Short description

Develop a secure and scalable technological solution that will enable people experiencing family and domestic violence to access support quickly.

Potential Themes

Distributed ledger technology, security, privacy, identity verification, document verification and storage, mobile technology/accessibility.

Overview of Challenge

Family and domestic violence creates complex economic issues for those in abusive relationships. Financial abuse occurs in approximately 99% of cases and is a primary reason victims stay in, or return to, abusive partners. Family violence is the single largest driver of homelessness for women, with 60% at risk due to financial dependence on their attacker.

This challenge is proposed by the Department of Human Services (DHS), an Australian Government department that provides essential services to almost every Australian. Through Medicare, social welfare, aged care, child support and crisis recovery, they assist people to meet life’s most fundamental challenges.

Those escaping violence require simple, fast, safe access to welfare payments to enable them to leave an abusive relationship. Many fleeing violence leave with limited access to money, personal paperwork and the identification documents required to apply for social support payments and access to services.

Waiting periods for income support payments vary, depending on a number of factors. This is further complicated if the customer cannot readily access the required paperwork, and then has
to navigate other government and non-government support services, repeatedly explaining their situation. This can all cause financial distress and potentially influence a person to return to an abusive situation as they don’t have the financial means to survive independently. On average women will leave abusers seven times before leaving for good.

Solution requirements

DHS is looking for a secure and scalable technological solution that will enable people experiencing family and domestic violence to access support quickly through an innovative digital solution – this may include secure identity verification and/or storage of a person’s historical personal documents e.g. medical, police, personal action plans.

The solution needs to be able to securely share this information between trusted government and non-government organisations, to enable quick access to support for people in highly vulnerable circumstances.

The solution should:

- have a high degree of information security and comply with relevant security standards
- enable verification of a person’s identity and/or storage of a person’s historical personal documents
- be able to provide confirmation of document status in line with DHS policy as the department’s current process requires that documents are originals, complete and accurate
- reduce the time and complexity of completing a claim and navigating the service system for customers e.g. different tiers of government and non-government agencies and service providers
- be available/work across various digital channels, e.g. mobile phone, tablet, PC to facilitate access to relevant information
- include an audit log function
- not increase administrative workload
- consider current platforms used by government and non-government entities to store and share this kind of information
- be scalable across government and non-government organisations and providers, such as government, medical, police.

Expected deliverable at the end of the proof of concept is a working prototype of the solution that can be trialled with a pilot group of customers.

A solution should also have scope for private commercialisation on a national or global scale.
Benefits of the solution

Empowerment is the most effective approach to provide necessary services to those affected by family and domestic violence, and requires access to information and necessary social and economic support to make informed decisions.

An innovative digital solution will help DHS to assist and empower customers experiencing family and domestic violence to make those decisions and access the support they require to confidently move forward in their lives.