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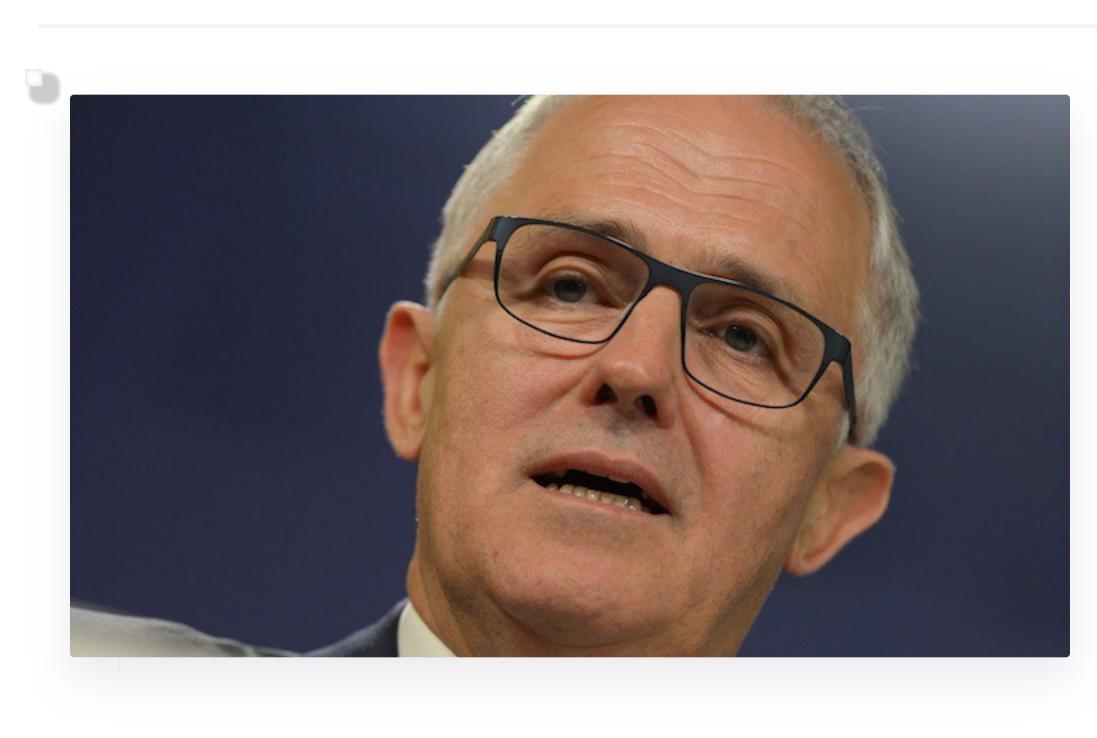
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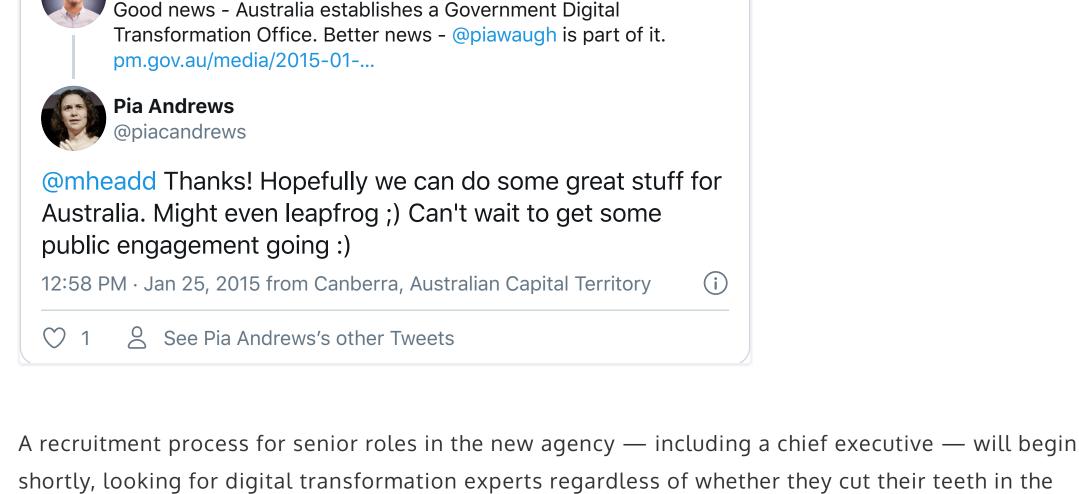
delivery. But it comes with a note of caution from public sector technology advisors that digital transformation is more than just ICT and must go beyond cosmetic front-end development. More details have been released about the Digital Transformation Office, the new Department of Communications unit announced by the Abbott government on Friday. A "small team of developers, designers, researchers and content specialists" will drive the existing myGov digital platform and

bureaucracy exploring innovative uses of data and bringing quality control to online service

