



**Digital Inclusion for  
Queenslanders  
Response &  
Recommendations**

Good Things Foundation Australia  
January 2024



**Good Things**  
Foundation Australia

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Summary of key recommendations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Our work in Queensland	5
<b>Best practice approaches: General consultation response</b>	<b>6</b>
Programs delivered by Good Things Foundation in Queensland	6
Key learnings	7
Target communities for digital inclusion support	7
Women	8
People with disability	8
CALD Communities	8
First Nations people	9
Low income families	9
Recommendations	9
<b>Improving digital access response</b>	<b>10</b>
Affordable internet access	10
Access to digital devices	10
Recommendations	10
<b>Improving affordability response</b>	<b>11</b>
Recommendations	11
<b>Improving ability response</b>	<b>12</b>
Emerging tech and AI	12
Digital media literacy and emergency preparedness	12
Essential services	13
Digital health literacy	13
Measuring impact and time spent supporting learners	14
Recommendations	14
<b>Improving digital resilience response</b>	<b>15</b>
Recommendations	15
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>About Good Things Foundation Australia</b>	<b>17</b>
Contact	17

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## Summary of key recommendations

Good Things Foundation thanks the Queensland Government for the opportunity to provide input into the digital inclusion plan as part of the Digital Economy Strategy for the state.

Overall, we recommend that:

1. A formal digital inclusion plan is created, implemented and fully funded, to ensure all Queenslanders can equally benefit from the digital economy and society.
2. The Queensland Government focuses digital ability and resilience efforts on supporting key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including under 50's, low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, new migrants and refugees, and women.
3. The Queensland Government creates permanent affordable access measures, including funding a Queensland Digital Devices & Data Bank, operating like a Food Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.

More detailed recommendations for each consultation area are outlined in our full submission below.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our recommendations and how we can assist the Queensland Government to achieve greater digital inclusion throughout the state.

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# Introduction

We live in a rapidly changing world, where the ability to access, afford, and effectively use digital services is not a luxury, it's essential. Digital inclusion is a requirement for full and equal participation in contemporary life to enable people to access essential government, education, social and health services. Digital inclusion is more important than ever.

**However, 1 in 4 Australians are digitally excluded.<sup>1</sup>**

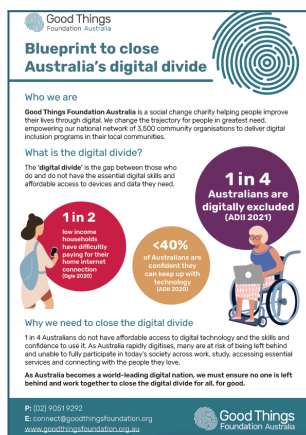
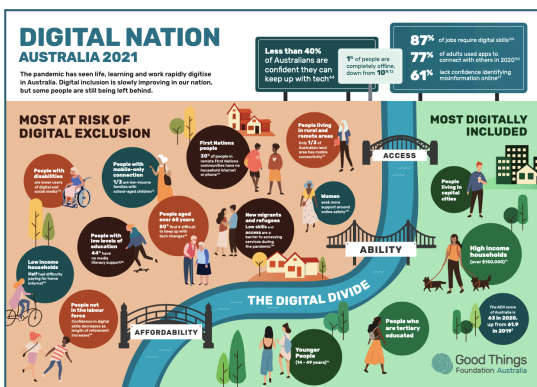
Good Things Foundation research shows that 1 in 5 Australians feel overwhelmed by the constant changes in technology, with 63% not feeling confident that they can keep up.<sup>2</sup>

This 'digital divide' between those who can and can't keep up affects some groups of people in Australia more than others. People on low incomes or with low levels of education, people with disability, First Nations people, new migrants and refugees, and people over the age of 65, face the greatest risk of being left behind in our digitised world.<sup>3</sup>

Ultimately, digital inclusion is a driver of social inclusion. It provides access to information, services, connections with the community and greater employment and education opportunities.

Given the importance of digital inclusion for a healthy Australian society and economy, we thank the Queensland Government for the opportunity to provide our insights and input into the development of the Queensland Digital Economy Strategy's digital inclusion plan.

