

2025

Australian attitudes to getting online

Good Things Australia's consumer research report

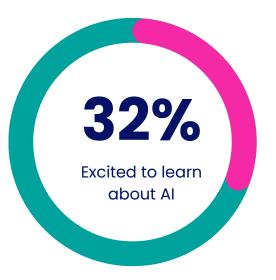




Summary









Struggle to keep up with constant changes in tech



1 in 3

Unsure how to distinguish AI from real content



1 in 3

Worried their loved ones can't spot a scam





Rely on friends and family for help when something goes wrong



Can't afford a new smartphone, computer or tablet but need one

Good Things Australia's latest research highlights Australians' attitudes toward getting online in 2025.

We surveyed 2,012 adults living in Australia to understand the barriers they face when accessing and using technology and the internet. With the rapid emergence of new technologies, we also investigated how they view and engage with Al.

Now in its third year, this research provides insights into changing consumer behaviours and attitudes, highlighting opportunities for Good Things and the wider community to close the digital divide so no one is left behind.

Introduction

We live in a rapidly changing world. The rapid adoption of artificial intelligence technologies is accelerating the pace of change exponentially, with laws and regulation trying to catch up to create a safe operating environment for consumers.

Yet, 1 in 4 Australians remain digitally excluded, with the digital divide affecting some groups of people 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.



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.

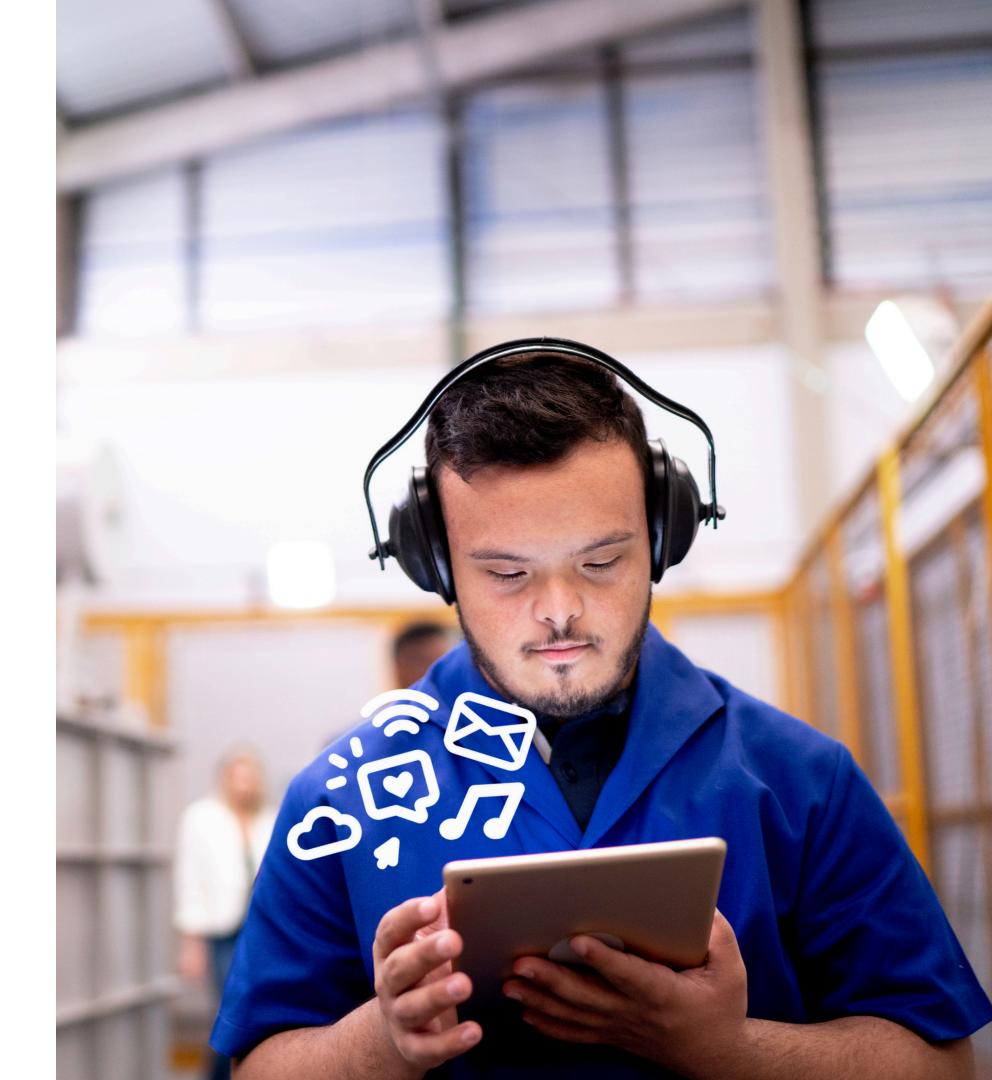
In today's world, affordable access to data and technology, and the ability to safely and confidently use digital services is not a luxury, it's essential.

