

Response to consultation on NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy

Good Things Australia
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Summary of key recommendations

Good Things Australia thanks the NSW Government for the opportunity to provide input into the development of the New South Wales Digital Inclusion Strategy.

Overall, we recommend that:

1. The Digital Inclusion Strategy recognises the need for all areas of government to hold responsibility for improving digital inclusion, with measures aided by investment to ensure implementation can support all people in NSW to equally benefit from the digital economy and society.
2. The NSW Government funds a network of local-community based digital literacy programs that support key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, new migrants and refugees, and women.
3. The ability to understand and use Artificial Intelligence is built into the Digital Ability initiatives and the government has a clear policy on the development and use of AI
4. The NSW Government supports permanent affordable access measures, including contribution to a National Device Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.

More detailed recommendations for each area are outlined in our full submission which I have sent by email.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our recommendations and how we can assist the NSW 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. As identified in the consultation paper, 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.

However, 1 in 4 Australians are digitally excluded.¹

Good Things 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.²

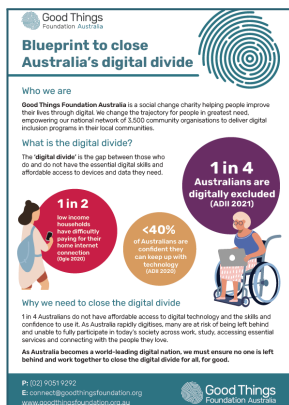
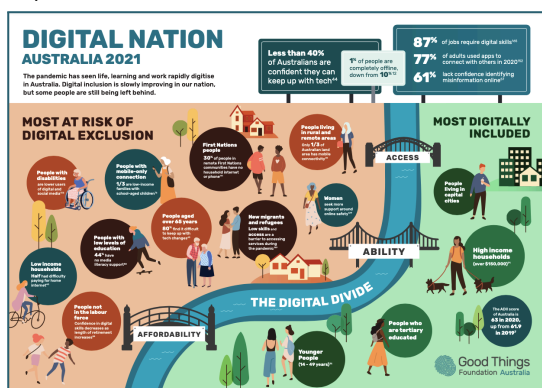
This 'digital divide' between those who can and can't keep up affects some groups of people in Australia more than others. People on low incomes or with low levels of education, people with disability, First Nations people, new migrants and refugees, and people over the age of 65, face the greatest risk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

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.

With the explosion of Generative AI into public use and the increased digitisation of government and other essential services, ensuring people are able to access affordable technology and have the confidence and skills to use it is more important than ever.

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

Read more about key digital inclusion challenges in Australia in Good Things [Digital Nation Report](#), our [Blueprint to close Australia's digital divide](#) and [Australian attitudes to getting online](#) research. In addition, we will be releasing a report on the intersection of AI and Digital Inclusion in late August 2024 and an [Economic Benefit of Digital Inclusion](#) report in September 2024.



¹ [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.

² [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia.

³ [Australian Digital Inclusion Index; Digital Nation Australia 2021](#), 2021, Good Things Australia

Good Things work in NSW

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

We create innovative programs in partnership with government, corporations 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 NSW.

Our network of community partners in New South Wales is diverse in location and organisation type, with 1,328 organisations (31% of our national network) located in NSW.

39% of our network in NSW is based in metro locations, with 61% in regional and remote NSW locations. Our network includes organisations such as public libraries, seniors groups, CWA branches and Men's Sheds, 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, 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 2,663 small grants to community organisations in NSW, totalling \$11.24M in value. This represents a third 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 acting as both grant managers and mobilising community organisations to access this funding.

Through our network and programs, we have supported people in NSW 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 NSW Network Partners:

- [The Place Charlestown & Youngster.co](#)
- [Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre, Pottsville NSW](#)
- [Digital IQ, Tamworth NSW](#)
- [The Tec Exec, Batemans Bay NSW](#)

Best practice approaches: General consultation response

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

Programs delivered by Good Things in NSW

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

- [Be Connected](#): Our national digital ability program for over 50's, run in partnership with eSafety and DSS. This program has engaged two million Australians in essential digital skills support, delivered online and in local communities through our network
- [Digital Sisters](#): Our initiatives to close the digital divide for women. We're helping women keep up with tech changes, like AI, and have a special focus on supporting refugee and migrant women
- [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
- [Bridging the Divide](#): Our projects supporting people with disability, including people with intellectual disability and people with low vision
- [Digital Skills for LIFE](#): Ensuring all families have the essential digital skills and access they need for life – work, school and fun
- [Digital Communities](#): We buddy up local organisations, create connections and run place-based programs to create holistic, community led solutions
- [Digital Health](#): Our initiatives supporting people with chronic health conditions, carers, parents and older people to learn essential digital health literacy skills.

