



MID WEST DIGITAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

2026-2031



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Acknowledgement of Country

Mid West Development Commission acknowledges the Yamatji people as the Traditional Owners of the Mid West region, which includes the Amangu, Nhanhagardi, Wilinyu, Naaguja, Badimia, Widi, Nanda, Mullewa Wadjari and Wajarri people. The Commission also acknowledges the Yugunga-Nya people near the Western Desert and the Yued people to the south.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community and pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders; past, present and emerging.

Photo credit: Tourism Western Australia

FOREWORD

Message from the Minister

Western Australia is the strongest economy in the nation and digital is only expanding our horizon. The Mid West has a key role to play in making the most of this opportunity. However, the scale, pace, and complexity of this task underline the need for a coordinated strategy – there is real value here worth the effort to realise.

A digital economy is not just approaching, it is already here – connecting people, technology, and ideas globally. It is creating jobs across the Mid West, driving new opportunities for remote and regional businesses, and bridging challenges of distance to improve access to essential services like healthcare and education. This Strategy frames the effort, activity, and collaboration needed to build on these strong foundations and realise our vision of the Mid West as a digital economy.

The Western Australian Government is committed to cementing its position as the nation's economic powerhouse, continuing to deliver record job growth, and ensuring the prosperity and resilience of our economy and our communities. The digital economy is centre to this commitment: we will realise the opportunities presented by investing in and attracting major job-creating digital industries, driving economic diversification, and equipping our people with the skills needed for the jobs and lives of today, and of tomorrow.

I look forward to seeing the activities and partnerships of this Strategy accelerate the opportunities for the region.

Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC

Minister for Regional Development; Ports; Science and Innovation; Medical Research; Kimberley



Message from the Board

A place of natural beauty, rugged resilience, and determined innovators, the Mid West is open to the boundless opportunities brought on by the digital economy.

We aim to support an enabling environment for businesses and communities alike to establish, build, or lead their digital economy journey in the Mid West. To achieve this our focus is the drivers of the digital economy – our people, our communities, and our businesses.

As the Mid West region adapts to a rapidly changing digital environment, we are driving forward innovative solutions to traditional challenges in accessing markets, information, and services and delivering essential infrastructure. We recognise that inclusive access to digital technologies and skills is a key challenge for our region and strive for a digital region that broadens choice and opportunity for all.

As a Western Australian Government entity, the Mid West Development Commission's role is to coordinate and promote economic and social development, which includes the development of this Strategy for the region. We are but one player in the digital economy ecosystem, and will work with our partners and government counterparts to progress the digital economy objectives in this Strategy, which were developed to align with feedback and observations from over 400 stakeholders across the region.

The diverse communities across our region are at different stages of their digital economy journey. This Strategy aims to support and facilitate digital leadership, while guiding and enabling the fundamental inputs needed to provide a strong foundation for a thriving region.

Lara Dalton

Board Chair, Mid West Development Commission



INTRODUCTION

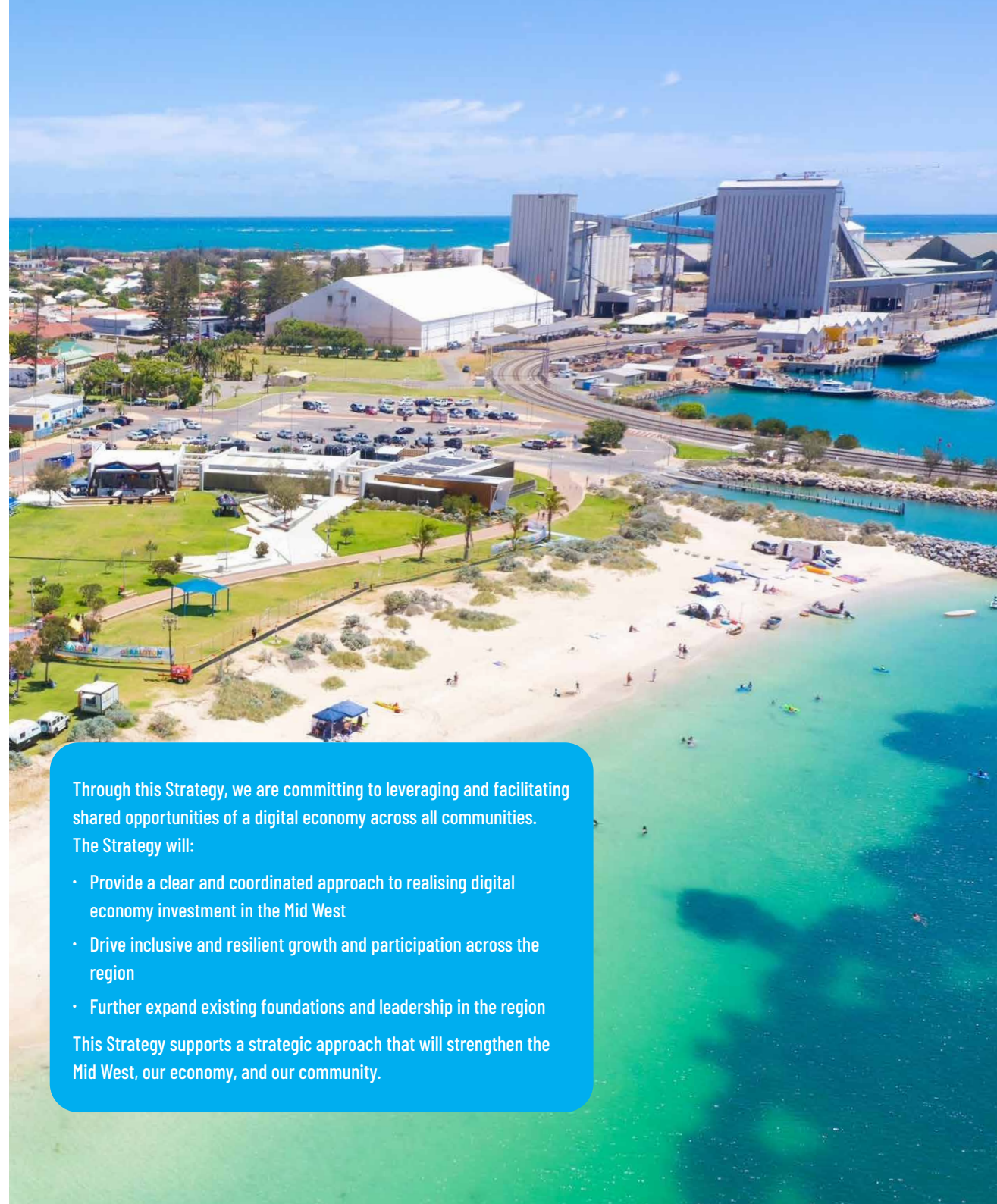
The digital economy will strengthen our communities and economy by creating diverse jobs and industries, harnessing our natural strengths and resources, advancing the energy transition, improving access to infrastructure and services, and lifting regional liveability.

As technology rapidly evolves, the digital economy is no longer a distant concept but a driving force behind economic development, workforce transformation, and community resilience. For regional and rural areas, a digital economy presents pathways to overcome traditional barriers of access, distance, and scale, enabling local industries, businesses, and communities to thrive.

In a digital economy, the diversity of the Mid West is a strength. Digitalising key regional sectors like mining and agriculture, and advancing the development of sustainable technologies, digital infrastructure, and future-ready skills will unlock new pathways for innovation and growth.

At its core, this Strategy is about people. It is about enabling our residents across town centres, remote communities, and Country, with the access, skills, and confidence to participate in a digital economy. It is about preparing our workforce for future jobs, supporting local businesses to innovate and grow, and using data and technology to improve services and decision-making across the region.

To achieve this, the Commission will collaborate, align, and partner with stakeholders across all tiers of government, industry sectors, community partners, and Aboriginal organisations. This Strategy outlines clear objectives, strategies, and opportunities across six key areas, through which we will focus digital economy activity.



Through this Strategy, we are committing to leveraging and facilitating shared opportunities of a digital economy across all communities.

The Strategy will:

- Provide a clear and coordinated approach to realising digital economy investment in the Mid West
- Drive inclusive and resilient growth and participation across the region
- Further expand existing foundations and leadership in the region

This Strategy supports a strategic approach that will strengthen the Mid West, our economy, and our community.

STRATEGY ON A PAGE

VISION

Our vision for the Mid West as a digital economy

A diverse digital economy where communities, businesses, and industries embrace digital technologies and skills, driving jobs, innovation, prosperity, and improved regional liveability.

We aim to accelerate the realisation of the Mid West's digital potential by connecting communities, boosting industry productivity, elevating local businesses, empowering Aboriginal people, supporting climate resilience, and promoting inclusive growth.



PRINCIPLES

The principles that will guide how this Strategy is implemented



Local Value



Collaborative



Human-Centred



Proactive and Innovative



Accessible and Inclusive



Sustainable



Resilient



Secure



STRATEGIC THEMES

The pillars of the Mid West digital economy, and where activity, advocacy, and investment will be focused



Building our Digital Skills and Workforce



Leveraging Connectivity and Infrastructure



Promoting Digital for Business, Industry, and Innovation



Fostering Collaboration and Investment



Delivering Value to the Community



Facilitating Economic Transformation and Resilience



INDICATIVE FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

Priority initiatives the Commission will work with partners and stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of

- + Mobile Digital Skills Library
- + Mid West Digital Economy Leadership Training Program
- + Digital Community Conversations
- + Digital Collaboration Network
- + Online Digital Resources Hub
- + Digital Start-Up Ecosystem
- + Mid West Digital Acceleration Program
- + Enhancing Mid West Digital Economy Profile
- + Digital Economy Investment Attraction
- + Cyber Safety Program
- + Evidence-Based Digital Affordability and Equity
- + Digital and Emerging Technology Expo
- + Digital Economy Accelerator for Key Industries

DEFINING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

The digital economy brings together two familiar concepts – ‘digital’ and ‘economy’. Combined, the range of possible interpretations of these concepts multiply.

We welcome a dynamic understanding of the digital economy, but our approach is practical: to realise the tangible value that digital can offer, rather than pursuing digital for digital's sake.

To help build shared understanding, we present several interpretive windows into ‘digital’, ‘economy’, and the ‘digital economy’.

What is Digital →

Digital might be understood in practice as generally relating to the electronic devices that make up our daily lives – smart phones, computers, emails, etc. However, fundamentally, digital refers to electronic devices that create, store, or process information. For instance,

- Traditional tractors are primarily mechanical heavy machinery, while modern models increasingly leverage digital systems such as GPS guidance, on-board sensors, and variable-rate technologies
- Modern electricity networks combine physical poles and wires with digital systems such as smart meters and virtual power plants

What is the Economy →

‘The economy’ might be broadly understood as referring or relating to business and industry, supply and demand, jobs and wages, money, and so on.

The Reserve Bank of Australia defines an economy as,

“the system for deciding how scarce resources are used so that goods and services can be produced and consumed.”¹

What is the Digital Economy →

A digital economy can be as simple as it sounds – using technology, data, or innovation to further the economic potential of an industry, business, region, or community, which could include:

- Local businesses with an online presence and a digital marketing plan
- Industries leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency and product quality
- Students who are developing and applying their automation, robotics, data analytics, or cyber security skills
- Households who feel confident and empowered to use online platforms and access digital services
- Public and private sector investment in digital infrastructure and connectivity

A digital economy recognises the value of investing in digital approaches to drive social, economic or environmental outcomes and deliver tangible benefits.

Our definitions and interpretations may vary, however, the WA Government defines a digital economy as:

“All economic activity reliant on, or significantly enhanced by the use of digital inputs, including digital technologies, digital infrastructure, digital services, and data. It refers to all producers and consumers, including government, that are utilising these digital inputs in their economic activities.”²

¹ Australian Government, Reserve Bank of Australia (2020), *What is the Economy?*

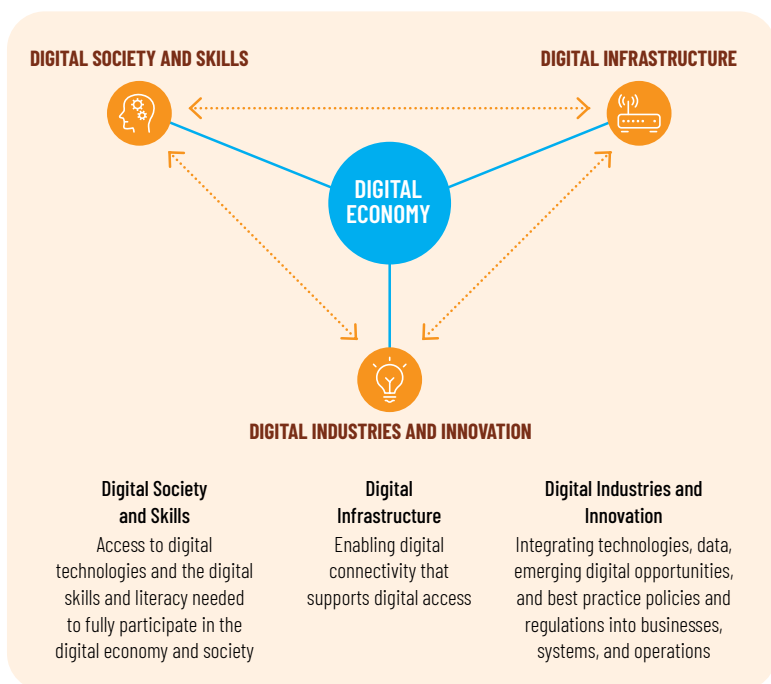
² Government of Western Australia Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (2024), *WA: Digitally Evolved, Digital Industries Acceleration Strategy*, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Breadth of the Digital Economy

A digital economy incorporates a range of influencing elements, which while interconnected, are not static. It embraces digital approaches that transform the factors of production, reaching across all aspects of a traditional economy including:

- Place and Environment
- People and Communities
- Institutions and Governance
- Industry Capital and Innovation
- Technology and Infrastructure

Applying these factors to the digital economy we can imagine it encompassing three pillars, the relative strength of which will vary over time, growing and retracting in response to strategic priorities and action. These pillars outline the scope of a digital economy and the breadth of activity this Strategy aims to address.



Approaches to the Digital Economy

Governments, industries, businesses or communities can maximise their economic opportunities by leaning into specialised digital approaches.

Particular areas of focus could include:



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Machine-based systems that infer, from the input they receive, how to generate outputs.



Automation

The use of technology or other automatic equipment to perform tasks with minimal human intervention.



Agricultural Technology (Agtech)

Technology used in agricultural operations, such as sensors, drones, autonomous vehicles, and variable-rate technologies.



Space Industry

All economic activity, including goods and services related to space, such as radio-astronomy and satellite connectivity.



Smart Technologies

Digital networks, sensors, and systems that support the delivery of smart services and assets.



Robotics

The branch of technology that relates to the design, production, and use of robots.



Mining Equipment, Technology, and Services (METS)

Digital systems and equipment that enhance mining operations through automation, robotics, remote monitoring, etc.



THE CASE FOR DIGITAL

The digital economy is not just about faster internet – it is about opportunity, inclusion, and resilience.

Digital is fast becoming a cornerstone of economic development across Australia, driving innovation and productivity. While this growth offers a range of opportunities for regions, aligned and coordinated action is needed to realise equitable benefits for all.



Industry and Business

- **Drives growth:** Digital skills and capabilities enable businesses to innovate, grow, and connect, creating jobs, expanding opportunities, and building a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient regional economy
- **Increases efficiency:** Traditional sectors are adopting digital technologies and automation to streamline processes, simplify compliance or optimise administrative tasks
- **Reduces barriers:** Digital technologies reduce traditional barriers to economic participation, connecting communities, businesses, and industries to new markets, services, and opportunities
- **Attracts skills:** A strong digital economy makes regional industries more appealing to skilled workers, especially in technology and innovation sectors
- **Creates resilience and flexibility:** Regional businesses hit by climate events or market disruptions can adapt faster with digital tools for remote work, online services, and customer engagement



Governments

- **Improves and expands service delivery:** Digital platforms allow for more efficient and accessible services like health, education, and social support, even in remote areas
- **Enhances policy and governance:** Data analysis informs policy and enables governments to respond faster to community needs
- **Supports economic and social goals:** Digital inclusion initiatives recognise the link between social and economic outcomes, connecting growth and productivity priorities with individual opportunity, engagement, and wellbeing



Communities

- **Increases access to services:** Online platforms reduce the disadvantage faced by regional and remote communities with limited local services
- **Supports social participation:** Digital access is crucial for participating in society, accessing information, and staying connected



Aboriginal Organisations

- **Supports cultural empowerment:** Digital platforms can support Aboriginal communities to preserve and share culture, language, and knowledge on their own terms
- **Digital sovereignty:** There is a growing movement for Aboriginal communities to have control over their own data and digital infrastructure, key to self-determination and cultural safety

BY 2030

the additional economic benefit from broadband-supported technology in the Australian agriculture sector could be between

\$3–10.6 billion
per year³

The **TECH SECTOR** is Australia's third-largest industry, adding

\$167 billion
to GDP and employing
861,000 PEOPLE,

with jobs growing at nearly twice the national average⁴

In WA alone, the NBN network has enabled an estimated

18,200 JOBS,
8,100 BUSINESSES,

and

\$20.5 billion

in GDP uplift, with remote communities seeing up to **16 times** the productivity gains of major cities (2012–2022)⁵

AROUND

1 in 5
(20.6%)

Australians are

DIGITALLY EXCLUDED or **HIGHLY DIGITALLY EXCLUDED,**

with higher rates of exclusion for people aged 75+ (66.5%) and First Nations people (40.9%)⁶

³ Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (2021), *Working paper—Economic impact of ubiquitous high speed broadband: agriculture sector*

⁴ Tech Council Australia (2021), *The economic contribution of Australia's tech sector*

⁵ NBN Co and Accenture (2024), *The economic and social impact of investment in the nbn network*

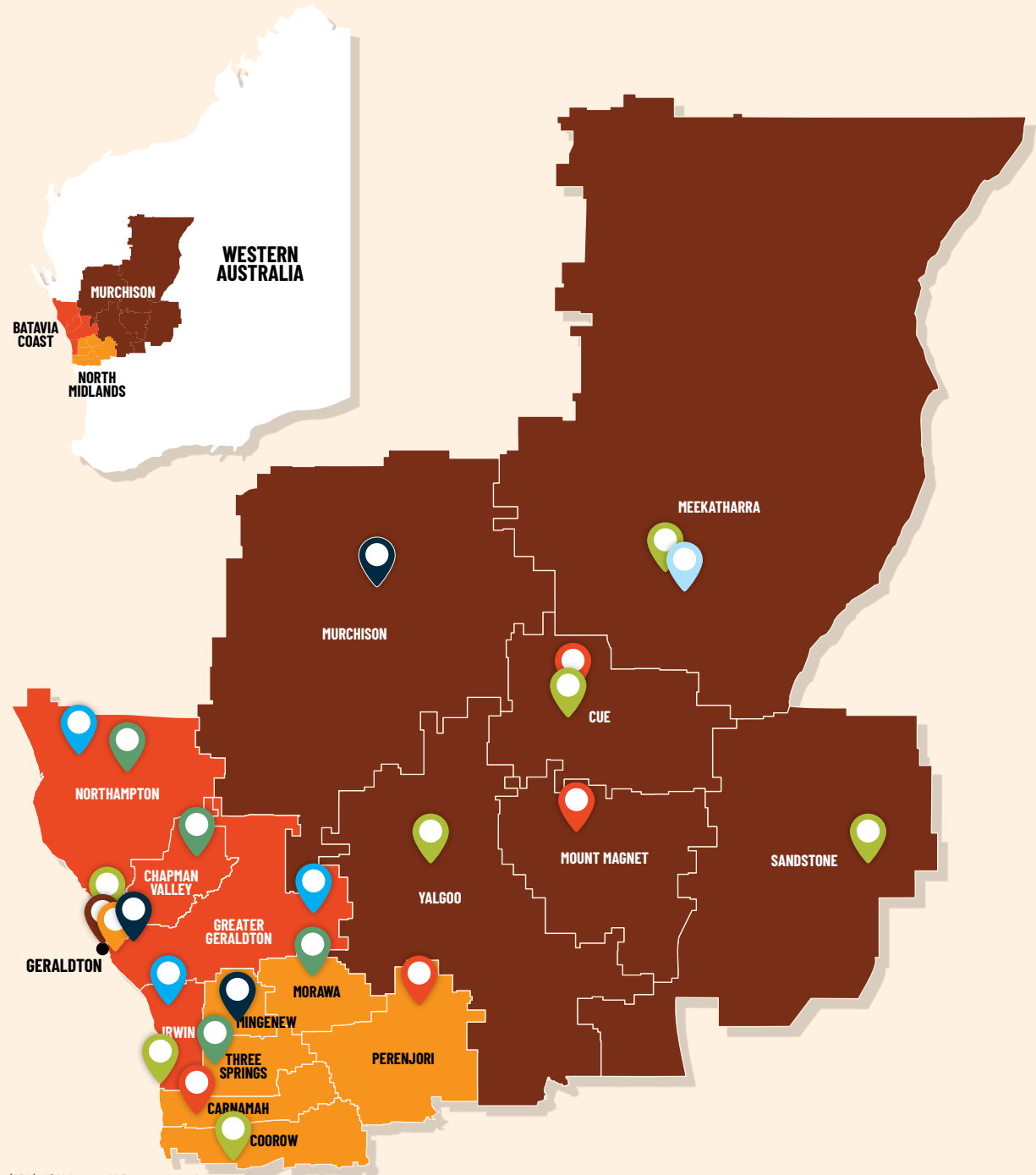
⁶ ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology & Telstra (2025), *Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: 2025 Australian Digital Inclusion Index*



THE MID WEST

The Mid West is diverse, stretching across 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and incorporating coastline, agricultural and pastoral lands, as well as mining and space activity. At approximately 285,000km² the Mid West is slightly larger than New Zealand (263,310km²).

The Mid West's subregions each bring distinct digital strengths and challenges. The map below provides a snapshot into each subregion's economic profile.⁷ Pins mark a sample of digital case studies, projects, and assets across the region.



	BATAVIA COAST	MURCHISON	NORTH MIDLANDS
POPULATION ⁸	47,952	2,618	3,878
MEDIAN AGE ⁷	42	38	47
DIGITAL INCLUSION INDEX ⁹	69	61	67
PARTICIPATION RATE ⁷	58.5%	45.2%	53.7%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD WEEKLY INCOME ⁷	\$1,496	\$1,234	\$1,326
KEY INDUSTRIES ⁷	Health Care and Social Assistance	Mining	Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing
	Retail Trade	Accommodation and Food Services	Mining
	Education and Training	Construction	Education and Training

⁷ All subregional data has been calculated using population-weighted LGA-level data. Sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021 Census All Persons QuickStats.

⁸ REMPLAN, *Mid West Region Demographic and Community Insights and Mid West Region Economy, Jobs and Business Insights* (data derived from ABS, 2021 Census), <https://app.remplan.com.au/mid-west-region/community/summary>.

⁹ ADII Dashboard (2025), *The National Picture* (WA, 2024).

DIGITAL ECONOMY IN THE REGION

Our collaborative network, including industry, governments, and community groups is actively leveraging the Region's comparative digital advantages, integrating digital solutions, and progressing digital innovation across the Mid West.

A small cross-section of these digital economy case studies, projects, and assets in the region have been mapped and outlined.

Invest Mid West

The Mid West has an expanse of exciting digital economy projects underway or ready to break ground.

Check out the opportunities and success stories.



Expanding Connectivity

Access to connectivity is being improved across the region, with rollouts of public Wi-Fi in Geraldton and Dongara-Port Denison and nbn fibre network upgrades in Geraldton, Northampton, Dongara-Port Denison, and Mullewa. Satellite connectivity is also unlocking high-speed access with competition set to increase following NBN Co's partnership with Amazon's satellite broadband business, Project Kuiper.



Regional Digital Hub

Reliable connectivity, affordable living, and access to local training through the Geraldton Universities Centre and Central Regional TAFE position Geraldton as the Region's digital and service hub, and an ideal place to start or scale digital businesses. This is exemplified by local success stories Westnet (acquired by iiNet for \$81 million in 2008) and LogicIT who continue to provide key IT services across the Mid West.



Tech-Forward Agriculture

Supporting farmers' access to connectivity and technology is vital to the industry's financial sustainability and resilience. Acting as an enabler for the uptake of agtech, the WA Government's Digital Farms Programs delivered enterprise-grade broadband services to farms in key agricultural areas across the Mid West.



Access to Global Markets

The Mid West's export infrastructure is a well-recognised asset and a strong lever for digital growth. Digital access to global and domestic markets is also a comparative regional strength, with existing fibre networks to be expanded under Vocus' Project Horizon. This will include a high-capacity, low-latency link from the Mid West, through to the Pilbara, and onto Darwin and Singapore.



Critical Digital Minerals

The Mid West hosts a range of mineral resources of national and state significance that are essential inputs in digital supply chains including battery manufacturing, defence technologies, and the net-zero transition. Commitments to capturing onshore value are driving flagship investments in projects such as the Eneabba Rare Earths Refinery. Supporting the ability of businesses and innovators to design and implement digital solutions to capture more of the critical minerals value chain is key to fully realising this opportunity.



Maturing Space Industry

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) and Mingenew Space Precinct are major radio-astronomy and space industry operations delivering value to the Mid West's economy. They provide local jobs and supplier contracts, skilled worker attraction and skill transfer, and research and innovation leadership. This established space industry also carries potential for new markets, diversification, and industry opportunity. The AARNET high-capacity fibre extension delivered as part of the SKA project will also establish new backhaul infrastructure and access points, supporting greater community connectivity.



Green Energy Production and Carbon Transition

Climate resilience and low-carbon transition are key regional priorities supported by flagship projects such as the Mid West Clean Energy Project and the Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area, alongside initiatives like the WA Microgrid Programs active in the Shires of Cue, Meekatharra, Sandstone, and Yalgoo. These initiatives strengthen the Mid West's position as a digital and innovation leader, while supporting reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy supply that is key to enabling digital industry growth.



Affordability, Liveability, and Wellbeing

Community-led digital solutions that leverage existing digital networks and capabilities can deliver real, lasting local benefits. Yulella Aboriginal Corporation's *Vision* shop is one example—connecting Meekatharra locals to more affordable essential goods and fresh produce from a major Geraldton supermarket via a coordinated "click and collect" delivery service. Initiatives like this strengthen liveability and wellbeing by easing cost-of-living pressures and improving access to competitive markets and essential services

KEY PLAYERS AND PARTNERS

The Mid West has a strong network of digital economy players, partners, and potential collaborators. A sample of key digital stakeholder groups, their digital role and significance in the region are highlighted below.



INDUSTRY AND REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS are drivers of innovation, knowledge sharing and research development. Creating the enabling conditions for digital transformation across key industries such as mining, agriculture, and space is central to this Strategy.



UTILITY AND SERVICE PROVIDERS are core to regional liveability and the viability of digital economies. Ingraining principles of equity, inclusion, resilience, and sustainability into utility and service provision is key to ensuring a competitive regional digital economy.



GOVERNMENT, REGULATORS, AND POLICYMAKERS frame, coordinate, and distribute resources. Developing productive relationships with regulators and policy makers requires regular engagement and strategic advocacy tailored to regional strengths and challenges.



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES are essential building blocks for digital skills and innovation. Encouraging local digital education and research pathways, and targeted regional interventions is a necessity for developing the literacy and skills needed to engage in the digital economy.



ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITIES are key regional partners, providing cultural knowledge, workforce capability, critical services, and connection to local Aboriginal communities. They are significant landowners and Custodians of Country as Traditional Owners. Empowering Aboriginal people to participate and innovate in the digital economy and build their digital literacy and skills are core to realising the region's digital potential.



COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE are the foundation and drivers of the digital economy. Digital economy success means creating the conditions for people and communities to participate fully in digital economy and life. It ensures that the benefits of digital transformation are realised within, and by local communities and people.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING PARTNERS deliver infrastructure, build industries, and foster growth. As strategic grounds for investment in the Mid West grow, directing funding to high-value digital opportunities that deliver benefit to both investors and the region alike is imperative.



SMALL BUSINESSES AND INNOVATORS play a crucial role in economic growth, job production, and technology innovation and adoption. Strengthening access to funding, resources, and tailored digital support is essential to address digital awareness and adoption challenges for firms often focused on day-to-day delivery.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Mid West Development Commission, as a Western Australian Government statutory authority, works with partners across local, state, and Federal governments to coordinate and promote economic and social development. This Strategy aims to align and further the goals and priorities of our region.

State Government Directions

The Western Australian Government has a core set of existing strategies that focus the opportunities for a digital economy through infrastructure, economic diversification, and skills and inclusion.

WA Government Priorities 2025-2029¹⁰

The WA Government have outlined their priorities for 2025-2029, with a focus on strengthening and diversifying the economy, supporting quality jobs, housing and healthcare, and supporting leadership in resources and renewable energy.