Digital inclusion is a requirement for full and equal participation in society — helping people access work, education, online services, and stay connected with loved ones and their community.

It also plays a vital role in driving broader social and economic inclusion. Research shows that if the digital divide is closed, it could add nearly half a billion dollars annually to the Australian economy, at a conservative estimate.²

This report presents new consumer research from Good Things Australia, uncovering national trends and shining a light on the online attitudes and behaviours of individuals and communities across the country. Now in its third year, the research explores the barriers that prevent Australians from getting online, with a particular focus on the impacts of AI, and how intergenerational perspectives shape confidence and safety in the digital world.

The findings make clear that ongoing support is essential to help people develop digital skills and build the confidence needed to keep pace with technology. As digital change accelerates, this support must not only continue but grow — ensuring everyone in Australia is digitally resilient and able to participate equally in ways that are meaningful to them. Achieving this will require ongoing investment in digital skills programs and campaigns, alongside strong measures to improve access and affordability, so the digital divide can be closed for good.



² Hutley, N. (2024). The Economic Benefits of Overcoming Digital Exclusion. Good Things Australia: Sydney, NSW.

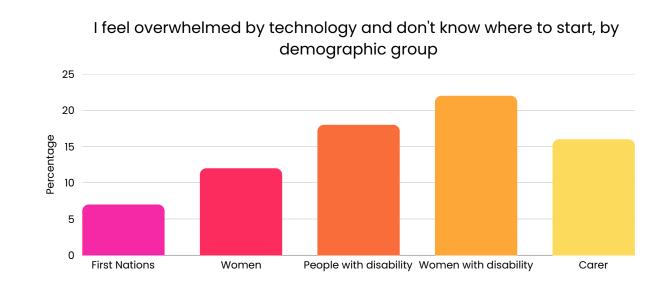
Keeping up with tech

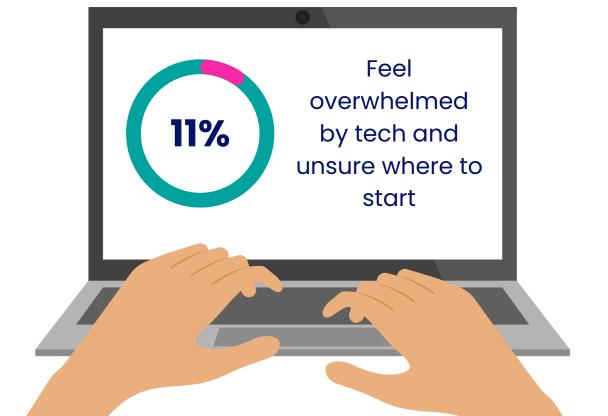
More than one in ten Australians said they feel overwhelmed by technology and unsure where to start — a key barrier identified when respondents were asked about the difficulties they've experienced when accessing digital services or the internet. Some groups were more likely than others to feel this sense of overwhelm toward technology. Overall, 12% of women said they feel overwhelmed by technology and are unsure where to begin, compared to 10% of men. This rises to more than one in five women with disability (22%).

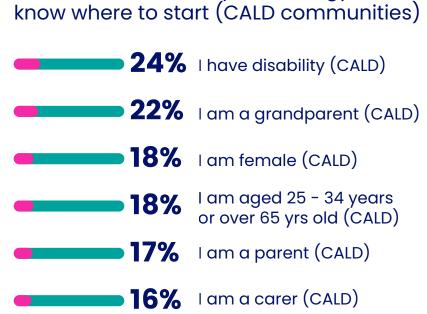
Among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) respondents, 14% reported feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start. This difference became even more pronounced when a person was from a CALD background and had additional demographic factors — such as having a disability, identifying as female, or being a grandparent

or carer. The trend was consistent across all age groups, except for CALD people aged 35–44, who reported a lower rate than the national benchmark (8%). In contrast, only 7% of First Nations respondents agreed with this statement, and there was no significant difference between regional and metropolitan respondents.

The 2025 research introduced a more specific measure, asking respondents to agree that they both feel overwhelmed and are unsure where to start — a refinement from the 2024 survey design. These respondents, who are most at risk of being left behind, are likely to experience both low confidence and limited awareness of opportunities to build digital skills or seek support, offering insight into where targeted interventions can make the greatest impact.