Additionally, an initiative recently delivered in QLD which would have practical applications in NSW:

- Digital Mentor Capability Assessment: Partnering with State Library of QLD we developed a digital skills and mentoring assessment tool for QLD library and Indigenous Knowledge Centre workers, with customised reporting to help staff develop their professional development plans based on their results

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

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

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 with many being volunteers, they are most often highly motivated local community leaders who are uniquely placed to build trust with participants. Digital mentors are upskilling passionate and committed people from a wide variety of roles and professional backgrounds and oftentimes may have evolved to take on the role from becoming accomplished participants themselves.
- The community sector is powerful in closing the digital divide, but it needs 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 NSW 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 improve 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 NSW 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 NSW'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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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. Although we have been delivering small pilot programs to support people with intellectual disability and people who are blind or have low vision, there is much more to do to ensure people with disability are able to easily and equitably access digital government service.

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

⁴ [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia.

⁵ [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia.

⁶ [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.

⁷ [Protecting voices at risk online](#), 2020, eSafety Commissioner

⁸ [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia.

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.⁹ Trusted support in familiar community environments would assist to reduce the digital skills divide for this priority group and improve employment outcomes.

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

For the last twelve months we have co-designed and tested the delivery of our Digital Sisters program supporting refugee and migrant women to build their digital skills and confidence. As a national pilot we worked with 20 organisations across the country to design the program (3 in NSW) and have supported over 1500 women in just 6 months of delivery. The initial impacts of the program include:

The impact of the Digital Sisters program



95% of women reported feeling more confident using technology.



75% reported increased online safety.



89% reported stronger social connections.



97% of participants would recommend the program to others in their community.

As a result of these positive initial results, we have been supported to continue this work for another 12 months expanding our partner organisations to 55 nationally. Yet, the need is more than can be addressed in this program and further long term investment is required.

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

First Nations people

First Nations people are more likely to experience exclusion from our digital society.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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.

In the recent 2024/25 budget to invest \$68 million in the 2024-25 Budget on measures to support First Nations digital inclusion including:

- Free community Wi-Fi in remote communities through a contestable program - \$20m
- First Nations digital support hub - \$4m over 2 years
- A network of digital mentors \$18m over three years
- Improving the national collection of data on First Nations digital inclusion.

Rather than create a new approach to support First Nations people in NSW, given this has been based on advice from the First Nations Digital Advisory Group, there is an opportunity for the NSW Government to support this and provide additional funding to support a greater reach of these initiatives to First Nations people in NSW.

Low income families

Research led by QUT has shown that low income families in NSW need additional digital inclusion support, including for affordable tech and data as well as digital skills.¹² 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 NSW families has the added benefits of supporting young people to equally access education and employment opportunities, setting them up for post-school life.

¹⁰ [Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2023](#)

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

¹² [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, & Mavoqa, J Digital Media Research Centre, NSW University of Technology

Recommendations

We recommend that the NSW Government:

1. The NSW Government funds a network of local-community based digital literacy programs that support key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, new migrants and refugees, and women.

Improving digital access and affordability response

Research with the Good Things network 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.¹³

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.

With the rising cost of living, our research indicates that affordability is increasingly a concern for many people in NSW. 20% of regional and 25% (1 in 4) of people in metro areas (Sydney) of NSW are having to make tough decisions between paying for internet/phone and other essential bills like food or housing.¹⁴ In research with our national network of community digital skills providers, 84% agreed that many people need affordable devices and internet connections.

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 Australia, alongside over 25 other organisations, have pledged support for [ACCAN's No Australian Left Offline](#) policy proposal for affordable NBN services 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.

