GOVIS 2025 Conference – Creative Digital Government

Day 1: Monday 1 September 2025

Conference opening address
Speaker to be confirmed
9:10 am - 9:30 am

Public service leadership
(Keynote)
Speaker to be confirmed
9:30 am-10:00 am

Reflections on breaking the mould
(Keynote)
Reverend Murray Edridge, Wellington City Missioner
10:00 am - 10:30 am

Precis to follow

What does creative and accountable leadership look like?
(Creative Connections - Stream 1)
Reverend Murray Edridge, Wellington City Missioner
11:00 am - 11:45 am

Precis to follow

Reimagining data at Stats NZ: the journey to an integrated statistical data system
(Creative Connections - Stream 2)
Celeste Cutting; Michael Alspach; Sarah Cowell; Mike Judd and Simon McBeth, StatsNZ
11:00 am - 11:45 am

Stats NZ is transforming how it produces statistics by leveraging the Integrated Statistical Data System (ISDS), to make better use of administrative data, and connecting it with survey data, to deliver faster, more meaningful insights. The ISDS will connect data on people, places, and businesses through three key components: the Administrative Population Model, the Places Index, and the Statistical Business Register. This shift will enable a more flexible, efficient system. This presentation will share how ISDS is laying the foundation for a stronger, more adaptive statistical system—beginning with its role in supporting the delivery of the next Census.

Digital experiences that truly matter - overseas voting
(Creative Connections - Stream 1)
Jarrod Baker, Electoral Commission; James Guthrie and Steve Barnard, Pikselin
11:45 am - 12:30 pm

This presentation will explore the design and development of digital services that truly matters for democracy, including the Upload Voting Paper (UVP) Service, which addresses issues identified during the 2020 General Election. Focused on reducing duplicates and unreadable images, it introduces digital solutions like the ability to mark and sign papers digitally, improved voter instructions, and back-end infrastructure enhancements. These efforts align with the theme of Creative Digital Government by leveraging technology to streamline the electoral process, increase voter accuracy, and ensure timely processing, ultimately improving the overseas voting experience in future elections.

Data driven community grant funding
(Creative Connections - Stream 2)
Alanna Irving, Maria Ngawati, and Marianna Pekar (DIA)
11:45 am - 12:30 pm

This presentation explores the transformation of the Lottery Grants system into one that is strategy-led, data-driven, and learns. We have developed outcomes data dashboards that provide a visual and analytical lens to align granting with the guiding legislation and with key outcomes of social cohesion, tino rangatiratanga, and community wellbeing. We'll introduce our new composite index, a modern tool for equitable and strategic granting, integrating data from the IDI to inform decision-making. This talk highlights the shift from output reporting to emphasising outcomes and impact, leveraging data for enhanced transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in community funding.

What do public service restructures and technical debt have in common?
(Keynote)
Annika Naschitzki, Victoria University of Wellington
1:15 pm - 2:00 pm

This presentation explores the tension between creative intent and structural reality in Aotearoa's public service. While the sector is full of ideas, the way we manage change often derails momentum. Annika draws on her research into recurring restructuring - typically done without method or monitoring - to show how short-term fixes win out over long-term thinking. Misalignments pile up: workarounds, gaps between policy and practice, and invisible distortions in how we work. The idea of technical debt offers a powerful way to name and track this "organisational debt" and push for more intentional, transparent, and equitable approaches to reform. If you would like to discuss this topic in more depth with Annika and others, then come along to the discussion session following afternoon tea.

Neurodivergence in IT: beyond the stereotypes
(Keynote)
Rachael Hurren, Inde Technology
2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

Neurodivergence is twice as prevalent in the IT industry as it is in the general population, but half of all neurodivergent adults are undiagnosed. Often, they just have a sense that they don't quite fit. There are some things they are exceptionally good at - and other things where life feels like a video game stuck on hard mode.

What does neurodivergence look like beyond the myths and TV stereotypes? This talk will help you to gain an understanding of what neurodivergence is, and how it impacts people. If you want to learn more, then come to the Q&A session following afternoon tea - this will centre around your questions and offer some practical tips on how to allow neurodivergent individuals to excel.

What do public service restructures and technical debt have in common? (discussion session)
(Creative Connections - Stream 1)
Annika Naschitzki, Victoria University of Wellington
3:15 pm - 4:00 pm

This presentation explores the tension between creative intent and structural reality in Aotearoa's public service. While the sector is full of ideas, the way we manage change often derails momentum. Annika draws on her research into recurring restructuring - typically done without method or monitoring - to show how short-term fixes win out over long-term thinking. Misalignments pile up: workarounds, gaps between policy and practice, and invisible distortions in how we work. The idea of technical debt offers a powerful way to name and track this "organisational debt" and push for more intentional, transparent, and equitable approaches to reform. If you would like to discuss this topic in more depth with Annika and others, then come along to the discussion session following afternoon tea.

Neurodivergence in IT: beyond the stereotypes (your questions)
(Creative Connections - Stream 2)
Rachael Hurren, Inde Technology
3:15 pm - 4:00 pm

Neurodivergence is twice as prevalent in the IT industry as it is in the general population, but half of all neurodivergent adults are undiagnosed. Often, they just have a sense that they don't quite fit. There are some things they are exceptionally good at - and other things where life feels like a video game stuck on hard mode.

