Australian Taxation Office: Enabling self-service through innovative digital revenue solutions

Executive Summary
To meet the Australian Government's ambitious digital service-delivery goals, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) sought to build its digital capabilities and implement new revenue solutions designed around meeting taxpayer needs.

Accenture enabled the ATO's vision for change by developing an innovative series of digital services aimed at improving delivery networks, increasing taxpayer interactions with government and supporting cross-agency collaboration.

These efforts have delivered substantial business benefits to the ATO, and helped the agency create a flexible framework to address challenges now and in the future.
Client profile
The ATO is Australia's federal revenue collection agency and one of the nation's largest organisations. With more than 22,000 employees and 26 million clients, the ATO collects more than A$300 billion each year.

Business challenge
In 2011, the Australian Government released its National Digital Economy Strategy to encourage the public sector to use digital channels to deliver high-quality services. One goal of the strategy was that by 2020, four out of five Australians would choose to engage with the Australian Government online. To meet this objective, the ATO launched a series of initiatives to improve its digital services for taxpayers and businesses. The ATO chose to work with Accenture to realise this vision. The agency was motivated by Accenture's international experience in delivering digital tax services for bodies such as Ireland's Office of the Revenue Commissioners, as well as Accenture's ongoing work with the ATO.

How Accenture helped
Led by Accenture, the ATO launched a series of high-quality digital services to help taxpayers and tax agents, and to support cross-agency collaboration.

Accenture began by creating a new self-service portal for individual taxpayers. The portal offers services similar to online banking, allowing taxpayers to:
- update personal details
- view current superannuation fund accounts, lost superannuation reported to ATO and any superannuation held by ATO on their behalf
- consolidate superannuation accounts
- nominate a fund for the transfer of ATO–held money and superannuation memberships (previously a lengthy paper-based process)
- view the progress of income tax returns
- create and view payment arrangements for outstanding tax.

At the same time, Accenture led the redevelopment and expansion of the Australian Business Register (ABR) – the nation's principal registration system for businesses and sole traders. This task included:
- delivering a flexible and agile new technology platform
- introducing new services that geocode addresses, enabling the ATO and its partner agencies to make use of this information for disaster recovery and data analytics
- extending ABN registrations to include whole-of-government business registration processes, such as the registration of business names, authentication (AUSkey), GST, fuel tax credits and PAYG withholding
- implementing legislative changes for charities and not-for-profit organisations, which were delivered one month ahead of schedule.

Accenture also helped the ATO develop a strategy for improving the security of its information transmissions.

High performance delivered
These digital initiatives have delivered substantial business benefits for the ATO and the Australian economy. For example, by introducing whole-of-government business registration, the ATO has saved businesses around 438,000 hours per year in administration time. Also, by improving the efficiency of manual business registrations, the ATO has saved an estimated 35,000 person-hours. This has allowed the agency to redeploy staff to higher-value tasks such as monitoring and enforcing compliance.

Furthermore, individual taxpayers now have access to more online self-service features, saving them more than 100,000 hours of administrative time per year and helping the ATO to improve the accuracy of its taxpayer information records.

About Accenture
Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 289,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$28.6 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013. Its home page is www.accenture.com.