As a participant in NBN's Low Income Digital Inclusion Advisory Group, we have been working alongside other telco, government and community agencies to develop options for government consideration.

¹³ [Media Release: New Grant](#), 2020, Good Things

¹⁴ [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia

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 people in NSW who really need them, are essential to support digital inclusion. We believe that the establishment of a National Device Bank is a key pathway. The experience of our colleagues in the UK in developing a [National Device Bank](#) and [National Data Bank](#) alongside digital literacy support delivered through the National Digital Inclusion network provides a holistic service model to people who are digitally excluded. So far in the UK, the National Device Bank has:

- 360+ local organisations providing devices to their communities
- 6,600+ donated devices have been distributed to people
- 2,750,000+ CO2 emissions have been avoided by reusing devices
- 26,000+ kg of electronic waste have been kept out of landfill by being reused

Donation of devices from the Government is essential to ensure a Device Bank is sustainable. The new [UK Government has recently committed to donating all appropriate devices to the National Device Bank](#). At London Tech Week, just prior to the Labour Party's successful election to establish Government in the UK, Peter Kyle, Shadow Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology announced:

“A Labour government will lead by example by looking to donate appropriate laptops, tablets and phones to digital inclusion schemes, when they are no longer used by departments. Once they are cleaned up and secured they can be reused by people who need them instead of being put in a landfill.”

The NSW Government could use this Digital Inclusion Strategy to be the first state government to commit the donation of all used devices to a National Device Bank, being a leader in our country.

Recommendations

We recommend that the the NSW Government:

1. Works with industry and the community sector to create and fund a National Digital Devices & Data Bank to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.
2. Donate all used Government devices to the National Device Bank being proposed by WorkVentures and distributed alongside digital literacy support provided by Good Things network of community partners

Improving ability response

Our research indicates that people in NSW are struggling to keep up with tech as it rapidly changes. 1 in 5 people in NSW feel overwhelmed with the constant changes in

technology.¹⁵ 21% of people in regional NSW and 24% of people living in metro areas (Sydney) said they need more support to keep up with changes in tech.

Our innovative [Digital Skills Checkers](#) assessing learners participating in our programs shows that community-based digital skills learning has had a significant positive impact. For Be Connected learners:

- 93% reported increasing confidence using technology in one or more ways
- 86% who completed our follow up survey improved their overall digital skills score
- 98% reported improved social connection after participating in Be Connected
- The most improved skill for NSW-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 NSW would improve the overall digital ability of people in NSW.

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

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Inclusion

Over the past few months, Good Things Australia has been exploring the intersection of AI literacy and digital inclusion through a combination of community consultation and testing the delivery of AI related content. We have worked collaboratively with Microsoft, Telstra, academics and experts in AI along with on the ground experts in our community partners across the country to build our understanding of AI literacy and how it fits within community based digital literacy programs.

AI literacy research key findings

The Good Things team conducted research through surveys to our network of community partners and consultations involving over 56 organisations and individuals from various sectors, including government, academia, technology, social impact sectors. We also spoke to women who will be learning about AI literacy as participants in our Digital Sisters program. Bringing together representatives from these varying stakeholders, our insights were further refined during a cross-sector roundtable held in early May.

Our key findings:

- AI will not solve digital exclusion and could make it worse if we don't address the basics of access and affordability
- A person needs to have basic digital and literacy skills to use AI powered tools and devices, although AI tools can help to overcome some barriers to use technology

¹⁵ [Australian Attitudes to Getting Online](#), 2023, Good Things Australia

- AI has the ability to positively impact efforts toward digital inclusion through tools that support easier communication
- The speed at which new AI tools and technologies have increasingly been developed and deployed means that it is difficult to predict how exactly it will impact society in the near and distant years. Yet it is a transformative technology that will shape our world and it is up to us to decide whether this is for good or bad.
- AI literacy education is a collective responsibility rather than an individual one. We cannot expect people to be able to access, engage and learn about AI on their own, there needs to be support and we should look to community based approaches to encourage a broader scope of learning

Our research also found that:

- Social Impact organisations are well placed to support people to build their AI literacy because of their contact with people most in need, but they need resourcing and training to build their knowledge and confidence in how to do this.
- Social Impact organisations need access to free or affordable AI tools that currently require paid subscription to ensure they are using the best and most reliable AI tools can offer.
- Social Impact organisations are well placed to support development of responsible AI due to our strong focus on human-centred and inclusive design. Yet participation in the design of AI, requires resources and training for not-for-profits to support development and leverage AI tools effectively and safely.