Feedback has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic about a new digital "start-up" inside the Canberra

other projects focusing on "end-user needs in developing digital services". Only one name has been attached to the DTO so far — Pia Waugh revealed her involvement on Twitter but little more until administrative details were settled.

Mark Headd @mheadd · Jan 25, 2015



within existing Department of Communications resources.

government agency.

According to the spokesperson:

service arms as it takes on a central agency-like position, assuming responsibility for leading all government ICT investment decisions relating to "citizen-focused digital service delivery", as well as acting as "digital champion" and educator for agencies with limited digital expertise. Australian government chief technology officer John Sheridan deflected questions about his ongoing role today, with a spokesperson from the Department of Finance saying the details are yet to be finalised. The machinery of government change involves no additional funds, with DTO to be financed entirely

public or private sector. Whoever fills those roles will quickly get to know all of government's

A spokesman for Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull told *The Mandarin* there are synergies in the Department of Communications between the digital-by-default ethos and practice that the public have come to expect — seamless interaction with government:

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protecting privacy and security of digital identities. The myGov log-in process — which won the Silver and Collaboration Award at the Excellence in Public Service Management awards last year will be expanded. According to Turnbull's office:

the world are grappling with in the digital space. Are you who you say you are? And

therefore once we've determined that you are who you say you are, we're providing a

One of the primary tasks will be to develop a unitary log-in for government services, while

Turnbull (pictured) said on Friday the unit will "operate more like a start-up" than a traditional

seamless log-in process where that can be duplicated across agencies as opposed to having to do that countless times." The government's vision includes a consistent "look and feel" that meets the needs and

expectations of the user, fewer roadblocks, and digital from start to finish. Turnbull will also direct

the new agency to look at all possible advances in digital service delivery across government.

"That identity assurance space is probably the most significant issue governments around

bit push in the open data space already, so how have we leveraged that data, and how have we leveraged analytics to improve the services we deliver?" Trials of more open data uses will be announced later this year.

"The classic example is going to be how we utilise data. Obviously there's been quite a

"Government agencies will retain responsibility for ICT investment decisions that do not

relate to citizen-focused digital service delivery."

platforms, says advice from Turnbull's office.

in a cluttered nest of process between and across agencies".

A takeover of government ICT?

Communications:

not needed.

But the team at the Department of Finance currently responsible for the whole-of-government ICT perspective don't yet know what remaining role they will have outside procurement. Nor do the team behind myGov at the Department of Human Services know their ongoing involvement with the

project. However, DTO will be responsible for resolving disputes about investment and

So is this a complete takeover of ICT? Not according to a spokesperson at the Department of

other agencies on expanding the service. Human Services senior executive Ben Rimmer was a significant driver of the project before he departed earlier this month for a post as CEO of the City of Melbourne. Former Human Services chief technology architect Marie Johnson says the task at hand is not about digital front end, "in the way that the online and e-gov initiatives of the past decades left the client

Human Services developed myGov for Centrelink, Medicare and other welfare transactions, but it

now includes the Australian Taxation Office's online system. The department had begun engaging

Johnson and UK government technology advisor Dr Jerry Fishenden presented a paper late last year on the digital disruption of government, which advocated for a commission of transformation, like the DTO. They criticised the lack of digital literacy in government agencies such as the Public

Service Commission for failing to even mention the word digital in APS-wide leadership strategies.

The single determinant of the unit's success will be the client experience, Johnson blogged today:

"The focus must be on transformation — not 'digital' — and that means some inconvenient truths will need to be faced about accountability and old structures that are

"The challenge at hand will require a profound understanding of the machinery of

— avoiding years of effort putting digital lipstick on the front end but which doesn't change things." Open data advocate, GovHack national organiser and Link Digital executive director Steven De Costa told *The Mandarin* there is still room for improvement in the public data space as well.

