NSW GOVERNMENT

Keeping Citizens at the Centre of its **Transformation**

DIGITAL REPORT 2024

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

ENCOMPAAS   **AXONIUS**

NSW DPHI:
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New South Wales Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's **Bianca Jordaan** explains how it has kept citizens at the heart of its technological transformation

Advances in technology have enabled enterprises around the globe to serve their customers in new and better ways. The invention of smartphones, for instance, gave consumers a new way to interact with the digital world, and companies have responded by developing a wave of apps to meet our every need.

Financial gain is often the incentive for new technology, however, governments are also leveraging it to connect with and better serve their citizens.

A great example of this can be seen in Sydney Australia, at the New South Wales Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

Tasked with improving the liveability and prosperity of the state of New South Wales (NSW), the department is at the forefront of creating diverse spaces, precincts and economies.

"In the NSW government, there has been a real focus on how we can utilise technology to connect public servants to our citizens," explains Bianca Jordaan, the Chief Digital and Information Officer of DPHI.

With a focus on technology, but a constant eye on humanity, Bianca is helping steer the department to upskill its offerings to ensure it can meet its ambitious goals to provide for one of the fastest growing areas in Australia.

Tech chief with a human touch

Bianca has rich experience in both the private and public sector, which has given her perspective on how to interact with third-party companies in her current role.

She got her first taste of public service six years ago at eHealth NSW, where she led a team to drive change and adoption for the Electronic Medication Management Program. She subsequently moved back to the private sector, taking the role of CIO of Pathology at Healius Limited, which provided critical testing services during Covid-19.

Her journey back to the NSW government was fuelled by a deep desire to influence policy and drive meaningful change.

"Working in government is so complex and the depth of change that we drive affects so many people," she explains.

Bianca brings this interpersonal approach to her role, where she champions honesty and bravery as pivotal leadership qualities.

"For me, it's about making sure we create an environment where people can be honest, where people can be brave and where we can align everybody around the organisations' goals."

Goals of the department

The DPHI's mission is multifaceted, focusing on creating vibrant communities, increasing housing supply and diversity and managing land assets sustainably.

In the last 10 years there has been a significant shift towards digital service delivery.

"WE NEED TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE AND NOT JUST ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY"

BIANCA JORDAAN
CHIEF DIGITAL AND INFORMATION OFFICER, DPHI

"Citizens now expect to interact with the government digitally, akin to ordering pizza or booking movie tickets," Bianca says. "We are at a place now where more and more people receive their services online. This means as public servants, we need to uplift our skills and meet rising expectations."

The DPHI has embraced technology across its wide portfolio to expand the way it serves its citizens.

One standout example is the Land iQ application, a tool that utilises spatial information to inform strategic land use decisions.

"We recently leveraged the app to help shortlist plots of land that could be used to respond to the state's housing crisis," Bianca explains. "This meant that surveyors and planners didn't have to travel all over the state to find appropriate places for housing, they could narrow down options thanks to AI technology."

BIANCA JORDAAN in

TITLE: **CHIEF DIGITAL AND INFORMATION OFFICER**

INDUSTRY: **GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**

LOCATION: **AUSTRALIA**

As Chief Digital and Information Officer Bianca is responsible for the delivery of ICT services for 20,000 end users across the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

Bianca was the former CIO of Pathology at Healius Limited, which provided critical testing services during Covid-19. She has led a range of high-profile change transformation projects, including the Electronic Medication Management program at eHealth NSW and the national MyHealth Record Program. Prior to this, Bianca was a director at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

With a consistent track record leading large ICT operations, Bianca is passionate about how technology can enhance the lives of ordinary people and how government can leverage technology to serve the citizens of NSW.

EncompaaS Empowers DPHI to Supercharge Data Preparation

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is leading the charge in shaping New South Wales' future through innovative planning, housing solutions, and infrastructure development. Building on their successful multi-year collaboration, DPHI and EncompaaS have taken their partnership to new heights by strengthening the department's Manage-In-Place Information Strategy.

Streamlining Information Discovery and Management

EncompaaS' Intelligent Information Management Platform, powered by cutting-edge AI, is transforming how DPHI handles its vast data landscape. By seamlessly finding, enriching, organising and de-risking the department's structured and unstructured information, EncompaaS creates a normalised data quality foundation enabling DPHI to achieve automated governance at scale.

Delivering Comprehensive Insights

The partnership's initial phase focused on metadata discovery across DPHI's information repositories. EncompaaS' intuitive dashboards now offer comprehensive insights into all SharePoint sites, empowering different business units to make informed decisions about information management. This deployment lays the groundwork for consolidated, effective information management across the agency.

Long Term Vision for Data Readiness

Looking ahead, DPHI is poised to stay ahead of regulatory requirements and fulfill governance obligations.

> "With these insights, our stakeholders can gain deeper understanding and visibility into our data landscape. This enhances informed decision-making and overall data management efficiency."
>
> Bianca Jordaan, Chief Digital and Information Officer at DPHI

With EncompaaS' proactive approach to managing compliance and privacy risks in-place, the department is well-equipped to navigate the complex regulatory landscape.

DPHI's long-term vision extends beyond compliance. By leveraging EncompaaS' powerful information management solutions, the department is establishing a robust foundation for data readiness. This strategic approach positions DPHI at the forefront of technological innovation, ready to harness the transformative potential of Generative AI and other emerging technologies.

Through this partnership, DPHI is not just managing information – it's unlocking the power of data to build a smarter, more efficient future for New South Wales.

Learn more about preparing your data for GenAI success: ▶

DPHI

Other technological implementations include systems for managing fishing licences, digital planning services, as well as mapping and reporting tools to assist proposed developments. There is even a Beach Watch application, which provides information on water cleanliness and safety at beaches.

Challenges and solutions

Implementing technology is not easy, however. After all, the NSW Government serves a population of over eight million.

While technology plays a crucial role in the DPHI's digital transformation, Bianca emphasises the importance of the human element in this process.

"We need to talk to people about what we are trying to achieve and not just about the technology," she explains. Deploying new technologies is challenging. People, with their diverse backgrounds, skills, and resistance to change, often present the greatest hurdles.

Through collaboration and consultation the department is committed to ensuring that technological advancements are not just implemented, but truly understood and embraced by staff, stakeholders and citizens alike.

What makes managing technology in the public sector particularly challenging, is the shift in services included in each department. "During the three years I've

> ## "WE ARE SITTING ON A LOT OF REALLY INTERESTING DATA - FINANCIAL, BUSINESS PROCESS AND SPATIAL, AND WHAT THIS DATA CAN SHOW US IS POWERFUL"

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been here, we have had four significant restructures," Bianca explains. "It means technology from very different organisations keeps getting pushed together and then pulled apart."

Adding to the complexity are aging systems and hardware that require constant upgrades, an expensive exercise in a fiscally challenged environment.

One major difficulty is ensuring sustainable investment in technology post-COVID. "Following COVID, the investment in technology was significant. We are now at a point where we have to ensure that that investment is sustainable," Bianca acknowledges.

Another challenge is managing the excitement and fear surrounding

AXONIUS

Securing New South Wales' Tech Expansion

HOW AXONIUS SECURED NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE NEW TECHNOLOGY

In an era of rapid digital transformation, government agencies face the challenge of balancing innovation with robust cybersecurity measures.

The New South Wales Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (NSW DPHI) found itself at this crossroads as it embraced new technologies to improve efficiency in areas such as land use decisions. However, this technological leap brought with it unforeseen complications in asset visibility and security policy enforcement.

Enter Axonius, a cybersecurity asset intelligence platform. The partnership between NSW DPHI and Axonius has since become a testament to the power of comprehensive asset intelligence in strengthening an organisation's security posture.

"Axonius provided us with a cybersecurity asset management platform that helped us aggregate, normalise and correlate data from various sources, giving us a complete and always up-to-date asset inventory," says Bianca Wirth, Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at NSW DPHI and person responsible for the security of the department.

The impact of Axonius on NSW DPHI's operations became particularly evident during the department's Cyber Security Uplift Program.

"We were able to deploy Axonius successfully across our environment, which allowed us to establish a detailed view of devices, users, and

cloud instances, significantly enhancing our asset visibility and management capabilities," Bianca elaborates.

By doing so, NSW DPHI was able to identify "far more applications than we thought existed." This discovery led to a series of improvements in the department's IT infrastructure.

"THIS HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN UNCOVERING SECURITY GAPS AND AUTOMATING REMEDIATION ACTIONS."

"We utilised this information to consolidate our desktop standard operating environment by identifying non-SOE devices, applications that needed to be packaged and deployed, and verifying that we had captured new devices logging into the network at regular intervals," Bianca explains.

By partnering with Axonius, the department was able to streamline security operations and improve its overall security posture.

Equally, the platform's real-time insights and automated security policy enforcement capabilities empowered NSW DPHI to take a more proactive stance in addressing vulnerabilities and ensuring compliance.