We recommend that the NSW Government have a clear approach to ensuring all social impact organisations are provided with support and funding to engage in AI literacy development and that any new digital literacy program implemented includes a focus on AI and other emerging technologies.

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.¹⁶ We know misinformation can cause real world harms, ranging from health and safety to electoral integrity.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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 Hazards Near Me NSW), websites,

¹⁶ [Adult Media Literacy in Australia: Attitudes, Experiences and Needs](#), 2021, Notley, T Chambers, S Park, S Dezuanni, M. WSU, QUT and University of Canberra

¹⁷ [Misinformation and news quality of digital platforms in Australia: A position paper to guide code development](#), 2020, ACMA

¹⁸ [Digital Platforms Inquiry, Final Report](#), 2019, ACCC

sources of reliable information, support and recovery services (such as those accessed via MyServiceNSW app) and what to do when the internet goes down.

Essential services

The NSW Government has had a strong focus on improving digital access to government services through the continued development of the Service NSW app. For many people this has made government services easily accessible. Yet, for those who are digitally excluded, access to these services continues to be a challenge. Without access to an appropriate device or the confidence and skills to use the app,

We recommend that the NSW Government ensure that people are supported not just to use the app itself, but to build their digital literacy more broadly, to enable digital resilience. This would mean that people are better able to respond to any changes in or introduction of new digital services.

Community based and targeted digital literacy support programs for essential services in NSW would increase digital ability in the state, while supporting the adoption of digital services within hard to reach populations. Support in trusted, local spaces to learn about and use these apps is needed to support their continued uptake.

However, community organisations need funding to be able to provide this support, rather than just a referral pathway. Local libraries and community centres, report an increase in people coming to seek support to access digital government services, which takes time and capacity. When local Service NSW centres, banks or post offices close, or are not easily accessible, people seek support at community infrastructure such as libraries and support services. So, **a program of funding to community organisations to provide this support is essential.**

Recommendations

We recommend that the the NSW Government:

1. Provide funding to enable local community organisations to deliver digital literacy programs that support key communities not already served by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples and women.
2. Build on existing Networks and program infrastructure and ensure any new digital literacy programs include emerging tech and issues such as AI, digital media literacy, emergency preparedness and recovery and NSW essential services.

Improving awareness of the benefits of digital

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](#)

Recommendation

We recommend that the the NSW Government:

1. Supports Get Online Week 2024 to gain additional traction in NSW.

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 NSW 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 NSW, we recommend that:

1. The Digital Inclusion Strategy recognises the need for all areas of government to hold responsibility for improving digital inclusion, with measures aided by investment to ensure implementation can support all people in NSW to equally benefit from the digital economy and society.
2. The NSW Government funds a network of local-community based digital literacy programs that support key communities not already supported by other initiatives, including low income families, people with disability, First Nations peoples, new migrants and refugees, and women.
3. The ability to understand and use Artificial Intelligence is built into the Digital Ability initiatives and the government has a clear policy on the development and use of AI
4. The NSW Government supports permanent affordable access measures, including contribution to a National Device Bank, to support people struggling to afford appropriate tech with free devices and data.

About Good Things Australia

Good Things Australia are future-focused digital inclusion leaders, advocating, partnering, educating and innovating to ensure no one is left behind in the digital world.

We close the digital divide so no one is left behind.

We develop and deliver a range of innovative digital inclusion programs to support those most in need, including people over 50 years of age, people with intellectual disability, migrant and refugee women, people with chronic health conditions, carers and low income families.

We partner and collaborate with other social impact organisations, industry and government to provide holistic, sustainable and impactful digital inclusion programs and to advocate to close the digital divide.

Good Things Australia is part of the Good Things Foundation Group, delivering digital inclusion programs in the UK for over 10 years and in Australia since 2017.

Learn more about our work: goodthingsaustralia.org

Good Things 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.