



Citizen Engagement Platforms

Dynamics 365:
Applications for Government



There is a widening gap between citizens' expectations based on how they interact with businesses, and their experience of interacting with government. With businesses, the experience is instantaneous, paperless and near-frictionless. The same can't be said of all interactions with government agencies.

This gap erodes trust in the Australian Government. The policy landscape has evolved to meet new expectations. We see emphasis on deliberative democracy, co-regulation and voluntary compliance. But we also need the mechanics to make the policy intent possible. Seamless authentication. Minimal reporting overheads.

Agencies, both in Australia and overseas, are now exploring how software can bridge the gap. Citizen Engagement Platforms, such as Microsoft's Dynamics 365, are already making inroads. This software creates a channel for two-way communications at scale, managing journeys through government services, with radical potential for greater efficiency.

However, it's not just the software's technical capabilities that merit attention. We see great potential for new ways of delivering government services. Citizen Engagement Platforms let you map new ways of working:

- Give all staff a single view of citizens
- Eliminate bottlenecks
- Automate workflows
- Capture real-time data from frontline service delivery
- Quickly deploy applications (inspections, audits, case data)

These platforms have the potential to embed your organisational strategy and vision into every facet and every stage of service delivery.

I trust this information is useful. My team and I would be glad to discuss it with you at any time.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keiran Mott', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Keiran Mott
CEO, Veritec

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Introducing Citizen Engagement Platforms

Is your agency expected to deliver more services at the same or lower cost? Delivering more services will demand more citizen touchpoints—and a higher volume of interactions across those touchpoints.

Citizen Engagement Platforms are a class of software that address this challenge. They bring strategy enabled by technology—focussing on citizens to optimise service delivery, maintain relationships and foster democratic participation.¹

This software draws on the tools and insights from private sector customer relationship management systems. Where Citizen Engagement Platforms differ is in their scope: a customer relationship management system is ultimately focussed on commercial transactions. In contrast, Citizen Engagement Platforms capture the diversity, complexity and scale of agencies' interactions with citizens.

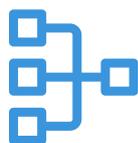
Where Dynamics 365 stands out from other Citizen Engagement Platforms is that it gives a more complete integration. Other Citizen Engagement Platforms only manage the point of contact between the agency and the citizen. For Dynamics 365, that contact and the workflows it triggers are comprehensively managed, and all in the one place.

Benefits of a Citizen Engagement Platforms



A single view of citizens:

reducing fragmented services by giving a single view of the citizen—gathering all their data and interactions in one place so that staff anywhere in your organisation have full visibility.



More-seamless interactions:

drawing all the information together to reduce the friction citizens experience when they interact with government. Staff can give more-accurate, in-depth advice—and use this insight to deliver more-targeted services.



More-efficient processes:

digitising interactions that are currently taking place in person or on paper—attending a service desk, or posting a form. This makes services more convenient for citizens and reduces the administrative overheads for agencies.



Increased productivity:

automating workflows for back-office operations. This reduces bottlenecks, as well as supervisors needing to manually check that processes are being followed.



Improved identity management:

simplifying log-ons. Staff no longer need to log on to eight different systems to get the information they need. Dynamics 365 extracts information from your legacy systems and presents it via one interface with a single sign-on.



Improved data reporting and analytics:

allowing agencies to interrogate data from several angles with highly flexible, customisable reporting. These reports can combine variables in new ways: you don't need to set up a whole new Excel spreadsheet to get the data in the form you need.



Supporting two-way communication:

helping agencies to move beyond one-way broadcast channels—emails or letters to citizens. Some agencies are adopting limited online interactivity, such as chatbots. However, in many cases, these interactions are isolated from other operations. Dynamics 365 allows agencies to analyse and feed these conversations directly into operational planning.²



Ease of deployment:

out of the box Dynamics 365 can be quickly and easily configured. Customised deployments are also available covering agency's unique requirements.



Purpose built applications:

hosted in the cloud, Dynamics 365 has purpose built module applications, enabling you to choose the applications that suit your agency's business needs. As your requirements change, you can add additional applications. For example, PowerApps and Field Services.

Components of a Citizen Engagement Platform

What are the key facets of a Citizen Engagement Platform? In their 2017 paper, analysts Wulansari and Subriadi describe the facets of this class of software:

- **Interaction:** actions completed through the service, such as filling out forms, updating details and communicating with the agency or other users
- **Information:** information about the government service and how to use it, together with information about the citizen using that service
- **Personalisation:** tailoring the information or service for a specific citizen or cohort of citizens
- **Transaction:** online payment facilities.³

These facets may be delivered within the one piece of software, or through integrations.

Where a system such as Dynamics 365 comes into its own is in templated workflows and assets. Agencies don't need to build and customise an application from scratch. Instead, it's largely a matter of configuring a ready-made solution. This saves time, but also scaffolds the work of those tasked with implementing the solution: for almost every conceivable interaction or process, Microsoft has already analysed the scenario and designed an approach.

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Capabilities of a Citizen Engagement Platform

How could an agency use a Citizen Engagement Platform? Examples include:

- **Coordinating citizen service delivery:** an individual receives multiple benefits from one agency, and often has to provide the same information two or three times. A Citizen Engagement Platform's citizen profile enables that information to be easily shared, with full privacy controls.
- **Policy release:** after the release of a new policy, an agency uses Dynamics 365 to run sentiment analysis on social media to get real-time data on how that policy is being received.
- **Licensing workflows:** an online licensing application is received, which needs to go through several layers of approval. Previously, handling the request was a manual process, with potential for bottlenecks. A Citizen Engagement Platform automates the movement of that request through to the next stage, and allows tracking of that progress for greater transparency.
- **Emergency response:** collating information from staff on the ground—such as conditions or availability of shelters—to rapidly understand the scale of the crisis, distributing directions back out to relief teams in real time.
- **Mobile field inspections:** case information can be collated and documented through image capture, geographic recording of inspection sites, allowing for enforcement of compliance with government regulations through simplified and connectivity solutions.
- **Stakeholder management:** build better stakeholder relationships through improved communications and processes. Create standardised workflows to manage different stakeholder engagements, identify internal processes and track all stakeholder touchpoints in one easy to use interface.

These are just some of the possible uses. However, there is still the question of whether a Citizen Engagement Platform is a good fit for your agency.



Does your agency need a Citizen Engagement Platform?

There are three main scenarios where a Citizen Engagement Platform is likely to be a good fit for your agency.

1. Do contacts trigger complex actions?

If your agency receives a high volume of inbound calls and emails, you may already have a contact centre management system in place. That system will automatically distribute calls and display basic contact information.

That system may be enough—if you only need the system to record what was said and flag a basic follow-up.

However, if a contact triggers workflows that go beyond contact centre operations, you may need a system with broader scope. A Citizen Engagement Platform allows managing an enquiry end-to-end—from an initial email enquiry, through to seeking insight from a policy area, up for executive approval, and back out to the citizen to resolve the enquiry such as Freedom of Information request.

Using a Citizen Engagement Platform to integrate with your contact centre management system is relatively straightforward. But we could expand this to ministerial correspondence. What difference would it make to your certainty and visibility over critical stakeholder relationships to know the exact status of incoming correspondence from your minister?

2. Do your staff have to move between processes?

In rare cases, your agency may have staff assigned to one job, which they know inside-out. That's not the reality for most government agencies. We see staff whose time is 95% dedicated to known processes. But once or twice a year, they need to tackle an unfamiliar process. Perhaps it's yearly reporting, or organising a biannual forum.

Even if a staff member has been with your agency for some time, they don't have that ready grasp of the process that comes with repetition. Instead, it takes longer for them to re-learn the process. There's more room for mistakes.

A Citizen Engagement Platform such as Dynamics 365 speeds up processes and removes room for error by scaffolding human decision-making. Dynamics 365 can map the workflow for all processes: familiar and unfamiliar. That workflow is presented to staff as an on-screen process, with next steps laid out.

3. Does your environment change suddenly?

It's a common scenario in government. The legislation is amended, with only four weeks to change the way you work. How benefits are awarded. The conditions for a license. When processes are paper-based (or worse, locked in the know-how of a handful of staff) change is fraught. The problem is that the place where processes are followed and the place where processes are recorded are separate.

Tools like Dynamics 365 bring together recording a process and actioning a process. Because it's all in the one place, changing a process is a matter of reconfiguring a module: adding another step or changing a condition. Your agency isn't sacrificing control—there is always room to change the workflow. If anything, managers gain control. That's because, when processes change, you can rebuild them in an instant. Set out a new process and present it via an interface that channels action. People won't slip back into the way things used to be done.

But implementing a Citizen Engagement Platform is not simply about implementing new software. There is also a question of change management.

Is your agency ready for that change?

Is your agency ready for a Citizen Engagement Platform?

Your agency will find it reasonably straightforward to gain support for a Citizen Engagement Platform if one or both of the following signs are present.

Sign 01: Service delivery under scrutiny

Australia Post was hit with a staggering 1.1 million complaints last financial year, [news reports show](#) ⁴.

Those complaints covered everything from allegations that Australia Post hadn't bothered to deliver parcels to the door, to claims that parcels had been stolen and compensation refused.

No agency sets out to deliver bad service. These incidents most likely arose because internal systems didn't give an end-to-end view of a customer and their service request.

But these incidents do generate scrutiny. Probing questions at Senate Estimates hearings. Ministerials demanding explanation.

If your organisation is under this kind of pressure, Citizen Engagement Platforms offer a solution: a way of reporting with confidence on every facet of operations. Not only that—Citizen Engagement Platforms help you integrate different facets of operations, and generate useful business intelligence. Forecast service demand. Identify bottlenecks. Use these insights to drive change, get ahead of the situation, and stop it reoccurring.

Sign 02: Modernising systems

Is your agency on a path to upgrade antiquated legacy systems and overhaul service delivery? You're already changing the way you interact with citizens, and there's work underway to overhaul the IT systems that underpin these services. New solution architecture. New procurement.

In this climate, it's much easier to leverage the change to build a case for doing things better, rather than just replacing the old systems like-for-like.

You can rebuild case management systems or contact centre software, with integration embedded from the start. This is a far more cost-effective solution than applying an integration layer to legacy systems.

This is an opportunity to transform the whole way you deliver services. Digitise paper processes. Move face-to-face enquiries to online services. Embed integration from the start. Doing this now is a far more cost-effective approach than tackling it down the road: retrofitting integration to legacy systems.





As a software engineer, I'm excited by delivering software systems that have a positive impact on people's lives. With Dynamics 365, I can implement robust software solutions at scale and at an order of magnitude faster than is possible with a custom-designed solution.

Trevor Stephenson, Dynamics Specialist - Veritec

How can Veritec help?

Veritec is the transformation partner for the Public Sector through Microsoft solutions.

With over 120 Canberra-based employees, 40 of whom are security cleared and certified Dynamics 365 specialists, Veritec has over ten years' experience in delivering outcomes for the Public Sector. Microsoft's preferred partner, Veritec, has the expertise in helping build the business case for Citizen Engagement Platform implementations to lead your transformation.



Contact us

Start a conversation about how Dynamics 365 solves the pain points for your agency.

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Microsoft

| Dynamics 365