah, the Digital Transformation Cabinet is a committee of Cabinet. I attended, and it's chaired by the Prime Minister. I attended my first one a few weeks ago in the spirit of learning. I was chased out of the room three times because the first time I had my mobile phone, I had to take that out. Then I got my iPad out, and they said, "no, no, you can't have that in." And then they saw my briefcase and said, "you can't have that in there either." The last time when I walked in, I said to my minister, "should I empty my pockets?" Anyway, he saw he humour in that. But I did eat all the peanuts. It was great.

Back to, sort of, the swing factor, when I was contemplating do I take on this role, don't I, what's the upside, what's the downside ... One of the big positives for me was the Digital Transformation Committee of Cabinet. In discussions with Martin, an opportunity that this is, at the most senior levels of government, it signals that it is a priority, and it's a forum for the government to get a perspective on how things are going across key priorities. As you'd expect, key initiatives that are politically important come up for discussion and updates on how they're going.

So there's good transparency, and I think that's really important. Being able to present a view of how the whole portfolio's going for government, and where things are going well and where things are not going so well, and what plans have been taken to address those. And then it's also an opportunity for agencies to put things up for, in principle, improvement, and there's still a process that has to be followed. I'm looking at Rosemary, who would know this better than me, around, ultimately, how money gets allocated. But it's an important mechanism to really present a case for change and an initiative.

One of the things that we are looking to do, back to that road map, is the work that I mentioned, one of our first priorities ... and we are up against it a little bit around when these things are scheduled and where we are in terms of our maturity of developing it out. But working with agencies to say, well, based on what we know today and our best guess, what do we think the top four, five priorities might be around if there are investment decisions that needed to be made around digitising key services, what would we be recommending, both in terms of big transaction type things, but also key life events. Because I think that end-to-end user journeys, in putting some of those up, they cut across a lot of agencies and don't deal with just one particular part of the transaction, is quite important.

Hopefully that gives you a little bit of an insight into what goes on there.

Question asked by David Hazlehurst, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science:

Hi, Gavin, really rich and inspiring content. Thank you for your remarks. You said a lot about how you're going to engage, and the agency's going to engage with us. But I was wondering about your thoughts about what you need from us, and how we can help you.

Gavin Slater: Thanks, David, and yeah, as I say, I apologise for not mentioning business registries. That's

important, too, and other work. Yeah, I really appreciate the question, David, because engagement is a two-way thing. To have authentic relationships, and constructive, really requires both parties to turn up with the right mindset and focus. So, what I ask of all of you is, firstly, give us feedback. Feedback is a gift. We have a number of forums. We have a CIO forum, we have the so-called DA, turning into the D90-10, which is the CIOs of the major agencies turning up to focus on those things around collaboration that really matter, like digital identity.

For the first ... A, people turning up is good. We've seen improvement in that. But just generally how people turn up, for me, is what matters. And really coming with a mindset of not representing your agency, but representing the government, I think that would be most helpful. It's natural that you come with an agency perspective, and bring that, but at the same time, dial it up and little and say, okay, this is not only about what's in the best interest of my agency and my secretary and my minister. I must have a point of view on something that's to the benefit of whole of government, and ultimately linking back to what we're trying to achieve for individuals and businesses.

Alison Larkins: And on that, I think we have to close. Gavin, thank you so much. I think that's been an incredibly valuable exposition of your journey, and I think we're all excited about working with you and contributing. It's a good question to end on, David's question. Thank you very much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT