

## Digital Government case studies: Life Events Approach – Smart Start

The New Zealand Government (2009-2017) emphasised the importance of service transformation and collaboration in the public sector through the Better Public Service goals (State Services Commission, 2017). In the update of these goals for 2017, Results 9 and 10 focused on the way services are designed and accessed, to improve the interactions that businesses and the public have with government services:

- Result 9: Business gains value from easy and seamless dealings with government;
- Result 10: People have easy access to Public Services, which are designed around them, when they need them (State Services Commission, 2017).

In addition to the Better Public Service goals, the first ICT Strategy and Action Plan for New Zealand was approved by the Government in 2013. This strategy pointed to the way in which government organisations, as a collective, would embrace technology and transform the services and systems of the public sector (Department of Internal Affairs, 2017). An update to the strategy was introduced in 2015 that recognised the changing dynamics of how business was being conducted, embracing emerging technologies for the transformation of public services, and initiating a focus on citizen and business-centric design for ICT services (Department of Internal Affairs, 2017).

A further update to the ICT Strategy, in May 2016, replaced the Action Plan with an 'integrated work programme'. This update emphasised the importance of a collective approach and partnership across government and non-government organisations to transform services using ICTs. It is also more agile, acknowledging the changing nature of ICTs, and enabling the ability for reprioritisation across government and within the strategy over time (Department of Internal Affairs, 2016). The functional leader of the ICT Strategy is the Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO), who is supported in this work by DIA. In 2013 the New Zealand Government committed to improving the delivery of government services to their customers, the public and businesses, through the ICT (Information, communication and technology) strategy (Department of Internal Affairs, 2017).

The 'life events' approach led by the Departments of Internal Affairs is an organisational response to government's strategic direction. The approach focuses on the information and services that cross between multiple organisations and agencies regarding significant life experiences for New Zealanders, such as the birth of a child, a marriage or a death.

In such instances, there are many significant actions and interactions undertaken with government organisations, agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs). Digital services for a 'life event' are intended to streamline these interactions and help customers easily navigate the process to get what they need.

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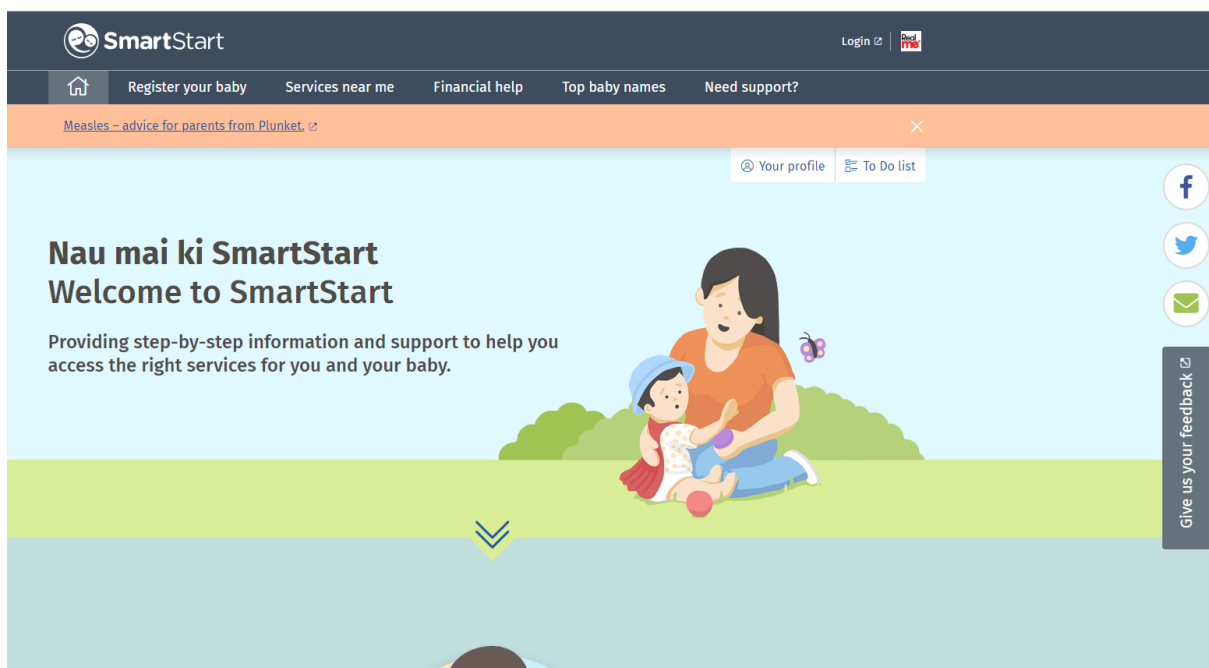
To date the approach incorporates:

*Smart Start*: relating to the birth of a child

*Te Hokinga ā Wairua* - End of Life Service: relating to the death of a person.

*Te tono mō tētahi pukamana mārena* - *Apply for a Marriage Licence*: relating to applications for marriage licences.

SmartStart was the first 'life event' project and digital service to be released. This service has received a considerable amount of praise and a number of awards following its release at the end of 2016, including awards from IPANZ, IABC and the Best Citizen Engagement Award at the Govinsider Innovation Awards (Department of Internal Affairs, 2016).



<https://smartstart.services.govt.nz/>

In 2017 and not too long after the SmartStart release, *Te Hokinga ā Wairua* - End of Life Service and then *Te tono mō tētahi pukamana mārena* - *Apply for a Marriage Licence* services were also made available to the public.

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**A life is something to be celebrated and treasured,  
even in a time of sadness.**

Things can be eased for loved ones when they understand more about what's happening following a death, and what someone's wishes are.



Someone's died and I need information

I want to plan and share my wishes and information

<https://endoflife.services.govt.nz/welcome>

For each new set of services, the application has a similar look and feel and is designed around the questions and needs for government services the citizen might have. Work is currently underway to bring events related to education into the approach such as early childhood education: finding providers; finding out about the providers, finding out about the early learning curriculum; similarly for when a child is ready to go to school; or tertiary education.

Some questions for discussion:

*What are the aspects of the Life Event approach to enable it to be more user-centric?*

*In what respects can you detect an all-of-government approach?*

*Can you see possible difficulties that extending this approach across government to other life events might face?*

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