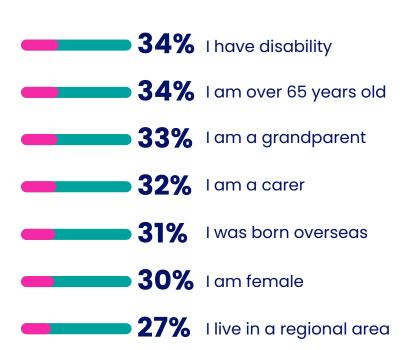




I feel overwhelmed by technology and don't

When asked how changes in technology impact their lives, 1 in 4 people (25%) said they find the variety of technology available to be overwhelming. This rose to 30% of women, compared to 20% of men, and above 30% of people aged over 55 years, who were born overseas, have disability, or are grandparents or carers. Results also trended slightly higher in regional areas compared to capital cities. People aged 25–54 were less likely to report feeling overwhelmed by the variety of technology available. This age group is more likely to be in work — a factor not explored in this research, but one that could help explain lower levels of this feeling, alongside other influences. These findings highlight that keeping up with technology is more challenging for some Australians than others, and that connectivity literacy programs for at-risk groups could play an important role in addressing this gap.

The variety of technology available is overwhelming



Attitudes toward keeping up with technology were also explored in relation to online safety — a key consideration given the growing sophistication of cybercrime and the strong link between feelings of safety online and overall digital confidence. Almost half of all respondents (48%) said they are worried that scams are becoming harder to identify. This concern was particularly high among grandparents, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (62%) and grandparents aged 55–64 (63%). Women across a range of ages and backgrounds were also more likely than men to express concern about online scams.

Beyond online safety, many respondents reported broader challenges in keeping up with technology. More than one in four (26%) said they don't like that everything is now online or tech-related, while nearly one in five (18%) said they need help to keep up with changing technology.



Those more likely to need support included women (19%, compared with 17% of men), people with disability (21%), those born overseas (23%), parents (20%), grandparents (23%), and carers (21%). Among people aged over 65, 27% said they need help — highlighting the importance of programs like Be Connected in supporting older Australians' digital confidence.

The research also shows the need for targeted digital skills programs for CALD communities and other at-risk groups. This includes for the 26% of CALD women aged 18–54, 28% of CALD grandparents, 25% of First Nations grandparents (noting the limited response size), and 21% of people with disability who said they need support to keep up.

One in five (20%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents said they find it embarrassing to ask for help all the time when accessing digital services. 19% of CALD people with disability said they too find it embarrassing having to ask for help. Meanwhile, 11% of the total population said that this was a barrier or difficulty to accessing digital services or the internet for them.

Conversely, many Australians feel confident embracing new technology. One in three (32%) said they feel comfortable keeping up with changes in technology and the internet. These respondents were more likely to be men (38%), people who speak a language other than English at home (35%), First Nations respondents (42%), or aged 35–44 (39%), showing that attitudes to technology vary widely across groups.

Further insights on attitude to keeping up with tech are detailed in the *Attitudes to AI* and *Supporting Loved Ones* sections of this report.





Digital skills for everyday

The survey asked respondents to select from a list of ten essential digital skills any activities they find challenging. Overall, the top skill Australians struggle with is using AI tools or apps, at nearly one in four people (23%). The next most common digital skills that people struggle with were using government services (19%) and scanning QR codes (14%).

The results reveal interesting differences in who is most likely to struggle with particular skills. Women were generally less likely to report difficulties across the ten digital skills, except when it came to scanning QR codes, and showed equal results to men for using AI tools or apps and accessing news and information. People with disability identified the same top three challenges overall but at higher rates — four to five percentage points more than those without disability.

Digital skill barriers also affect every generation. NIneteen percent of young men aged 25–34 said they find paying bills or banking online difficult, and 26% of young CALD people in this age bracket. Young men (26%) were also more likely to struggle with online shopping than young women (14%), and one in five (20%) in this age group said applying for jobs online is difficult — double the overall Australian rate of 10%.



Respondents were also asked how they respond when something goes wrong online or with their device. With problem solving being a key digital skill linked to confidence and many other areas — particularly within the context of digital change — the research explored this for the first time in 2025.

