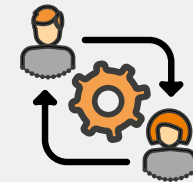**Australian Government**

Department of Jobs and Small Business

BECOMING
USER-CENTRED

HOW WE WILL STRENGTHEN OUR CAPABILITY

2017

User-centred principles and approaches help us to consider problems from new angles. They give us the tools we need to better understand our environment and the issues at hand. These tools are critical for understanding how people use or are affected by the policies and services we create.

The Department is committed to strengthening the way we look at the work we do using the latest user-centred approaches and evidence.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S USER-CENTRED AGENDA

The Australian Public Service is transforming how it undertakes its day-to-day operations to be simpler, clearer and faster for users. Key to this change is the Government's Digital Service Standard and commitment to enhancing public participation in government decision making.

We must build and embed our user-centred capability to meet the direction set by the Government in transforming the way it develops policies, programs, and services.

BEING USER-CENTRED MEANS PUTTING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF OUR POLICY ADVICE, BUSINESS DECISIONS AND THE WAY WE DELIVER.

It's about creating an evidence-based approach founded on the behaviour and drivers of the people who use or are affected by our policies and programs.

To become user-centred we must be effective collaborators, listeners and communicators. We need to be able to let go of our perceptions and validate our assumptions.

To help us become user-centred we will be guided by four user-centred principles:

- Understand the people we serve
- See the whole picture
- Find different perspectives
- Test, learn and share often.

Our approach to building our user-centred capability will involve us changing the way we work—until being user-centred comes naturally.

In 2017 we are at the beginning of our journey discovering how to apply user-centred principles to our work.

As we progress we will develop our skills by continuing to work together to adapt our business systems and processes, build new social, physical and digital infrastructure and find ways to share information more easily.

The Department is committed to fully building our user-centred capability by the year 2025.

WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE?

Our user-centred capability will evolve as the Department moves through the three progressive stages of change: discovery, development, and default.

DISCOVERY
NOW 2017

We are beginning to become user-centred. We are learning to put the user-centred principles into practice in our day-to-day work and in projects.

DEVELOPMENT
2020 ONWARDS

We have a shared understanding of all user needs. We employ the right user-centred approach for the job. We routinely conduct user research, prototype and embrace the principles.

DEFAULT
2025 ONWARDS

We anticipate the future and drive change based on the evolving needs of our users. We have increased trust and transparency for our stakeholders. We work together to improve our policies and services and deliver better user outcomes by iteratively redesigning our systems and frameworks.

UNDERSTANDING OUR
USER-CENTRED PRINCIPLES

Our Department's user-centred principles represent the values, habits and behaviours we will all work towards as we begin to build new ways of working and thinking to deliver better outcomes for our community.

UNDERSTAND
THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

We know who our users are and talk to them to understand their perspective to build our knowledge base. We use the evidence we have to generate new ideas and guide the actions and decisions we make in our day to day work.

FOR ME THIS MEANS

I go out and talk to my users.

I listen and seek to understand my user's perspective.

I advocate for others to think about their user in their day to day work.

I feed the evidence I collect about my users back into the Department.

I frame user-centred research to minimise the risk of ethical harm.

SEE
THE WHOLE PICTURE

We consider how our part of the puzzle interacts and affects the end-to-end experience of our users. We use the right approach for what we are working on, and make connections visible.

FOR ME THIS MEANS

I seek to understand the problem and find connections before jumping into solutions.

I use the right tools and approaches for the specific problem I am solving.

I continuously ask questions to broaden my understanding.

I quickly bring my ideas to life to make them visible to others.

FIND
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

We bring the right people together at the right time. We use each others' perspectives, skills, knowledge and experience to deliver solutions. We build and maintain a shared understanding of the intent so that we achieve the right outcomes.

FOR ME THIS MEANS

I collaborate with the right people at the right time.

I use the expertise of others to achieve the right outcome.

I am open to new ways of working and thinking.

I seek out others with different views to me to enrich my thinking.

I have the ability to synthesise perspectives and provide guidance to others.
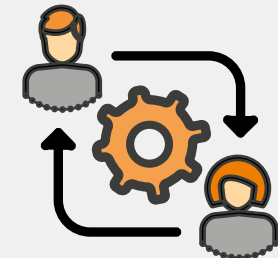
TEST, LEARN & SHARE
OFTEN

We share and test ideas early and often to validate our assumptions with our users. We continuously check-in with others and adjust our thinking to stay on track to solve the right problem and deliver the intended outcomes. We are transparent in what we do.