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Day 2: Tuesday 2 September 2025

Conference relaunch
Mick Crouch, GOVIS President and Chris McDowall, Conference Convenor
8:45 am - 9:00 am

Remixing the rules of digital government
Andy Neale, Parliamentary Counsel Office
9:00 am - 9:30 am

Innovation in government doesn't always look flashy - but it can often start with a remix. In this talk, I'll trace the creative arc from early government web experiments in the 2000s through to today's R&D with AI. Along the way, I'll highlight how constraints - tight budgets, legacy systems, slow-moving approvals - can, and have, become creative catalysts. From the days of the single "webmaster", through the Web 2.0 era, the rise of closed ecosystems, right back again to a period of irrational exuberance in technology. I'll share lessons in trust, persistence, and collaboration that show how creativity can thrive when you make bureaucracy work for you, not against you.

Creativity in the C-suite panel
Speakers to be confirmed
9:30 am - 10:15 am

Creativity, it's a 'culture thing'!
(Creative Connections - Stream 1)
Pat McShane, Croga Ltd
10:40 am - 11:20 am

This presentation gets to the heart of what drives creativity in today's fast-moving, unpredictable world: Leadership. At every level, in every role, it's leaders - through their behaviours - who shape the environment where creativity can spark and thrive. No behavioural change? No real change.

We're all operating in a VUCA world - volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous - where creativity and innovation aren't optional; they're survival tools.

At the core of this talk is a simple but powerful truth: No Trust, No Creativity.

We'll explore how leaders build that trust through PEC: Perspective, Empathy, and Courage - the behavioural blueprint for creating high-trust and high-creativity teams.

The presentation is interactive with the audience where they will have the opportunity to explore the PEC model. While covering important topics, I deliver the presentation in a light and tasty collaborative style.

Trust by design: creative interventions in bureaucratic spaces
(Workshop, Creative Connections - Stream 2)
Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, Stats NZ
10:40 am - 12:00 pm

Trust is both the most essential and the most fragile element of public service. Trust must be earned (or restored) and maintained through credibility, reliability and relationship. Citizens' trust is needed for them to interact with the government; access the services they need; and provide accurate information to enable digital government.

In this interactive workshop you will have opportunities to explore the crisis of trust affecting the public sector and how creativity can offer pathways to rebuild it.

At the cutting edge - where are AI tools heading next?
(Keynote)
Shivonne Londt, AWS   **Sponsored by AWS**
12:45 pm - 1:15 pm

Since 2022, AI has been disrupting industries and sectors with its growing capabilities. AI is evolving from simple chatbots to intelligent systems capable of handling complex, multi-step tasks. This session explores how these advancing AI tools can help transform and improve government services.

At the heart of our discussion is the need to creatively balance the tension between innovation and trust. We'll look at how next-generation AI tools are being thoughtfully integrated into government services, with considerations of privacy and human augmentation.. Through real-world examples, we'll see how these technologies are already making public services more efficient and accessible.

This forward-looking session will provide practical insights for preparing for an AI-enhanced future. We'll focus on the tools that are coming, the skills you'll need to be successful with these tools, including human-AI collaboration, and proven approaches for building public confidence through transparent, secure, and ethical AI deployment.

Public service leadership
(Keynote)
Speaker to be confirmed
1:15 pm - 1:45 pm

Precis to follow

Invent a government service
(Creative Connections - Stream 1)
Michelle Edgerly, DIA
1:45 pm - 2:30 pm

Designing and delivering government digital services is a rewarding challenge. In this workshop, you'll invent a government service using nothing other than some basic service "ingredients" provided and your imagination. Be as creative as you like to meet your users' needs. The more 'out there' your service is, the more fun we will have when we share them at the end of the workshop. The goal is to give you some insights into service design and delivery, including the opportunities of using emerging technologies to meet user needs. The winning team will be decided by popular vote.

**From bespoke to routine: enabling rapid delivery of complex analytics
(Creative Connections - Stream 2)**
Simon Anastasiadis and Dan Young, Social Investment Agency

The analytic process to produce novel insights, often requires creativity on behalf of the researcher. While such results are valuable, the bespoke nature of their creation can hinder their repeatability.

Innovation at the Social Investment Agency allows us to convert bespoken analyses into repeatable processes, and from repeatable processes into routine deliverables. We present the frameworks and tools that enable this conversion. Their value will be demonstrated via application to the regular production of a public-facing data product.

Utaina: Connecting Aotearoa through Digitised Sounds and Stories
Zak Argabrite, Cynthia Wu and Joshua Ng, DIA
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Delve into the impacts of Utaina, a multi-year collaborative digitisation project with the goal of preserving Aotearoa's at-risk audiovisual taonga. Over the course of the project, 70,000 digitised audiovisual materials have been made available virtually by the National Library and Archives New Zealand. Our presentation will cover the creative systems that made Utaina successful: unique partnerships between national archival institutions and external stakeholders, adaptive approaches to project hurdles, and virtual reading rooms which reduce barriers to accessing audiovisual collections and holdings by making them available anywhere in the world.

Closing keynote
Speaker to be confirmed
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm