

Submission to the Australia and Singapore Agreement on the  
Digital Economy

By Yellow Edge Pty Ltd



# Yellow Edge's Submission on the Australia and Singapore Agreement on the Digital Economy.

## Introduction

Yellow Edge welcomes the Australia and Singapore Agreement on the Digital Economy (the Agreement) and supports greater cooperation, collaboration and two-way digital trade between Australia and Singapore.

## Background

Appreciating the ambitions of Singapore to become the world's first digital nation and the Australian Government's emphasis on innovation and the new economy, Yellow Edge instituted a partnership with the e-government leadership centre at the Institute of Systems Science (ISS) National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2018. <https://www.iss.nus.edu.sg/centres-of-excellence/e-government-leadership-centre>. 6,500 companies from 150 countries send their employees to the e-government centre for a variety of training, education and development programs.

This arrangement focused on the provision of a digital leadership program conducted at the e-government leadership centre in Singapore for Australian public sector executives from Commonwealth and State and Territory levels.

Yellow Edge and the e-government leadership centre conducted the first Global Leadership Practices (GLP) Program-leading digital transformation successfully in November 2018. Participants included senior executives from the Australian Tax Office, The Department of Human Services and the Department of Home Affairs.

Through facilitated discussions, frank dialog, live case studies and a series of field visits to Singaporean digital businesses, start-ups and civil service departments at the forefront of digital transformation, Australian program participants are able to engage with a wide range of technical experts, policy makers and implementers on issues and ideas to do with leading and managing digital transformation. Program topics include:

- Singapore's digital government transformation blueprint
- Industry digital guides
- Human capital development for the digital economy
- Alternative energy
- Smart Nation
- AI applications in the health and supply chain sectors
- Digital citizen engagement
- Digital services co-design
- Leading digital transformation

## Our submission

This submission is focused on emphasising the importance of Australian public sector leaders becoming more aware of and in tune with digital developments in jurisdictions like Singapore which is in many ways, at the leading edge of the digital economy. Such awareness and appreciation are first steps towards building practical capabilities needed to lead successfully in the Australian digital economy.

We suggest that the task of successfully capitalising on digital innovation and the digital economy for the benefit and wellbeing of Australian businesses, communities and the public in general is contingent not just on technical capabilities, but on effective leadership and management. This is exemplified in the Singapore economic development experience. Being resource poor, Singapore has had to rely on its human capital and the leadership abilities of its civil servants and business executives as the basis for its past economic development. Leadership and human capital will continue to form the basis of its future success in a digital world. The Singapore experience therefore provides useful lessons and reflections in leadership and human capital development for Australian leaders and executives.

We call on the Australian Government under the auspices of the Agreement, to encourage senior executive leaders across the public and private sectors to build capabilities required to provide policy, service delivery and business leadership in a digital economy. In-country programs such as the one we conduct with the e-government leadership centre, NUS can play a very useful role in developing such capabilities as well as in forging strong bonds of trust and understanding between public servants and business executives from both countries and the free exchange of knowledge and experience for mutual benefit.

## Conclusion

The Australia and Singapore Digital Economy Agreement is a very welcome framework which offers significant potential for Australia. However, such potential will only be realised if Australian executives and leaders across the public and private sectors have the capabilities and confidence to design effective policy, implement workable programs and build digitally capable businesses in a highly competitive, continually transforming digital landscape.

We believe that the Agreement provides energy and opportunity for such capabilities to be built and sustained and we call on the Australian Government to encourage and support the development of such digital leadership capabilities.

## About Yellow Edge

Yellow Edge is an Australian Canberra based consulting company focused on helping individuals, teams and organisations to achieve high performance.

Founded in 2002 on a clear set of values and an approach to our work that is client centred, our high performance work is carried out through the following business streams:

- Capability development in many areas including helping leaders drive digital transformation and change including leading people through change and disruption as well as finding and keeping the right people, building and sustaining high performing teams and tapping into external and networked talent.
- Leadership development including executive cohesion, senior and middle level management and leadership development.
- Performance consulting including organisational alignment, executive cohesion, workforce planning, capability planning, business planning organisational reviews and design and performance management.
- Citizen and stakeholder engagement. We specialise in building solid engagement strategies for organisations as well as conduct stakeholder engagement processes on their behalf with citizens, communities and business stakeholders.
- Executive coaching including for senior executives up to chief executive level.

Yellow Edge is a digitally enabled company. All our operating and communication systems are Cloud based, we use a range of third party digital apps to manage various aspects of our business. Yellow Edge is applying to be a member of the Digital Marketplace.

Of relevance to this submission and reflective of our interest in forging closer ties with countries that matter to Australia, Yellow Edge has and continues to conduct its flagship Global Leadership Practices (GLP) Programs. These include:

- GLP To China. Conducted in partnership with the China Executive Leadership Academy, Pudong. This program is in its 10<sup>th</sup> year.
- GLP to India. Conducted in partnership with the Welingkar Institute, one of India's top 10 business schools. This program is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- GLP to Washington DC. Conducted in partnership with the Centre for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Studies at Georgetown University. Yellow Edge conducted this program for 4 years.
- GLP to Singapore. Conducted in partnership with the e-government centre for leadership at the National University of Singapore. Yellow Edge conducted its first program in November 2018.