*Read more about key digital inclusion challenges in Australia in Good Things Foundation's [Digital Nation Report](#), our [Blueprint to close Australia's digital divide](#) and [Australian attitudes to getting online](#) research.*



<sup>1</sup> [Australian Digital Inclusion Index](#), 2023, Thomas, J., McCosker, A., Parkinson, S., Hegarty, K., Featherstone, D., Kennedy, J., Holcombe-James, I., Ormond-Parker, L., & Ganley, L., Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, and Telstra.

<sup>2</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia.

<sup>3</sup> [Australian Digital Inclusion Index; Digital Nation Australia 2021](#), 2021, Good Things Foundation Australia

## Our work in Queensland

Good Things Foundation designs and delivers digital inclusion programs across Australia to close the digital divide for good.

We do it because we believe good things happen when everyone is safely, confidently and affordably online.

We create innovative programs in partnership with government, corporates and the community. We reach people most in need of support through our passionate network of 4,000 community organisations across Australia. Our programs and initiatives have an active presence in Queensland.

Our network of community partners in Queensland is diverse in location and organisation type, with 738 organisations (18% of our national network) located in Queensland.

38% of our network in Queensland is based in metro locations, with 57% in regional and remote Queensland locations. Our network includes organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch groups, public libraries, seniors groups, CWA branches, community centres, training providers and community colleges, retirement villages and aged care, employment services and cultural support groups.

We resource our network to deliver digital inclusion programs through professional development and upskilling training, creating ready to use digital mentoring resources, creating and sharing high quality learning resources for people wanting to learn digital skills, providing one on one support through our telephone and email helpline, and distributing small grant funding.

Across our digital inclusion programs and campaigns, we have awarded 1,130 small grants to community organisations in Queensland, totalling \$4.6M in value. This represents 15% of total grant funding we have awarded nationally over the past 6 years to support the delivery of local digital inclusion initiatives. This grant funding is made available by our government and corporate partners, with Good Things Foundation acting as both grant managers and mobilising community organisations to access this funding.

Through our network and programs, we have supported Queenslanders to cross the digital divide, but there is more work to do to ensure everyone can equally benefit from the digital economy.

Meet some of our Queensland Network Partners:

- [Ravenshoe Community Centre, Far North Queensland](#)
- [Workways Charters Towers, North Queensland](#)
- [Bloomhill Cancer Care, Sunshine Coast](#)

## Best practice approaches: General consultation response

Through our programs, research and outreach initiatives over the past 6 years, Good Things Foundation has learnt some key lessons about best practice digital inclusion programs that can be adopted in Queensland.

### Programs delivered by Good Things Foundation in Queensland

Good Things Foundation delivers a mix of national digital inclusion programs and state based initiatives in Queensland, including:

- [Be Connected](#): a national digital ability program for over 50's, run in partnership between Good Things Foundation, eSafety and DSS. To date this program has engaged millions of Australians in essential digital skills support delivered online and in local communities through our network
- [Digital Sisters](#): a pilot digital ability program for migrant and refugee women, with resources and community-based learning models being codesigned with those who will use them
- [Get Online Week](#): our national digital inclusion awareness and education campaign, reaching 23K people through local digital skills events and 56.8M through our media campaign in 2023 alone
- [Digital Mentor Capability Assessment](#): Partnering with State Library of Queensland we have developed a digital skills and mentoring assessment tool for Queensland library and IKC workers, with customised reporting to help staff develop their professional development plans based on their results
- [Bridging the Divide](#): Our projects supporting people with disability, including people with intellectual disability and people with low vision
- [Digital Skills for LIFE](#): Our initiatives supporting low income families to be more confident online
- Digital Health Literacy: Our initiatives including [Your Health in Your Hands](#) and Health My Way, supporting people with chronic health conditions, carers, parents and older people to learn essential digital health literacy skills
- [Good Things Learning](#): Our online digital skills learning library and resources, available for anyone to access.

While we are proud of the diversity in our programs, many people at risk of being left behind in Queensland still do not have access to digital inclusion support tailored to their needs. There remains a significant gap to fill to ensure everyone has the support they need to get affordably, confidently and safely online.

We deliver our programs in partnership with a range of organisations including the community sector, corporates, telcos and government. Partnerships take time and investment to get right, but we believe the digital divide can best be solved when we work across sectors and collaborate with others.

- [Find out more about our projects](#)

## Key learnings

Through our initiatives over the past 6 years, we have gained key insights into delivering impactful digital inclusion projects on the ground, including:

- Community based digital skills programs, when supported with online learning, digital mentor upskilling and grant-funding, have a return on investment of \$4 for every \$1 and have social inclusion outcomes in addition to building digital skills and confidence. This is a model that has been piloted in other demographics and found to be just as effective. [See Be Connected social impact evaluation.](#)
- Trusted local digital mentors are the heart of digital inclusion programs, and core to their success. They do not have to be education or tech experts, and upskilling passionate and committed people from a wide variety of roles and professional backgrounds has seen success in building those trusted relationships in community.
- The community sector is powerful in closing the digital divide, but need support to do so. This support must include grant funding to contribute towards costs of providing this support, including to micro support groups without charity status or VET/RTO accreditation. It must also include ready to use program resources and upskilling for staff and volunteers running the programs. [See our Not for Profit Sector Blueprint submission.](#)
- A diverse network of providers reaches those most in need. Libraries and community centres in Queensland do fantastic work in providing digital skills support programs, but we have found that having additional providers including CWA's, Men's Sheds, disability services, employment services and cultural support groups means that more people can find a trusted place they feel safe to access support and have great outcomes.
- Awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives improves uptake of programs, and budget for marketing campaigns and community outreach is needed to bolster participation rates.
- Digital skills programs must be complemented with digital access and affordability measures to truly close the digital divide for all.

## Target communities for digital inclusion support

Following a recent announcement by the Federal Minister for Social Services, the successful national Be Connected program supporting older Australians to gain essential, basic digital skills has been extended to 2028. This is good news for Queensland seniors, who will be able to continue to access local essential digital skills support in their community.

But, it is not just older Australians who need digital inclusion support. Investing in tailored essential digital inclusion programs for adults aged 18-50, delivered in community settings, will help to close Queensland's digital divide. We also recommend prioritising groups requiring specialised or tailored support including women, people with disability, low income families, CALD communities and First Nations people, so they get meaningful and timely support in modes that work best for them.

## Women

Our research indicates that 1 in 4 women say that they need more support to keep up with tech changes and 1 in 5 feel overwhelmed by constant changes in technology.<sup>4</sup> Investing in improving digital capabilities can enable women to return to the workforce after periods outside of it and participate in the digital economy in the way they choose. There is also a need for women to improve their digital skills to maintain existing jobs, participate in growth industries such as in aged care, healthcare, social services, and disability support services, and be resilient to emerging tech. Beyond digital skills, women are more likely than men to struggle with affordable access to tech and data.<sup>5</sup> Support should be targeted towards women with low or no digital skills, in low income families, who are unemployed or migrants and refugees, in caring roles, or in workplaces at risk of automation or newly requiring digital skills.

## People with disability

People with disability are more likely to be digitally excluded in Australia.<sup>6</sup> The Australian eSafety Commission has reported people with disability being more likely to experience online safety issues such as cyber-bullying, harassment, image-based abuse and technology facilitated abuse.<sup>7</sup> Our research shows that while 19% of Australians report that they have to make hard choices between paying for the internet or phone and other essential bills like food or housing, this number jumps to 31% of people with disability, showing a critical affordability divide.<sup>8</sup> People with disability were also more likely to report feeling overwhelmed with constant changes in tech than the general population. As the needs of people with disability vary, tailored programs and support reaching different audiences are needed. For example, our pilot program for young people with intellectual disability saw the creation of resources in easier English, whereas our pilot program for people with low vision had a greater emphasis on digital and print accessibility tips and resources.

## CALD Communities

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, particularly newly arrived migrants or refugees, could particularly benefit from community-based, culturally appropriate digital inclusion support as the economy transforms. For newly arrived migrants and refugees in CALD communities, digital exclusion can have significant impacts on successful settlement in Australia, including their ability to find and maintain work or establish small businesses and participate in professional development and training opportunities.<sup>9</sup> Trusted support in familiar community environments would assist to reduce the digital skills divide for this priority group and improve employment outcomes.

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<sup>4</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia.

<sup>5</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia.

<sup>6</sup> [Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2023](#), 2023, Thomas, J., McCosker, A., Parkinson, S., Hegarty, K., Featherstone, D., Kennedy, J., Holcombe-James, I., Ormond-Parker, L., & Ganley, L., Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, and Telstra.

<sup>7</sup> [Protecting voices at risk online](#), 2020, eSafety Commissioner

<sup>8</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia.

<sup>9</sup> [Supporting the Digital Inclusion of New Migrants and Refugees](#), 2021, Settlement Council of Australia & Good Things Foundation Australia



- [See our recommendations towards closing the digital divide for older migrants and refugees](#)
- [See our report on increasing digital participation of new migrants & refugees](#)

## First Nations people

First Nations people are more likely to experience exclusion from our digital society.<sup>10</sup> Equal digital inclusion of First Nations people has been recognised as essential to Closing the Gap, being identified as one of the 17 national targets to ensure equal access to information and services in the National Closing the Gap Agreement.<sup>11</sup> The recent establishment of the Australian Government's First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group is welcomed and will accelerate progress towards closing the digital divide for First Nations people. It recognises that more needs to be done to ensure Indigenous Australians can benefit from the digital world and that First Nations people face significant barriers to digital inclusion, particularly in remote areas. Achieving equal levels of digital inclusion is critical for First Nations Australians to receive economic and social opportunities such as employment, social connectedness, and to access online services such as financial services, telehealth and education. Additional funding is now required to develop culturally appropriate, co-designed and community led programs to close the digital skills gap for First Nations people in Queensland.

## Low income families

Research led by QUT has shown that low income families in Queensland need additional digital inclusion support, including for affordable tech and data as well as digital skills.<sup>12</sup> This research identifies that there are no broadly accessible community-based digital skills programs for this audience and recommends a 'Be Connected program' style approach to closing the digital skills divide for this community. Supporting Queensland families has the added benefits of supporting young people to equally access education and employment opportunities, setting them up for post-school life.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the the Queensland Government:

1. Focuses digital inclusion efforts on supporting key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including under 50's, low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, refugees and migrants, and women
2. Supports partnerships between telcos, corporates, government and a diverse network of community sector providers
3. Supports community sector participation through grant funding, upskilling, ready to use resources and networking opportunities.

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<sup>10</sup> [Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2023](#)

<sup>11</sup> [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), 2020, Australian Government, Closing the Gap in Partnership

<sup>12</sup> [Digital Inclusion is Everyone's Business: Key Findings from the ARC Linkage Project Advancing digital inclusion in low-income Australian families](#), 2023, Dezuanni, M, Osman, K, Foth, M, Mitchell, P, McCosker, A, Notley, T, Kennedy, J, Marshall, A, Tucker, J, Hourigan, A, Mamalipurath, J, & Mavoa, J Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

## Improving digital access response

Research with the Good Things Foundation network in 2020 indicated that 75% of Network Partners were concerned that their digital skills learners do not have access to the internet because they are lacking digital devices to use at home.<sup>13</sup> Our network have also identified that an absence in competition of internet and data providers in regional Australian locations means that the lowest cost carriers and plans are not available to everyone.

### Affordable internet access

The Australian Government's School Student Broadband Initiative to provide free broadband to school children is a welcome addition to the digital inclusion landscape, but is funded only in the short term and does not support people without school aged children.

Good Things Foundation Australia, alongside over 25 other organisations, have pledged support for ACCAN's No Australian Left Offline policy proposal for affordable NBN for all. Under this, low income families would be eligible to access unlimited high speed broadband internet at home at a wholesale price. If implemented, ACCAN estimates the policy would be Federal budget neutral, while low income households would pay only \$30 per month to be connected to unlimited, high speed internet connections. This initiative could be applicable at a state level through a subsidy system.

### Access to digital devices

In 2020, we introduced a [Digital Devices Grant](#) as part of the Be Connected program, to create device loan libraries in community organisations that older people can access. This grant round has been run several times and has shown to have benefits in providing temporary support to digital skills learners who are considering if a device is right for them before they commit to a purchase, or who otherwise would not have access to a device to use at home.

Providing free internet connections and devices to Queenslanders who really need them, similar to the model of a Food Bank, would greatly improve digital inclusion rates. This would take collaboration from industry and the community sector to distribute devices and data to those in need, and core funding from the Queensland Government to promote the initiative and fund appropriate administration and logistics so it could reach Queenslanders in both metro and regional locations.

- [Read about Good Things Foundation's solution to digital poverty in the UK - the National Databank](#)

## Recommendations

We recommend that the the Queensland Government:

1. Works with industry and the community sector to create and fund a Digital Devices & Data Bank, operating like a Food Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.

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<sup>13</sup> [Media Release: New Grant](#), 2020, Good Things Foundation

2. Supports increased access to lower cost internet providers, such as through initiatives that encourage more telcos to service regional Queensland.

## Improving affordability response

With the rising cost of living, our research indicates that affordability is increasingly a concern for many Queenslanders. 16% of regional Queenslanders and 21% (1 in 5) of people in metro areas (Brisbane) are having to make tough decisions between paying for internet/phone and other essential bills like food or housing.<sup>14</sup> In research with our national network of community digital skills providers, 84% agreed that many people need affordable devices and internet connections.

We have taken steps to support people at risk of digital exclusion to make informed choices about comparing internet and phone plans, and finding plans that best work for them. ACCAN has compiled information to support consumers, but many do not know that financial hardship provisions are available with telcos, and information alone will not be enough to close the digital affordability divide.

- See our Get Online Week learning resources on [saving money](#) and [finding affordable connections](#).

The above device and data access initiatives (See 'Improving digital access response') temporarily assist some people to gain free access to data, but permanent affordability solutions are needed.

The community sector we work with are often already connected with people in need of affordability support. By partnering with this sector and relying on their local knowledge and expertise, digital affordability programs can overcome barriers in engaging with people and maximise participation. This could be supported by a broad brush awareness campaign on affordability measures in place that Queenslanders at risk of digital exclusion can access. By delivering this campaign through online and offline channels, maximum reach can be gained.

See 'Improving digital access response' above for more detail on our solutions to affordable access to technology and data.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the the Queensland Government

1. Works with industry and the community sector to create and fund permanent digital affordability solutions, including a Digital Devices & Data Bank, operating like a Food Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.

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<sup>14</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia

## Improving ability response

Our research indicates that Queenslanders are struggling to keep up with tech as it rapidly changes. 19% (1 in 5) of regional Queenslanders and 17% of people in Brisbane feel overwhelmed with the constant changes in technology.<sup>15</sup> 24% (1 in 4) of regional Queenslanders and 28% of people living in metro areas (Brisbane) said they need more support to keep up with changes in tech.

Our innovative [Digital Skills Checkers](#) mapping Be Connected learners in Queensland shows that community-based digital skills learning has had a significant positive impact:

- 85% reported increasing confidence using technology in one or more ways
- 81% who completed our follow up survey improved their overall digital skills score
- 99% reported improved social connection after participating in Be Connected
- The most improved skill for Queensland-based learners was connecting more with friends, family or their community online.

However, this program is only funded for people aged over 50 years, and we know that younger people are still at risk of not having all the skills they need to keep up. Funding for tailored, community-based essential digital skills programs for additional priority groups in Queensland would improve the overall digital ability of Queenslanders.

We believe the following topics are particularly important areas for state governments to play a role in funding, creating and implementing support initiatives.

## Emerging tech and AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology that has the potential to support people to build digital skills and confidence and make our lives easier. But, like lots of new technologies, it also has the potential to do harm if not used responsibly or ethically, if it is not developed with inclusion in mind and if it is not used equally across the population. While a definition of AI literacy has not yet been established ready for digital skills programs to adopt, we know that it will take a combination of digital media literacy, digital literacy and literacy to keep up with this emerging tech. Already, 1 in 5 Australians feel overwhelmed by constant changes in tech.<sup>16</sup> With the rapid development of emerging tech like AI, digital skills programs are needed to cover this topic so more people don't get left behind.

