

Telling their story once: How digital technology can support regulators to provide streamlined services to citizens and businesses

Additional Q&A

Q1: Rules-as-Code question - have you directly codified established regulation OR did you first re-draft (Better Rules approach) regulation?

Cassandra Meagher
Executive Director, Service Reform & Corporate, Service Victoria

Service Victoria has undertaken both approaches.

We work with partner agencies to deliver established programs, such as obtaining a working with children check or a national police check. The regulatory approaches for these services are already well defined so we are simply codifying regulation. Many people don't realise that software code is a lot like legislation. They're both a set of rules, clearly laid out in a binary format which explains the rules to follow. When you work out how to translate regulation into software, or put the rules into code, you can give the computer permission to make some of the decisions which would normally be made in the back office. That's how we are making it easier and faster for people to comply with the rules.

We also work with partner agencies to take a better rules approach. A good example of this is the partnership between Service Victoria, a small group of local councils and the Victorian Department of Treasury & Finance. The initiative reviewed the approvals processes for footpath trading, undertaking fitness training in a park and getting a permit for a skip bin. The councils agreed on a common process and then Service Victoria worked to make sure the rules could be digitised in a simple way so automatic approvals could be issued to applicants. This service can then be rolled out quickly to new councils, as it's the same digital process for each new council. For example, Golden Plains was able to go live with online automatic footpath trading permits in just 12 business days. This included sign-off of all agreements and setting up the service for the Council.

Q2: NSW has done some great work creating digitally enabled non-digital pathways (e.g., rather than the citizen having a COVID sign-in app they have a number they can give to the supermarket to automatically sign them in) is VIC doing this or thinking about non-digital pathways?

Cassandra Meagher
Executive Director, Service Reform & Corporate, Service Victoria

Service Victoria is committed to ensuring our services are inclusive. We know not all customers can or want to transact digitally, though this number halved during COVID with more people willing to give digital a try. So, it is really important that we consider alternative pathways for these customers. We work with our agency partners to make alternative pathways available either through Service Victoria or our partner agencies.

For QR Code check in, customers who couldn't check in themselves using a smartphone were able to be checked in by another person using the Service Victoria app, checked in by the venue using a kiosk check or use a paper-based alternative.

For customers who can't or won't transact online we've developed a tiered support model and assisted digital pathways so these customers can choose their preferred support channel and complete their transaction in a way and at a time convenient to them. Our mail-in and outbound telephone support model helps customers who can't or don't want to use technology avoid the effort of an instore visit. We've designed an offline channel that's eliminated the need to visit in-person thanks to:

A traditional mail-based approach

Online support – for example videos and animations to help people complete their journey

Popular payment options included on manual forms.

Since February 2021, Service Victoria has delivered offline identity services for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).