While 60% of people surveyed said they resolve technical problems, glitches or errors by researching the issue and fixing it themselves, over a third (37%) said they need support from friends or family members to navigate and resolve online issues. 33% contact tech support or customer service for help, and one in four (26%) said they ask AI such as ChatGPT, Google AI or Siri for assistance. A small percentage (3%) go to digital skills training in their area to resolve tech problems or glitches, and 14% said they try but struggle to identify the correct solution. Women (46%) are much more likely to rely on friends or family for help than men (28%), as are parents (44%), grandparents (52%) and people over 55 (53% of those over 65), showing the importance of strong social networks in digital inclusion.

These results indicate that many people are confident in using problem solving skills to overcome barriers when things go wrong and may use more than one strategy to do so. It is encouraging to see the number of people who have a support system to turn to when they experience a glitch, error or technical problem. However, the quality of the support received to build independent problem solving skills — and its impact on overall confidence getting online — was not explored and could be an avenue for future research.

Essential digital skills explored in this research



Using AI apps or tools



Using government services



Scanning QR codes eg for ordering food or buying tickets



Staying connected wth loved ones



Paying bills and banking online



Shopping online



Booking medical appointments



Applying for a job



Studying



Accessing news or information



Problem solving

³ Australian Digital Capability Framework Version 1.0, 2023, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

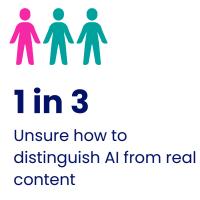


Attitudes to Al

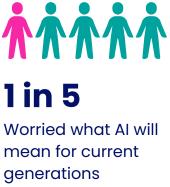
Attitudes toward AI (Artificial Intelligence) were a key focus of the 2025 research, reflecting its rapid development, widespread adoption, and growing presence in public discussion.

Survey participants were asked to select statements that best described their attitude and experience with Al. One in five Australians (21%) said they worry about what Al will mean for current generations, while 14% are concerned their jobs could be taken over by Al. This concern is stronger among young adults, with 25% of 18–24 year olds and 26% of people who speak a language other than English at home expressing concern about Al replacing their jobs.

As generative AI continues to advance but remains relatively new, nearly one in three respondents (29%) said they are unsure how to tell AI



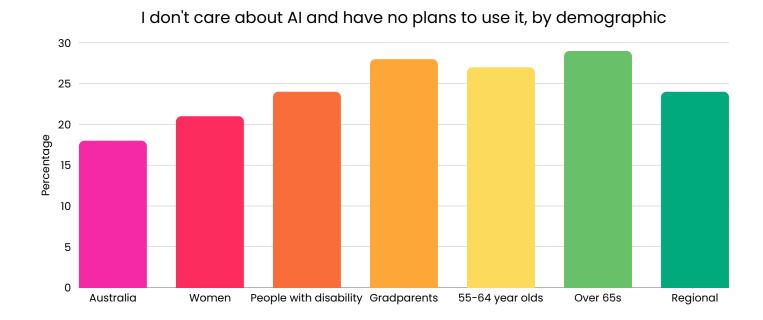




generated content from real content. This uncertainty rises to 43% among grandparents, highlighting a possible intergenerational gap in media literacy skills.

Fourteen percent of respondents said they have never used AI, and almost one in five (18%) said they don't care about AI and have no plans to use it. These attitudes were more common among women, people with disability, grandparents, people living in regional areas, and older adults.

Despite this, many Australians are enthusiastic about Al. Nearly one in three (32%) said they are excited to learn about and use Al — a figure that rises to two thirds (62%) of First Nations respondents and just over half (55%) of



those who speak a language other than English at home. Confidence in helping others use AI also varies. One in four men (25%) said they feel confident supporting friends or family to use AI, compared with 14% of women and the national average of 20%.

Additional survey questions reinforce Al's growing everyday role. More than a quarter (26%) of people said they already use Al to help resolve tech problems, while nearly a quarter (23%) said they struggle to use Al tools or apps. These findings show that while Al can already support everyday problem solving, many Australians still need opportunities to build Al literacy, skills, and confidence as the technology continues to evolve.

26%

Use AI to help to resolve tech problems

23%

Struggle to use AI tools or apps



Supporting loved ones

The survey explored how Australians feel about their own and their family's relationship with technology, to better understand intergenerational attitudes toward getting online. One in five parents (20%) and nearly one in three grandparents (32%) said they rely on their children or grandchildren for support. This figure rises to 40% among CALD grandparents and 38% among grandparents with disability. Similarly, CALD parents (23%) and parents with disability (27%) were more likely to seek help from their children. Only 10% of First Nations parents and just 1% of CALD women aged 18–54 said they rely on their children or grandchildren for support, compared to the overall average of 13% across all groups.