"We need to raise the awareness of bureaucrats how to do good data management, how

to create good data, how to design programs that enable iterative program management

to improve the quality of the programs being undertaken."

government — it is in every respect a complex system, and systems thinking is required.

Knowing the lever points that can change the system – as well as the fossilised structures

that it was "exciting stuff": "Needless to say, you have our heartfelt support. If you need input from us, we'll be

happy to provide it. And if any of your team find yourselves visiting the UK, you'll be

made welcome at our office in Holborn. It will be the least we can do to repay the

summer at the invitation of Minister for Communications Malcolm Turnbull.

hospitality shown to Ben Terrett and Liam Maxwell when they visited Australia last

"Digital transformation is fast becoming an international effort, something we saw clearly

at the D5 summit we hosted in London last December. The Australian team joins others in

Mexico, Israel, the USA, Estonia, Singapore, South Korea and New Zealand — together,

we're building an amazing community of knowledge and experience. The pace of

the Government Digital Service GDS, extended his congratulations to DTO on Monday, blogging

The UK government's Mike Bracken, executive director of Digital in the Cabinet Office and head of

momentum is striking." More at *The Mandarin*: Tale of two countries: the digital disruption of government

About the author



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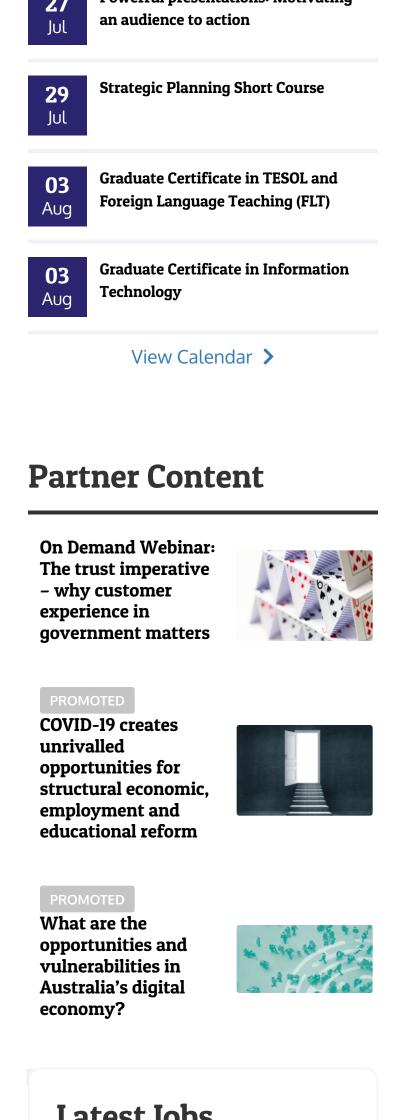
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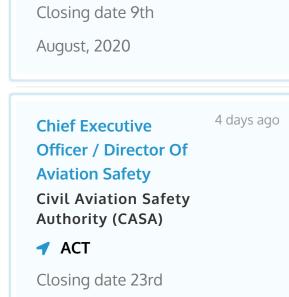
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By Harley Dennett

Washington DC.



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Tags: Department of Communications and the Arts Department of Human Services digital service delivery Digital Transformation Office e-government Malcolm Turnbull myGov

Harley Dennett is editor at *The Mandarin* based in Canberra. He's held communications roles in the New

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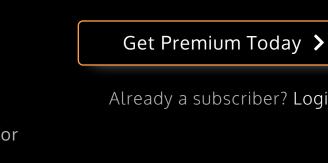
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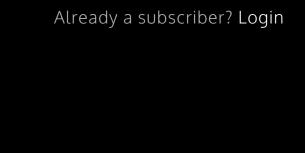
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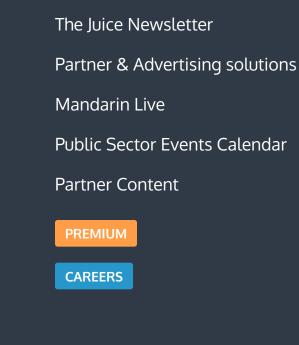


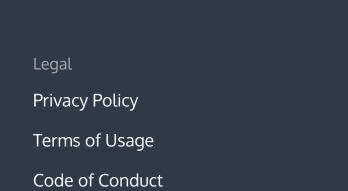
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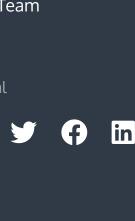












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