The Mid West and this Strategy have the opportunity to play a key part in realising:

- Global leadership in investment attraction, industry facilitation and regulation
- Ambitions as a renewable energy powerhouse
- Enhanced workforce skills and productivity
- Increased local production
- Economic vibrancy and creativity

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT	KEY AREAS OF INVESTMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
<p>Diversify WA 2024 Update (2024)</p> <p>WA's economic development framework setting out a vision for a strong and diversified economy, delivering secure, quality jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and support talent, skills, and workforce • Access to digital infrastructure and pilot programs
<p>WA: Digitally Evolved – Digital Industries Acceleration Strategy (2024)</p> <p>Aims to accelerate the digital transformation and uplift of WA businesses and industries, driving economic growth and diversification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to fixed and mobile broadband • Connectivity for regional farms and businesses • Test new technologies that improve connectivity • Free Wi-Fi hubs in public spaces
<p>Made in WA (2025)</p> <p>Sets out a pathway to a diverse and resilient WA economy through investment in job-creating projects, such as in manufacturing, supply-chain integration, and the clean energy transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurpose technology for those who need it • Digital literacy and personal digital skills support at community centres • Digital access and skills, and STEM training in WA schools and TAFE
<p>Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint (2022)</p> <p>Opportunities to work collaboratively with partners to address barriers to digital inclusion including connectivity, affordability, skills, and design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber security and online scams awareness programs • Medical products and digital health
<p>Western Australia's 10-Year Science and Technology Plan (2025)</p> <p>A strategic vision to enhance the State's scientific and technological capabilities, driving economic growth, societal well-being, and environmental sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture and food innovation • Critical minerals advanced processing • Renewable energy and hydrogen industry • Carbon capture, utilisation and storage technology
<p>State Infrastructure Strategy: Regional Development (2022)</p> <p>Outlines the Government's long-term plan to address key infrastructure challenges and emerging opportunities. Regional Development was identified as a cross-cutting theme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space infrastructure and cross-sector technologies • Data sharing

¹⁰ Government of Western Australia (2025), *Our priorities for government 2025-2029*

National Perspectives and Federal Priorities

The Australian Government has identified a range of strategic priorities that further key components of the digital economy and support emerging opportunities to diversify and enhance the resilience of regional economies.

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT	KEY AREAS OF INVESTMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
<p>Australian Cyber Security Strategy (2023) Australia's plan to be a leader in cyber security by 2030.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and community cyber security skills, guidelines, and support
<p>List of Critical Technologies in the National Interest (2023) Technologies crucial for Australia's future economic prosperity, national security, and social cohesion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber security workforce and innovation • AI technologies • Advanced information and communication technologies • Quantum technologies
<p>Industry Growth Program (2024) Supports innovative SMEs undertaking commercialisation or growth projects that will build Australian capabilities in priority areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous systems, robotics, positioning, timing, and sensing • Biotechnologies • Clean energy generation and storage technologies
<p>Australia's Net Zero Plan (2025) Sets a target of reducing Australia's emissions by 62%-70% on 2005 levels by 2035 on the path to Net Zero.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewables and low emissions technologies • Lowering emissions and clean electricity across the economy
<p>National AI Plan (2025) Sets out the steps for Australia to build an AI-enabled economy that is more competitive, productive, and resilient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-add in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors • Value-add in resources • Defence capability

Closing the Gap

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap has 19 national socio-economic targets across areas that have an impact on life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2025 there was mixed progress on these targets. Digital inclusion is a key aspect of the Government's commitment to Closing the Gap:

- **Outcome 17:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.
- **Target 17:** By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion

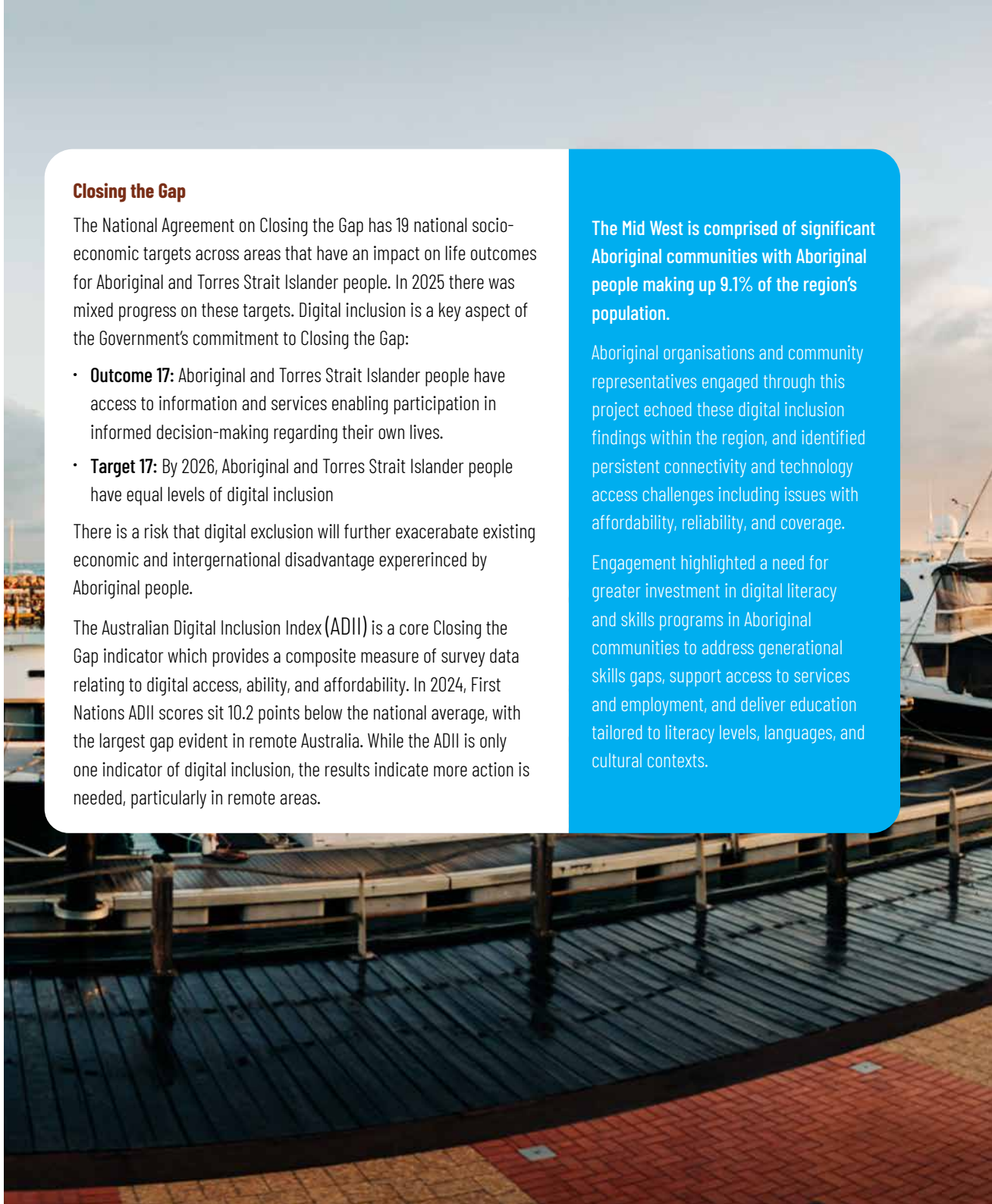
There is a risk that digital exclusion will further exacerbate existing economic and intergenerational disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people.

The Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) is a core Closing the Gap indicator which provides a composite measure of survey data relating to digital access, ability, and affordability. In 2024, First Nations ADII scores sit 10.2 points below the national average, with the largest gap evident in remote Australia. While the ADII is only one indicator of digital inclusion, the results indicate more action is needed, particularly in remote areas.

The Mid West is comprised of significant Aboriginal communities with Aboriginal people making up 9.1% of the region's population.

Aboriginal organisations and community representatives engaged through this project echoed these digital inclusion findings within the region, and identified persistent connectivity and technology access challenges including issues with affordability, reliability, and coverage.

Engagement highlighted a need for greater investment in digital literacy and skills programs in Aboriginal communities to address generational skills gaps, support access to services and employment, and deliver education tailored to literacy levels, languages, and cultural contexts.



Regional Priorities

This Strategy aims to bring together existing work and priorities by the Commission and other regional players across the enabling factors and pillars of the digital economy.

Mid West Development Commission Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan sets out the Commission's approach to enable the boundless opportunities across the region, in collaboration and alignment with public and private sector partners and communities. The digital economy is but one input supporting this vision, furthering the Region's advantages, and supporting the Commission's overarching strategic initiatives.

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT	AREAS OF ALIGNMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
<p>A Digitally-Enabled Future: A Digital & Communications Strategy for Australia's Mid West (2016)</p>	<p>Focusing on digital and communications, the Strategy aimed to support digital empowerment and innovation, competitive mobile and network infrastructure, and competitive local industries.</p>
<p>Invest Mid West (2025)</p>	<p>Focusing on attracting direct investment into the region, Invest Mid West covers a range of digital and digitally-enabled industries of comparative advantage including space, advanced manufacturing, tourism, energy transition, mining and mining services, and marine services.</p>



ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

In developing this Strategy, stakeholders across the Mid West were engaged. The graphics below provide an outline of the engagement process, outcomes, and findings.



440

STAKEHOLDERS

contributed from across the Mid West

- > Batavia Coast
- > Murchison
- > North Midlands

ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS

- Workshops
- Interviews
- Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Submissions

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

- Community and Households
- Industry and Businesses
- Aboriginal Organisations and Communities
- Local and State Government Agencies
- Digital and Technology Sectors

KEY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Throughout engagement, the value and potential of the digital economy was recognised. Aspirational attitudes were balanced by a practical focus on strengths, challenges, and priorities. A selection of these are signposted below.

Building Digital Literacy, Skills, and Awareness

Strengthening Infrastructure Reliability and Resilience

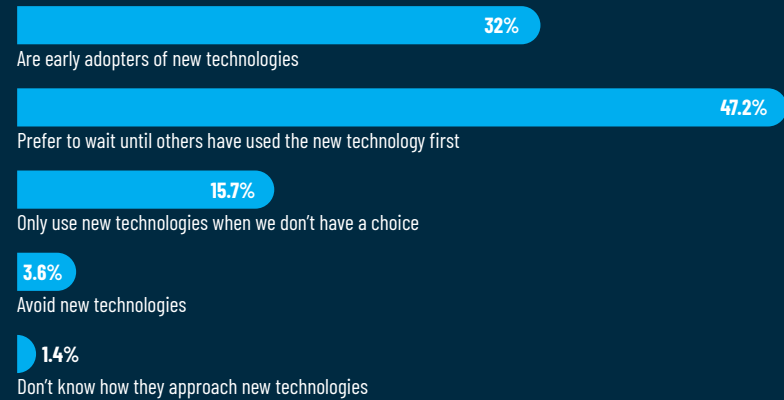
Improving Affordability and Access

Driving Renewable and Sustainable Growth

Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships

Supporting Digital Services and Adoption

350+ VOICES indicated they:



DIGITAL ECONOMY AIMS (N=74)

- 1 Enhancing regional liveability through digital
- 2 Expanding digital access and connectivity
- 3 Attracting investment and new industries
- 4 Building local digital skills and literacy
- 5 Maximising use of digital infrastructure

HIGH-VALUE TECHNOLOGIES (N=61)

- Satellite connectivity
- Remote services (e.g. telehealth)
- Precision agriculture and agtech
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning
- Cyber security and digital literacy initiatives

DIGITAL ECONOMY SWOT

The Mid West is emerging as a connected, innovative, and investment-ready region, powered by strong industries, expanding digital infrastructure, and a growing culture of collaboration.

Continued focus on inclusion, skills, and connectivity will ensure all communities share in the Region's digital future. Insights from across research and engagement highlight the Region's strengths to build on, challenges to address, opportunities to pursue, and threats to manage.

DIGITAL STRENGTHS

Strong Digital Foundations: Growing fibre connectivity in particular areas is strengthening digital competitiveness and community access

Skilled and Innovative Workforces and Industries: Access to digitally skilled workforces enables digital adoption and deeper supply-chain integration

Strategic Location: A resource-rich region with critical minerals, export infrastructure, and expanding space and defence industries drive digital investment potential

Green Energy Supply and Potential: Renewable energy production and increasing transmission capacity create opportunities for reliable, affordable, and sustainable digital growth

Appealing Regional Lifestyle: Affordable living, regional lifestyles, and strong digital foundations support digital talent attraction and retention

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

Support Digital Skills and Literacy: Building local capability and skill development pathways will empower residents and businesses to adopt new technologies, improve productivity, and grow the region's digital industry

Drive Inclusive Digital Participation: Ensuring all communities have access to connectivity, tools, and training will close participation gaps and strengthen regional cohesion

Raise Awareness of Digital Opportunities: Promoting digital success stories and practical benefits will help businesses and communities recognise digital transformation as a tangible opportunity

Strengthen Regional Collaboration: Fostering government, industry, education, and community digital partnerships will enable knowledge sharing, coordinated activity and regional innovation

Accelerate Clean Energy Transition: Advocating for continued clean energy transition and digital innovation in energy systems will drive digital productivity, resilience, and economic diversification

DIGITAL CHALLENGES

Digital Literacy and Skills: Targeted digital literacy and digital access and affordability initiatives are needed to address pockets of digital exclusion within the region

Future Workforce Pathways: Targeted interventions from education providers are needed to ensure local workforces have access to the skills needed for future industries

Access to Technical Support: Building local maintenance and repair capability, and improving access to technical support will reduce downtime of digital infrastructure and services

Digital Culture: Promoting awareness, training, and leadership in digital innovation will help accelerate digital adoption and innovation across sectors

Barriers to Digital Adoption: Increasing affordability, simplifying processes, and improving business support will accelerate digital transformation and competitiveness

Connectivity and Energy Reliability: Continued investment in infrastructure and energy is needed to ensure reliable digital access and support digitalisation across the region

DIGITAL THREATS

Cyber Security and Privacy: Increased digital activity exposes the region to cyber security and privacy risks, requiring stronger awareness and security capabilities for government, community, and businesses

Digital Exclusion: Without equitable access to technology and skills, parts of the community risk being left behind in the digital transition, or miss the opportunity to overcome existing economic exclusion

Digital Infrastructure and Platforms: Aging backbone infrastructure, technology platforms, and digital services expose the region to digital vulnerabilities

Energy Supply: Unreliable, high-cost, or limited energy supply can constrain digital growth, making renewables integration and improved energy transmission vital

Digital Services: Inconsistent connectivity limits the reach of digitalised services and prevents equitable digital access across the region

VISION

Our vision for the Mid West as a digital economy:

A diverse digital economy where communities, businesses, and industries embrace digital technologies and skills, driving jobs, innovation, prosperity, and improved regional liveability.

Through this Strategy, we aim to:

- **Connect communities** and celebrate and promote the diversity of the Mid West region
- **Boost industry productivity** and encourage growth that is sustainable, diversified and locally made
- **Elevate local businesses** and strengthen workforce opportunities and resilience
- **Empower Aboriginal people** to choose their own future from a secure foundation
- **Support climate resilience**, the low carbon transition and renewable energy leadership
- **Promote inclusive growth** that ensures everyone is a part of the digital economy now and into the future



PRINCIPLES

Our principles describe the approach the Commission and partners will take to implement the Digital Economy Strategy. They reflect the values and expectations of stakeholders when using a digital economy lens.



Local Value

We align digital economy efforts to local issues and opportunities, generating value for Mid West industries, businesses and communities.



Collaborative

We realise digital economy outcomes with stakeholders across the region through broad dialogue, trust, and open participation.



Human-Centred

Digital investment and activity deliver tangible benefits to regional liveability and community outcomes across the region.



Proactive and Innovative

We take a forward-thinking approach to actively anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to digital economy challenges and opportunities.



Accessible and Inclusive

Digital economy services and technology are affordable and accessible to all across the diverse communities of the Mid West.



Sustainable

Investment in the digital economy supports efficient resource use, minimises environmental impact, and promotes clean energy production.



Resilient

Digital economy systems and infrastructure can withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptions, with ability to maintain access to essential services.



Safe and Secure

We foster trust and improve physical and digital safety through secure digital infrastructure, design, and capabilities, and by empowering our community to do the same.

BUILDING OUR DIGITAL SKILLS AND WORKFORCE

The digital economy is changing the way we engage with services, businesses, and our community. Access to digital skills, education opportunities, and local job pathways is crucial in supporting communities and businesses engage in the digital economy and the broader economic landscape.

Objectives

- Increase digital and data literacy levels
- Grow local workforce skills and capabilities in the digital economy



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Highlighting local digital opportunities and benefits

MURCHISON

Identifying and breaking down barriers to digital participation and skills

NORTH MIDLANDS

Building local digital literacy maturity

Strategies

- Promote accessible education opportunities including through remote learning, local training providers, and community-based initiatives, focused on technology, data, STEM, and related fields, to strengthen the digital economy workforce of each subregion.
- Support pathways for local educators and community leaders to build their digital skills, aiming to encourage local-led teaching and learning.
- Work with regional stakeholders to understand distinct goals and barriers for digital and data participation, particularly for priority groups including Aboriginal communities, remote residents, youth, and older workers.
- Connect regional stakeholders with WA and Australian Government agencies and potential partners to attract investment, resources, and expertise for community digital training programs.
- Encourage local businesses and industry to upskill and reskill the local workforce by sharing training resources and tools, identifying grant opportunities, and promoting benefits of digital transformation.
- Facilitate a partnership network, specific to each subregion, that encourages relevant industry and education stakeholders to identify and support local digital economy needs, skills, and career pathways.
- Collaborate with WA Government agencies to identify high-priority avenues to meet (or exceed) minimum standards for digital access and skill development in regional schools.

Industry Opportunities

Government

Establish or expand community digital learning hubs with free Wi-Fi, devices, and digital resources in key community spaces and government buildings

Education

Develop modular digital skills courses in industry-aligned areas that can be combined into qualifications

Expand remote education opportunities to support greater education engagement

Local Businesses

Explore free online resources to identify digital opportunities, upskill teams, enhance productivity, or streamline business administration

LEVERAGING CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Connectivity is the backbone infrastructure of the digital economy. Our region has the opportunity to capitalise on a strong fibre and backhaul network, however driving greater connectivity and infrastructure access, coverage, and reliability across the Mid West is critical to supporting our digital economy aspirations.

Objectives

- Maximise use of existing connectivity and infrastructure
- Improve the coverage and quality of connectivity and infrastructure



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Supporting access to connectivity information, services, and support

MURCHISON

Exploring connectivity solutions that mitigate regional and remote safety and reliability risks

NORTH MIDLANDS

Encouraging expanded public connectivity access in key community spaces

Strategies

- Support public and private activities to upgrade the quality and reliability of existing infrastructure to meet future demand for connectivity across public and private spaces.
- Work across all levels of government, service organisations, businesses, and community groups to increase awareness of available connectivity options, digital tools, and programs tailored to each subregion.
- Work with partners to enable investment in last mile connectivity including Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and other satellite technologies in low coverage, black spots, or remote communities to bridge the gap between telecommunications service providers and end-users.
- Encourage improvements in community connectivity infrastructure in local planning (e.g., public Wi-Fi), to expand access and increase use, and leverage community infrastructure and services.

Industry Opportunities

Government

Encourage connectivity service provision, maintenance, and competition

Education

Maximise use of existing digital infrastructure to support pathways to advanced digital skills

Industry

Explore opportunities to share or leverage private digital infrastructure to support community access

Telecommunications

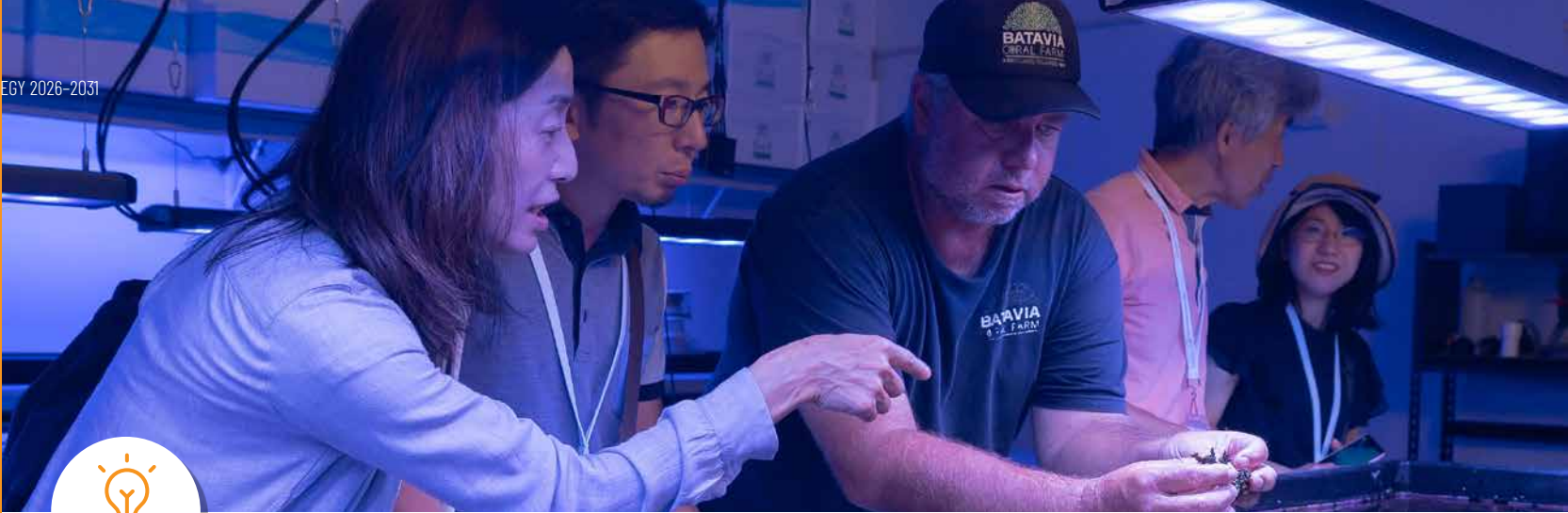
Investigate opportunities to expand or improve existing connectivity infrastructure in line with current and future demand

PROMOTING DIGITAL FOR BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND INNOVATION

The Mid West is home to innovators and leaders. Our businesses – small and large – are constantly collaborating or adapting to the environment around them, and how we approach data, technologies and other innovations in the digital economy is no different.

Objectives

- Increase digital activity and maturity of businesses and industries
- Enhance productivity and competitiveness of businesses and industries



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Boosting local business productivity and technology uptake

MURCHISON

Integrating local innovation and technology into supply chains or production and distribution processes

NORTH MIDLANDS

Connecting businesses and industries to digital adoption resources

Strategies

- Act as an enabler for a digital startup, small business, and innovation ecosystem, to facilitate sharing of digital tools, skills, and resources and foster digital confidence across the region.
- Work with partners to support tailored digital programs and funding models that improve regional productivity and resilience, particularly in high-impact sectors and SMEs.
- Work with business associations, the technology sector, and all levels of government to support affordable and scalable technology adoption programs for local businesses and industries.
- Champion local examples of successful digital adoption and innovation in key industries to encourage and enable sector-wide productivity and competitiveness.
- Explore how Mid West industries and businesses can further integrate into existing technology and innovation supply chains, or production and distribution processes.

Industry Opportunities

Mining

Strengthen local supply chain and innovation through targeted procurement, and by supporting applied research and funding

Construction

Identify opportunities to integrate into established and emerging digital industry supply chains

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

Support regional adoption, innovation, and knowledge sharing of agricultural and business technologies

Local Businesses

Promote business innovations and share implementation approaches or lessons with other businesses

FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND INVESTMENT

A diverse and expansive region, the Mid West poses a unique digital value proposition. Collaboration is key to driving meaningful benefits and positioning the region for the very best digital opportunities that attract people to visit, live, work, and invest in the Mid West.

Objectives

- Expand digital partnerships across the Region
- Position the Mid West as a digital economy leader



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Showcasing the Region's digital initiatives and potential

MURCHISON

Co-designing digital initiatives and investment opportunities

NORTH MIDLANDS

Highlighting digital investments and catalysing local supply-chain integration with broader industry production and distribution processes

Strategies

- Promote the region's digital capabilities, sector strengths, and innovation ecosystem to other government agencies and national or international investment partners as a compelling investment destination, leveraging the Invest Mid West platform.
- Enable pilot initiatives and research and development (R&D) that strengthens innovation ecosystems, supports digital industries, responds to regional needs, and connects government, industry, academia, international partners, and community.
- Partner with Aboriginal organisations and communities to support self-determined digital development, including co-designed digital inclusion strategies, and the promotion of Aboriginal innovation and leadership in the digital economy.
- Coordinate with all levels of government, local businesses, industry, and community groups to align messaging and build the brand of the Mid West as a digital economy.
- Leverage digital approaches to support the visitor economy and tourism impact measurement in conjunction with the tourism industry and partners.

Industry Opportunities

Government

Identify cross-collaboration funding opportunities for digital economy pilots and initiatives

Tourism

Explore collaborative opportunities to integrate established and emerging technologies into services and marketing

Aboriginal Organisations

Showcase opportunities for partnered digital industry investment and development

DELIVERING VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY

A digital economy aims to work with and boost up communities – addressing key strengths and challenges through digital means. Aligning digital investment with local and regional priorities facilitates stronger economic and community outcomes.

Objectives

- Improve community value derived from digital economy investments
- Enhance digital access to key services
- Improve cyber security capabilities and outcomes



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Advocating for targeted investment in digital infrastructure and tailored community skills programs

MURCHISON

Expanding access to connectivity, technology, and services through community hubs and resources

NORTH MIDLANDS

Leveraging investment in digital industries to realise long-term benefits to the community

Strategies

- Explore opportunities to work with new and existing industries in the region and extend current and existing digital infrastructure investments to deliver community value.
- Support locally available, culturally appropriate cyber safety education and awareness programs tailored to the digital literacy and capabilities of the communities, businesses, and industries of each subregion.
- Elevate regional, including Aboriginal, voices in public and private digital, technology and cyber security agendas, ensuring community and Aboriginal priorities and needs inform investment and policy.
- Encourage the integration of smart community infrastructure in local planning (e.g., public Wi-Fi, smart sensors, CCTV), to increase community digital access points, support data collection, and encourage community cohesion.
- Promote access and inclusion in the design of digitalised government and essential services to ensure digital delivery does not create service access barriers, and are culturally and accessibly appropriate.
- Facilitate access and support pathways to essential digital services such as telehealth, digital community health services, or Services Australia.
- Work with the WA and Australian Governments for targeted investment in digital infrastructure, to bridge connectivity or affordability gaps that limit access to essential services in remote areas.

Industry Opportunities

Government

Ensure services that are digitalised remain accessible to all through co-design with priority groups

Health

Expand telehealth opportunities to improve service accessibility

Education

Expand remote education opportunities to support greater education engagement for rural and remote students

Telecommunications

Explore opportunities to address safety implications from unreliable coverage



FACILITATING ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND RESILIENCE

Embracing innovation responsibly requires balancing ambition with sustainability, adaptability, and resilience. Strengthening connections and resilience across key regional sectors such as agriculture, mining, energy, and the space industry, will support a digital economy that is both robust and future-focused.

Objectives

- Increase productive uptake of emerging digital technologies in key industries
- Enhance sustainability innovation in key industries



Subregion Application

What a digital economy could look like for the Mid West subregions:

BATAVIA COAST

Attracting digital and innovation businesses, industries and workers

MURCHISON

Exploring innovation to enhance energy reliability and digital uptake

NORTH MIDLANDS

Supporting industry innovation and business productivity

Strategies

- Facilitate opportunities for local industries to adopt and integrate emerging technologies and innovation to support long-term business sustainability and productivity including agtech, METS, and advanced manufacturing.
- Work with all levels of government to enhance funding, policy, and regulation that incentivises industry innovation supporting sustainable, affordable, and reliable consumer energy and renewable energy supply as a digital economy foundation.
- Encourage industry innovation and technology uptake to reduce impacts on the local environment and support circular economy outcomes including, for example, variable rate farming and water management.
- Promote existing and emerging space technology opportunities for the region to attract new investment, skilled workers, and potential local benefit.
- Coordinate with all levels of government, industries and businesses to leverage digital applications that support climate change mitigation and adaption goals and activities, including, for example, bushfire warning systems and emergency call access.
- Collaborate with other governments, industries, and businesses to support Australian digital sovereign capability and promote the Mid West as a key exemplar.

Industry Opportunities

Government

Align digital priorities to identify collaborative and coordinated activities

Mining

Continue to leverage emerging technology opportunities, including, for example, those relating to electrification and improved connectivity







Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

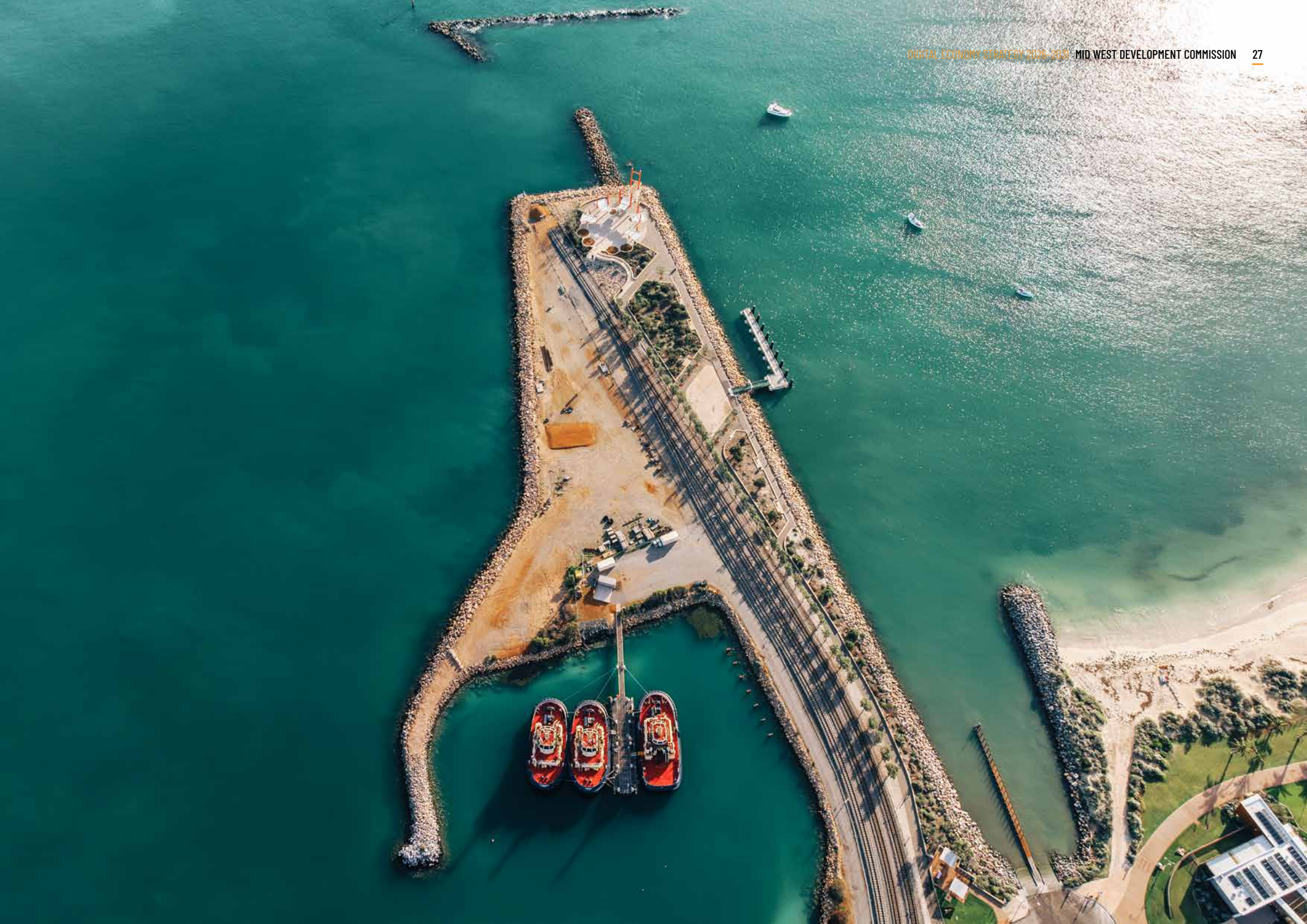
Identify priority technology implementations and explore funding opportunities

MEASURING PROGRESS

The Commission is committed to playing our role in facilitating, promoting, and supporting a digital economy in the Mid West that delivers impacts across the subregions and to communities, industries, and businesses.

Leveraging the WA Government framework aligned to program logic, we will monitor and assess progress across the following outcome areas. Given the interconnected nature of the digital economy with economic, social, and environmental outcomes, this model allows for more targeted assessment in the shorter term and broader assessment in the longer term. This model is supported by measures of success incorporated into the Implementation Plan.

	STRATEGIC THEME	OBJECTIVE	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES
	Building our Digital Skills and Workforce	Increase digital and data literacy levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved awareness of barriers to digital participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced digital maturity and greater engagement with the digital economy
		Grow local workforce skills and capabilities in the digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded local digital education opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thriving local digital workforce and job opportunities
	Leveraging Connectivity and Infrastructure	Maximise use of existing connectivity and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of connectivity options, opportunities, and constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved competitiveness and affordability of digital connectivity and infrastructure
		Improve the coverage and quality of connectivity and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased investment in regional connectivity initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence in connectivity service for general, business, emergency, or community use
	Promoting Digital for Business, Industry, and Innovation	Increase digital activity and maturity of businesses and industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased baseline level of digital activity and maturity in businesses and industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading digital start-up, innovation, and business sector
		Enhance productivity and competitiveness of businesses and industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved awareness of digital adoption and support opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business productivity increased by digitalisation
	Fostering Collaboration and Investment	Expand digital partnerships across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multilateral digital partnerships, networks, and/or platforms and access to funding
		Position the Mid West as a digital economy leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased digital-economy-oriented investment in the Mid West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre for digital economy investment and attraction
	Delivering Value to the Community	Improve community value derived from digital economy investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased private sector investment in digital economy infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutually beneficial digital investments
		Enhance digital access to key services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to support and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and economic inclusion of target groups
		Improve cyber security capabilities and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness and understanding of cyber and digital risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and business confidence in cyber security and digital adoption abilities
	Facilitating Economic Transformation and Resilience	Increase productive uptake of emerging digital technologies in key industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased share of SMEs and businesses in key industries adopting innovative digital technologies and data approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional business and industry productivity and resilience
		Enhance sustainability innovation in key industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned digital, sustainability, and climate resilience priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy supply



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW




This Strategy is supported by a detailed Implementation Plan which outlines the specific actions and activities to deliver on this Strategy. The Implementation Plan will be regularly reviewed in line with local, regional, and national priorities.




As we implement this Strategy over the next five years, our initial activity will be focussed through the following flagship initiatives. Initiatives will be delivered in collaboration with relevant partners. and are subject to budgets and resourcing.

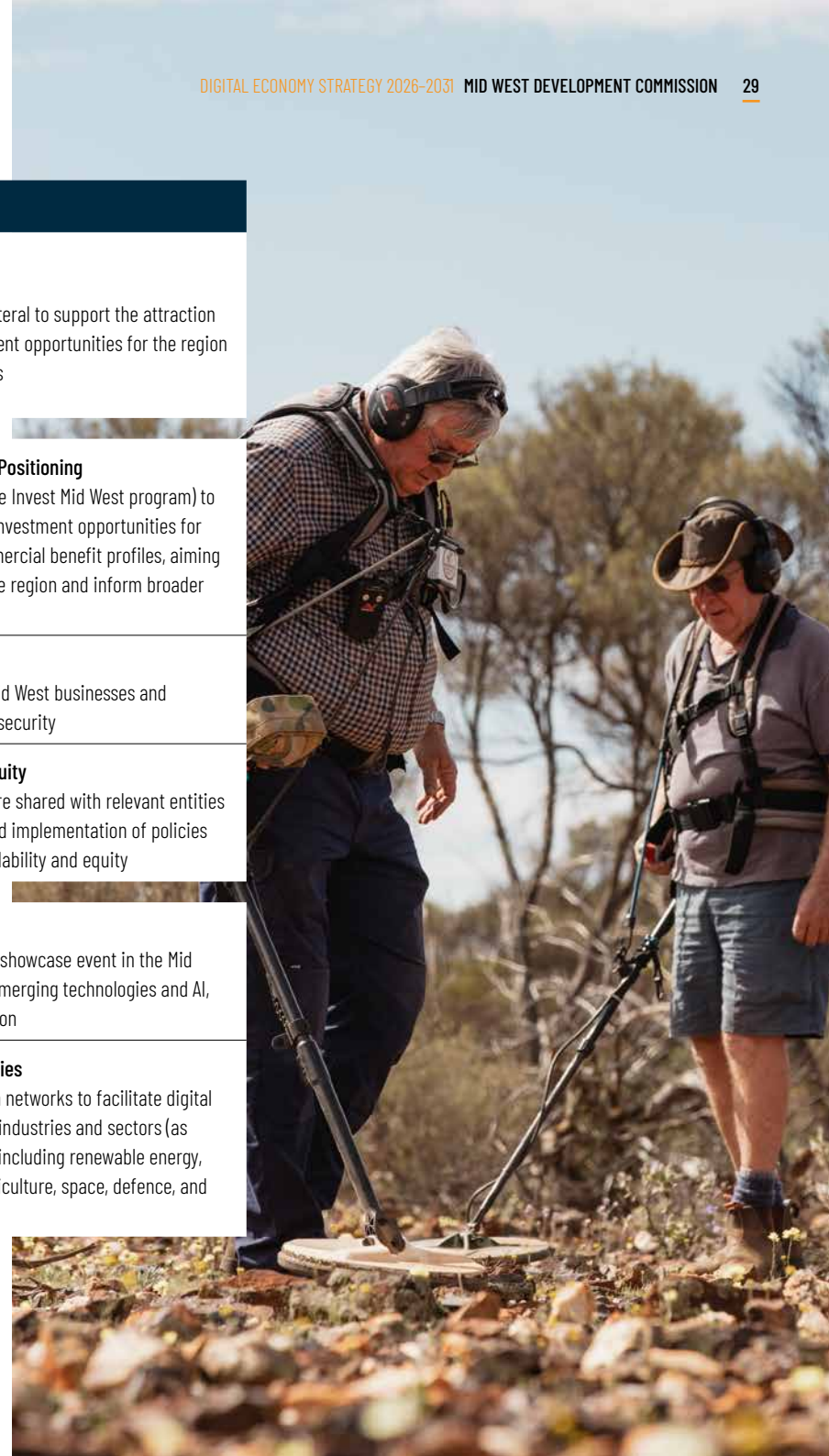
The primary role of the Commission in implementing this Strategy is to 'enable'.

Aligning with our strategic vision, our focus is to increase opportunities for investment in the Mid West digital economy, by facilitating, connecting, and collaborating with regional partners and potential investors.

Our role will manifest in various ways through implementation as we work with all tiers of government, industry, and community towards our objectives for a digital economy.