Looking to the future, NSW DPHI plans to strengthen its partnerships with Axonius and

expand use cases across the Security and IT domains. "We plan to continue leveraging Axonius to support our long-term goals of maintaining a secure and resilient digital infrastructure," Bianca states. *"We aim to further integrate the platform into our security ecosystem, utilising its capabilities to drive continuous improvement in our cybersecurity strategies and operations."*

The NSW DPHI case study demonstrates how Axonius's comprehensive asset intelligence solution can transform an organisation's cybersecurity landscape. By providing clear visibility into all assets, automating security processes, and enabling proactive risk management, *Axonius has helped NSW DPHI navigate the complex terrain of modern cybersecurity challenges.*

As government agencies continue to digitise and innovate, the need for robust cybersecurity asset intelligence becomes increasingly critical. The partnership between NSW DPHI and Axonius, however, can serve as a model for how organisations can leverage advanced technologies to support their core mission and objectives while keeping everything secure.

emerging technologies like Generative AI. "We are putting in place an assurance framework to help teams assess if they are implementing the technology in a safe manner and to ensure they understand where the data is. These safeguards, alongside decisions on what the technology is going to be doing, are crucial to keeping people involved in the decision-making process," she elaborates.

This is critically important given the types of personal data governments collect, including health details, addresses and financial information.

To address these challenges, DPHI has developed a digital strategy that covers not just technology, but also the people and processes required to deliver key outcomes.

"A lot of work has gone into identifying the core, common and divergent capabilities required to deliver the department's vision," says Bianca. "We are laser focused on being an agile organisation through a number of key initiatives:

• Re-imagining NSW Communities, Visitor and Business centric services

• Investing in collective digital and data capabilities to save time and money

• Ensuring the 'basics' are done consistently to benefit all our customers

• Defining how the department delivers using digital tools to serve our citizens

"A LOT WILL HAPPEN IN THE HOUSING SPACE, WITH THE APPROVALS OF HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT, LIKE HOW WE CAN MORE SEAMLESSLY DO APPROVALS AND HOW WE COULD FAST TRACK APPROVALS USING TECHNOLOGY"

BIANCA JORDAAN
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"We are aiming to become more citizen-centric. We are focused on how we put more information and more services in the citizen's hands and improve the way our department is able to work."

Partnerships and collaborations

The department is also exploring how it can use data to gather insights and improve services.

"We are sitting on a lot of really interesting data. It's not only financial information and normal business process data, but spatial data, and what this data can show us is powerful," she notes.

Pushing ahead, DPHI has ambitious plans for how data and AI can be used to benefit NSW. Yet, with all these new assets coming online, it is important to keep track and also protect highly confidential governmental data.

Which is why the department brought on an established partner to aid in this challenge: Axonius.

"Prior to implementing Axonius, we faced challenges in gaining visibility into all our assets and ensuring consistent security policy enforcement across the board," Bianca Wirth, the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at DPHI says.

"Axonius provided us with a cybersecurity asset management

platform that helped us aggregate, normalise and correlate data from various sources, giving us a complete and always up-to-date asset inventory. This has been instrumental in uncovering security gaps and automating remediation actions."

This proved pivotal during the department's Cyber Security Uplift Program. Across NSW AU$315m (US$205m) was allocated and is part of the broader work of the Digital Restart Fund (DRF) to provide trusted and secure services to the people of NSW. With Axonius in tow, the department was able to establish a detailed view of devices, users and cloud instances, and identified far more applications than they thought existed.

"We utilised this information to consolidate our desktop standard operating environment (SOE) by identifying non-SOE devices – applications that needed to be packaged and deployed, and verifying that we had captured new devices logging into the network at regular intervals," explains Bianca Wirth.

This allowed the department to streamline its security operations and improve its overall security posture, allowing it to be more proactive in addressing vulnerabilities and ensuring compliance as it grew.

"SO HOW DO WE PUT MORE INFORMATION AND MORE SERVICES INTO OUR CITIZEN'S HANDS AND IMPROVE THE WAY OUR DEPARTMENT IS ABLE TO WORK?"

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A department prepared for the future

As new technologies are introduced, Bianca believes it is critical that citizens and businesses are kept informed. "We need to understand our customers, address their concerns and partner with businesses to see how technology can enhance and not be an obstacle for their operations" she says.

DPHI is committed to drive sustainable development and improve the liveability of the state by leveraging the power of technology.

From implementing innovative solutions to address pressing challenges such as the housing crisis and environmental sustainability, the seeds the department has planted – although already yielding insights – stand to grow and offer unprecedented efficiency to its workflow.

"A lot will happen in the housing space with the approvals of housing and land development, like how we can more seamlessly do approvals and how we can fast track approvals using technology," Bianca explains.

By focusing on citizen-centric services, improving internal workflows and managing its assets with Axonius as its partner, the DPHI is well-positioned to continue its mission of creating vibrant communities and ensuring the prosperity of NSW.

People's needs have not changed. But how they receive services has. This synergy of citizen-centric services, augmented by technology, may not only bring about better value for the department, but a better society for all. ⦿

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