## Digital media literacy and emergency preparedness

Those who are most at risk of digital exclusion and those with low levels of understanding of misinformation and online harms require tailored essential digital skills programs and support. 61% of adults in Australia lack confidence identifying misinformation online.<sup>17</sup> We know misinformation can cause real world harms, ranging from health and safety to electoral

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<sup>15</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia

<sup>16</sup> [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Foundation Australia.

<sup>17</sup> [Adult Media Literacy in Australia: Attitudes, Experiences and Needs](#), 2021, Notley, T Chambers, S Park, S Dezuanni, M. WSU, QUT and University of Canberra

integrity.<sup>18</sup> In order to reduce online harms for vulnerable groups, and help people with low digital media literacy skills to navigate and find reliable information, an effective, funded community education based approach is required, in line with the ACCC's recommendations.<sup>19</sup>

This is particularly important when it comes to activities like emergency preparedness and digital resilience in a crisis. Support must be provided to people at risk of digital exclusion on state based emergency apps (including Emergency+), websites, sources of reliable information, support and recovery services (such as Small Business Disaster Hub) and what to do when the internet goes down.

## Essential services

Community based and targeted digital literacy support programs for essential services in Queensland would increase digital ability in the state, while supporting the adoption of digital services within hard to reach populations. The Queensland Government has 20 apps available with varying target audiences including children in out of home care, parents of school students, small businesses, renters and social housing tenants, and Government employees. These audiences have intersections with people more at risk of digital exclusion, including low income families and individuals, First Nations peoples, older Australians, people with disability and new migrants and refugees. Not only do affordable access issues need resolving for these communities (so data or devices aren't a barrier to use), but once that is established, funded awareness and education support in trusted, local spaces to learn about and use these apps is needed to support their uptake.

## Digital health literacy

Digital health skills have been shown to be an important tool that enables people to access reliable medical info, local medical services and telehealth initiatives. The Queensland Government invests billions in its health services,<sup>20</sup> but there are no targeted, community based digital ability support programs to help patients better manage their health online in the state. Our former digital health literacy programs have developed resources for federal initiatives such as My Health Record, but ongoing support is needed for medical professionals and the community to use state-specific services such as the YourQH app.

We have co-designed solutions to improve digital health literacy outcomes, and created a cross-sector model *Digital Health Navigators* to coordinate between PHNs, GPs, allied health and consumers, that is ready to be adopted by state government health systems. Additionally our former nationally funded *Health My Way* program showed that community based digital health skills programs can close the digital health divide, including boosting skills in accessing telehealth services. An external evaluation found that it has a significant impact in improving participants' digital health literacy and the ability of community based digital mentors to deliver this type of support.<sup>21</sup> However, there is no ongoing national funding for these digital health

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<sup>18</sup> [Misinformation and news quality of digital platforms in Australia: A position paper to guide code development](#), 2020, ACMA

<sup>19</sup> [Digital Platforms Inquiry, Final Report](#), 2019, ACCC

<sup>20</sup> [Our investment](#), 2023, The health of Queenslanders, Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland, Queensland Government

<sup>21</sup> [Health My Way](#), Good Things Foundation Australia

literacy programs and this is a gap the Queensland state government could aim to fill in order to deliver on its digital health (metro and regional/rural) and digital economy strategy.

- [See our national digital health literacy resources](#)
- [Read our Expanding Digital Health roundtable findings](#)
- [Meet a network partner who supported digital health skills through art](#)

## Measuring impact and time spent supporting learners

Our innovative Digital Skills Checkers, developed in collaboration with experts at Swinburne University and our network, have helped us to measure the impact of the Be Connected program while giving learners and mentors tangible next steps to support their digital skills learning journey. However, being a digital tool, there are obvious barriers to their uptake with digital skills beginners. As such, to support their implementation, Good Things Foundation grants cover time spent by community organisations supporting learners to complete the digital skills assessments, with that time ranging from 10 minutes to one hour. We also developed a suite of support resources including how to videos and session plans to support their uptake.

Beyond the Checker, we require grant funded organisations to report back on factors such as time spent delivering programs and number of people supported, but give the grant holders the flexibility to tailor programs to meet local needs. Most of our grant funding allows for staff time administering programs to be covered, in addition to volunteer expenses such as mandatory police checks, and we provide significant free support so staff and volunteers feel confident to deliver local digital inclusion programs. This reduces the risk for community organisations who know there is a need in their community they would like to meet, but who may never have delivered digital inclusion support before or who do not have the capacity otherwise to do so.

Given the high demands on community sector workers' time, it is important that any measurement tools have the lowest administrative or time burden as possible, so that maximum resources can be allocated to their core business: helping people.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the the Queensland Government:

1. Create/support the development of targeted digital literacy programs to include emerging tech and issues such as AI, digital media literacy, emergency preparedness and recovery, Queensland essential services, and digital health literacy.
2. Focuses digital ability efforts on supporting key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples and women.
3. Ensure barriers to participation in digital inclusion programs for community organisations are low, including enabling grant funding to cover administration costs, upskilling and support is available for new/prospective digital mentors, and programs are flexible enough to allow tailoring to local community circumstances.

## Improving digital resilience response

Building motivation and trust is at the core of our community led model. We know that this is a key barrier to participation in digital inclusion initiatives. As such, we spend considerable time and effort upskilling digital mentors working in our programs on how to overcome digital skills learner barriers to participation and make their sessions interesting and accessible. This digital mentor training takes the form of online courses, event and session ideas, activity templates and resources, support articles, webinars and skill-sharing forums, and our telephone and email helpline.

Our Be Connected program [Digital Skills Checkers](#) help digital mentors to identify what is motivating people to learn something new and tailor their support appropriately. Our Checkers have found that for learners in Queensland:

- 95% reported learning how to stay safe online and avoid scams was important to them
- 91% reported that connecting more with family, friends and community online was important to them.

This supports our research findings on what motivates people to learn something new.

Our national campaign [Get Online Week](#) shows how successful digital inclusion and awareness campaigns can be in motivating people to learn something new. In 2023 the campaign engaged 23,000 learners, reached 56.8 million people through our media campaign and saw 92% of event attendees say they wanted to learn more about what they can do online thanks to Get Online Week.

- [Read more about the impact of Get Online Week 2023](#)

## Recommendations

We recommend that the the Queensland Government:

1. Focuses digital resilience efforts on supporting key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples and women, using motivation based messaging and actions.
2. Allocates budget to awareness raising, community engagement, marketing and education initiatives delivered state wide and in local communities.
3. Sign on to support Get Online Week 2024 to gain additional traction in Queensland.

## Conclusion

Digital inclusion is a requirement for full participation in our digital society and economy, enabling people to access essential Government, education, social and health services. While there are many committed organisations working in Queensland and some excellent digital inclusion programs available in the state, not everyone is able to access this support and gaps still exist.

Overall, to close the digital ability, affordability and access divide in Queensland, we recommend that:

1. A formal digital inclusion plan is created, implemented and fully funded, to ensure all Queenslanders can equally benefit from the digital economy and society.
2. The Queensland Government focuses digital ability and resilience efforts on supporting key communities and topics not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, new migrants and refugees, women, plus digital media literacy, emerging tech, digital health and emergency preparedness.
3. The Queensland Government creates and funds permanent affordable access solutions, such as a Digital Devices & Data Bank, operating like a Food Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech and connectivity.

We thank the Queensland Government for the opportunity to provide input into the digital inclusion plan as part of the Digital Economy Strategy for the state.



## About Good Things Foundation Australia

Good Things Foundation Australia is a social change charity, helping people improve their lives through digital. We work with thousands of community organisations across Australia to support those hardest to reach, to improve their digital skills.

We coordinate and deliver the Australian Government funded Be Connected program for over 50s and build capacity in community organisations through digital mentor training and resources, grants and program support.

We develop and deliver a range of specialised digital inclusion programs for people who are most at risk of being left behind in our online world, including women, people with disability, low income families, and migrants and refugees.

Each year we host Get Online Week - our national digital inclusion campaign supporting millions of Australians to get online and improve their digital skills.

Our programs are community led, delivered at scale and create maximum social impact. We advocate for the 1 in 4 Australians who are digitally excluded and raise awareness of the importance of closing the digital divide, for good.

Learn more about our work: [www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au)

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*Good Things Foundation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.*