STRATEGIC THEME	FLAGSHIP STRATEGY	FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE
 <p>Building our Digital Skills and Workforce</p>	Promote accessible education opportunities including through remote learning, local training providers, and community-based initiatives, focussed on digital technology, data, STEM, and related fields, to support the digital economy workforce pipeline of each subregion	<p>Mobile Digital Skills Library Work with partners to pilot a mobile service which moves around the Mid West, providing resources and advice to build digital awareness, skills, and confidence</p>
	Support pathways for local educators and community leaders to build their digital skills, aiming to encourage local-led teaching and learning	<p>Mid West Digital Economy Leadership Training Program Collaborate with local training organisations, teachers and other education or development professionals to build their skills and capacity to deliver digital training within or in addition to existing education roles</p>
	Work with regional stakeholders to understand distinct goals and barriers for digital and data participation, particularly for priority groups including Aboriginal communities, remote residents, youth, and older workers	<p>Digital Community Conversations Collaborate with Aboriginal organisations and other community groups to develop a short paper of how various Mid West communities hope to engage with and benefit from the digital economy</p>
 <p>Leveraging Connectivity and Infrastructure</p>	Support public and private activities to upgrade the quality and reliability of existing infrastructure to meet future demand for connectivity across public and private spaces	<p>Digital Collaboration Network Continue collaborative discussion and planning with key digital actors (telecommunication companies, energy utilities, technology infrastructure providers, other government departments, etc) to coordinate digital investment and identify collective opportunities and synergies for the Mid West</p>
	Work across all levels of government, service organisations, businesses, and community groups to increase awareness of available connectivity options, digital tools, and programs tailored to each subregion	<p>Online Digital Resources Hub Develop an online digital resources hub, tailored to local stakeholders, identifying key programs, resources, training, services, infrastructure, and grants that can be readily accessed to support digital adoption and capacity-building</p>
 <p>Promoting Digital for Business, Industry, and Innovation</p>	Act as an enabler for a digital startup, small business, and innovation ecosystem, to facilitate sharing of digital tools, skills, and resources and foster culture of digital confidence across the region	<p>Digital Start-Up Ecosystem Collaborate with the Mid West innovation sector to continue to facilitate incubator programs and support pathways for digital start-ups across the region</p>
	Work with partners to support tailored digital programs and funding models that improve regional productivity and resilience, particularly in high-impact sectors and SMEs	<p>Mid West Digital Acceleration Program Understand, identify, and maximise existing funding pathways or address key funding gaps in supporting accelerated adoption of digital technology by local businesses and community groups</p>

STRATEGIC THEME	FLAGSHIP STRATEGY	FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE
 <p>Fostering Collaboration and Investment</p>	<p>Promote the Region's digital capabilities, sector strengths, and innovation ecosystem to other government agencies and national or international investment partners as a compelling investment destination, leveraging the Invest Mid West platform</p>	<p>Enhancing Mid West Digital Economy Profile Leverage the Invest Mid West brand and collateral to support the attraction and development of digital economy investment opportunities for the region including the space industry and data centres</p>
 <p>Delivering Value to the Community</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to work with new and existing industries in the region and extend current and future digital infrastructure investments to deliver community value</p>	<p>Digital Economy Investment Attraction and Positioning Work with local stakeholders (and leverage the Invest Mid West program) to compile a set of high-value digital economy investment opportunities for the Mid West with clear community and commercial benefit profiles, aiming to attract public and private investment to the region and inform broader planning and decision-making</p>
	<p>Support locally available, culturally appropriate cyber safety education and awareness programs tailored to the digital literacy and capabilities of the communities, businesses, and industries of each subregion</p>	<p>Cyber Safety Program Facilitate a series of masterclasses to help Mid West businesses and communities manage digital risks and cyber security</p>
	<p>Elevate regional, including Aboriginal, voices in public and private digital, technology, and cyber security agendas, ensuring community and Aboriginal priorities and needs inform investment and policy</p>	<p>Evidence-Based Digital Affordability and Equity Ensure that Mid West data and experiences are shared with relevant entities and decision-makers to inform the design and implementation of policies and programs that aim to foster digital affordability and equity</p>
 <p>Facilitating Economic Transformation and Resilience</p>	<p>Facilitate opportunities for local industries to adopt and integrate emerging technologies and innovation to support long-term business sustainability and productivity including agtech, METS, and manufacturing</p>	<p>Digital and Emerging Technology Showcase Facilitate production and delivery of a digital showcase event in the Mid West, aiming to fast-track local adoption of emerging technologies and AI, and attract investors and partners to the region</p> <p>Digital Economy Accelerator for Key Industries Collaborate with local industry and innovation networks to facilitate digital acceleration pathways and programs for key industries and sectors (as identified by the WA Government and MWDC), including renewable energy, water management, local manufacturing, agriculture, space, defence, and critical minerals</p>



FURTHER READING

The following resources and initiatives are useful touchpoints for communities, businesses, and innovators to better understand the digital economy, explore digital adoption and innovation opportunities, and access funding for digital technology and initiatives.

Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII)

A national benchmark of digital participation providing a consistent evidence base to inform policy and programs. The ADII reports Digital Access, Affordability, and Ability survey data at the LGA level, with interactive maps and detailed data representations.

Cyber Security Small Business Hub

The Australian Signals Directorate's *Small Business Hub* provides guidance to small businesses to secure their business from common cyber threats. The platform covers basic steps to implement and offers free tools for cyber security assessment and other specialised cyber security resources,

National Reconstruction Fund

An Australian Government funding initiative to support Australian projects that drive high-value industry transformation. Priority areas include resources; transport; medical science; defence capability; renewables and low emission technology; agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; and enabling capabilities. The fund provides support for innovative business ideas that target emerging technologies that will help diversify and transform Australia's industry and economy.

New Industries and Innovation Fund (NIIF)

A Western Australian Government initiative to boost the development and acceleration of innovation-based technologies. Grants support startups and small businesses across WA to innovate and adopt technologies. Innovation hubs provide access to expertise and facilities, and awards showcase successful innovations.

On Farm Connectivity Program

An Australian Government funding initiative to enable primary producers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries to improve connectivity in their operations and better leverage emerging technologies. Final round applications are expected to open in the second quarter of 2026.

Regional Connectivity Program

An Australian Government grant program funding the delivery of 'place-based' connectivity projects to improve digital connectivity in regional, remote, and rural communities. The program runs in tandem with the *Mobile Black Spot Program* which targets improvements in mobile coverage and competition.

Regional Economic Development (RED) Grants

A Western Australian Government funding initiative that invests in locally driven projects that support efforts to create long-term economic growth and job sustainability in our regions.

Regional Tech Hub

An Australian Government-funded service that provides free, independent advice to regional, rural and remote Australian homes, businesses, and communities on connectivity and technology options, information, and troubleshooting.

Western Australia's Innovation Hubs

The Western Australian Government has invested over \$40 million into the New Industries and Innovation Fund (NIIF) to support acceleration of innovation-based technologies and economic diversification.

A core part of this is the WA Government Innovation Hubs which support access to expertise and innovation networks. Five established hubs are driving positive disruption in specific industries and supporting digital economy outcomes:

- CyberWest, the WA Cyber Security Innovation Hub
- WA Data Science Innovation Hub
- WA Creative Tech Hub
- WA Life Sciences Innovation Hub
- WA GreenTech Hub



GLOSSARY

Connectivity

Refers to the availability, quality, and reliability of digital network connections, including:

Fibre networks	Digital backbone infrastructure using fibre optic cables to transmit large amounts of data with low-latency and high-speeds
Backhaul	High-capacity regional links connecting local networks to major connection hubs
Last-mile connectivity	The final link that connects end users to local connectivity networks, often the bottleneck for speed, reliability, and affordability
Satellite connectivity	Internet delivered via satellites; newer Low Earth Orbit (LEO) systems offer faster, lower-latency connectivity than traditional satellite services
AARNet	Australia's Academic and Research Network providing fibre infrastructure to support research, education, schools, and cultural organisations
Community connectivity infrastructure	Shared or public digital infrastructure, such as public Wi-Fi, that provides internet or network access to local users

Key network performance terms include low-latency (minimal delay), high-capacity (large data throughput), reliability (consistent performance), and coverage (geographic reach).

Digital Literacy and Skills

Refers to the knowledge and skills needed to use technology confidently and effectively, from basic digital literacy for everyday life to advanced digital skills for specialised or technical work, including:

Cyber security	The ability to protect digital data, systems, and networks
Data analytics	The ability to collect, interpret, and use data to generate insights and guide decisions
Digital marketing	The ability to use online platforms and tools to reach, engage, and analyse audiences

Digital Technology

Refers to any electronic tool, system, or device that has the ability to generate, process, or store data, including:

Digital adoption	Refers to the process of people, businesses, and organisations beginning to use and integrate digital technologies into everyday activities, operations, or services
Agricultural Technology (agtech)	Technology used in agricultural operations, such as sensors, drones, autonomous vehicles, and variable rate technologies
Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS)	Digital systems and equipment that enhance mining operations through automation, robotics, remote monitoring, etc.
Business technologies	Digital tools that support core business functions, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), accounting, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms

Digital Inclusion

Refers to the process of ensuring people can meaningfully engage and participate in a digitally connected society, including:

Digital access	The extent to which people can connect to the internet through reliable, affordable, and high-quality services and devices
Digital ability	The extent to which people have the skills and confidence to use digital technologies safely and effectively
Digital affordability	The extent to which people can afford the cost of internet connections, devices, and data without financial strain

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GET INVOLVED!

This Strategy highlights the collaborative nature of the digital economy and the role of the Commission, other levels of government, businesses, industry, Aboriginal organisations, the education sector, communities, and others.

Have an exciting idea and want to find out more about the existing opportunities or how you can be involved? Check out the following resources:

- Existing investment opportunities and approaches investmidwest.com.au
- Resources, updates and collaboration opportunities mwdc.wa.gov.au/our-focus/digital-economy
- Get in touch about collaboration opportunities or questions info@mwdc.wa.gov.au



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