FOR ME THIS MEANS

I create evidence through experiments and prototyping.

I reflect on what I have done so that I know what worked, what didn't and why.

I share what I discover as I discover it.

ALL STAFF
THE ROAD TO BEING USER-CENTRED

We all have a role to play in building the Department's user-centred capability. What this will look like for your role is captured here.

AS A STAFF MEMBER THIS MEANS:

DISCOVERY
NOW 2017

I have an increased awareness of the user-centred principles.

I understand who my users are and I know where to find user research and insights about them.

DEVELOPMENT
2020 ONWARDS

I explore and build an understanding of how the user-centred principles apply to my day to day work.

I have a shared understanding of the key needs of my users.

I take an ethical approach to conducting user research

DEFAULT
2025 ONWARDS

I actively apply and demonstrate my understanding the user-centred principles in my day to day work.

I communicate a shared understanding of who our users are and what we know about them.

I understand the difference between good and poor quality user experiences.

I make ethics central to my approach.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

We consider and balance user needs and departmental requirements when making strategic and operational decisions, including the allocation of resources.

DECISION MAKER
THE ROAD TO BEING USER-CENTRED

We all have a role to play in building the Department's user-centred capability. What this will look like for a decision maker is captured here.

AS A DECISION MAKER THIS MEANS:

DISCOVERY
NOW 2017

I actively build my knowledge of the user-centred principles.

I encourage my staff to build their awareness of the principles.

I prepare my staff to conduct fieldwork in an ethically sensitive way.

I help with the impact that some user-centred work could have on their own wellbeing.

DEVELOPMENT
2020 ONWARDS

I demonstrate my understanding of the user-centred principles in my day to day work.

I encourage my staff to put the principles into practice by supporting a culture of experimentation by managing risk sensibly through short iterative cycles.

I explore how to consider and balance user and departmental needs when making strategic and operational decisions.

DEFAULT
2025 ONWARDS

I champion user-centred approaches and support my staff to embrace user-centred principles

I continuously resource user research to build the Department's evidence base.

I consider and balance user needs with departmental requirements when making strategic and operational decisions.

I structure my resources so that they are able to create seamless and integrated service delivery for the public.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

We consider and balance user needs and departmental requirements when making strategic and operational decisions, including the allocation of resources.

POLICY MAKER
THE ROAD TO BEING USER-CENTRED

We all have a role to play in building the Department's user-centred capability. What this will look like for a policy maker is captured here.

AS A POLICY MAKER THIS MEANS:

DISCOVERY
NOW 2017

I work in on projects to begin developing how we will work together in the future.

I start going out into the field to do user research.

DEVELOPMENT
2020 ONWARDS

I regularly go out into the field to talk to my users and feed the evidence I collect about my users back into the Department.

I use my shared understanding of user needs and experiences to guide critical policy design decisions.

DEFAULT
2025 ONWARDS

I actively apply user-centred principles and approaches to all new policies so that they are based on user-centric evidence.

I work with user-centred practitioners and organisational capability enablers to quickly prototype policies based on user-centric evidence in a public and political arena.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

We take a user-centred approach to tackle complex policy, including testing solutions with users early to find the best way forward.

PRACTITIONER
THE ROAD TO BEING USER-CENTRED

We all have a role to play in building the Department's user-centred capability. What this will look like for a practitioner is captured here.

AS A PRACTITIONER THIS MEANS:

DISCOVERY
NOW 2017

I actively build my knowledge of user-centred principles and approaches.

I demonstrate my understanding of user-centred principles and approaches and anticipate what support others need to adopt them.

I have an increased ability to identify the complexity of a problem.

DEVELOPMENT
2020 ONWARDS

I align the internal services I offer to the key needs of staff.

I work with others to support prototyping of user-centric evidence-based policies.

I champion user-centred approaches and support others to embrace being user-centred.

I change my approach based on the complexity of the problem.

I actively work towards increasing compliance with the Australian Government's Digital Service Standard.

DEFAULT
2025 ONWARDS

I have a detailed knowledge of the difference between good and poor quality user experiences.

I approach complex problems using clearly defined methods and pathways.

I help others to adapt and create new internal structures, processes and infrastructure to support seamless and integrated service delivery for the public.

I continue to explore emerging user-centred approaches and feed them back into the Department.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

We develop significant policy by applying the user-centred principles and approaches from the start, and with coaching from our practitioners.