Over a third (37%) of respondents said they ask friends or family members for help when facing a technical problem, glitch, or error — again highlighting the importance of close social networks in supporting digital literacy. However, one in ten respondents (10%) said they find it frustrating to provide technical support to their family, with younger adults far more likely to feel this way — 18% of 18–24 year olds compared with just 3% of those over 65. This suggests a potential need for non-family digital support options or additional assistance for younger adults who often take on this informal teaching role.

In contrast, 21% of respondents said they love helping their family use technology. This attitude was especially common among men (25%), First Nations people (42%), and those who speak a language other than English at home (32%).

Beyond supporting each other to use technology, 8% of respondents said they find it hard to connect with loved ones because they are not always online or tech-savvy. This rate was notably higher for people who speak a language other than English at home (17%) and particularly for CALD women aged 18–54 (22%).



Grandparents rely on their kids or grandkids for support



Parents rely on their kids or grandkids for support



I love helping my family use tech



These findings suggest that low digital skills and confidence can contribute to reduced social inclusion and everyday connection with friends and family. Despite other trends around digital confidence and age, this was not the case for older adults — only 3% of grandparents and people over 65 said they find it difficult to connect with loved ones because they are not always online or tech–savvy, possibly reflecting other ways of staying in touch or differing expectations about technology's role in relationships.

The survey also explored how worried people feel about their own and their family's relationship with technology. One in three parents (34%) said they are concerned about how their children use technology and whether they are safe online. Looking from the other direction, one in five (21%) carers and people aged 35–44 said they worry about their parents' or grandparents' ability to get online, compared with 14% of people nationally.



1 in 3

Parents said they are worried about how kids are using technology

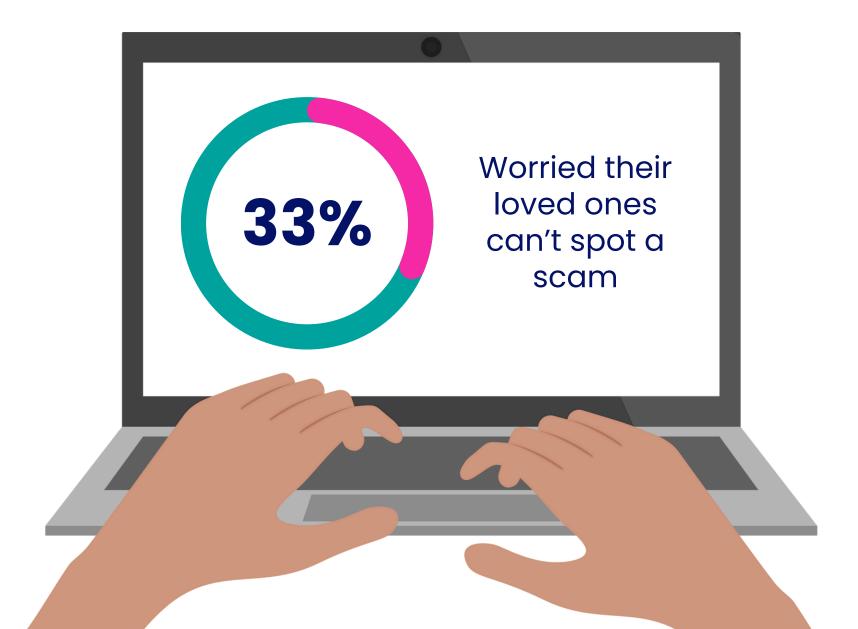


1 in 5

Carers are worried about their parents and grandparents ability to get online

Concerns about online safety also extend to scams. One in three people (33%) said they worry about their loved ones' ability to spot a scam. Men and women reported similar levels of concern overall (32% and 34%, respectively), but higher rates were seen among CALD men (37%), people with disability (38%), and CALD carers (46%).

Together, these findings show that while technology brings families together in new ways, it also highlights the different levels of confidence and concern people have — reminding us how important it is to make digital skills support easy to find and open to everyone.



Affordable access

Cost of living and affordability pressures continue to affect some Australians more than others. Eleven percent of respondents said they cannot afford a new computer, laptop, or smartphone but need one.

Women (13%) were more likely to report struggling to afford a device than men (9%), as were regional respondents (13%) compared with those in metropolitan areas (11%). Younger people were also more likely to say they couldn't afford a new device than older generations.

This rate increases to 15% among carers, one in five (22%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, and similarly high levels among Australians with disability (21%). The most affected group were culturally diverse people living with disability — more than one in three (36%) said they cannot afford a new digital device but need one.

These findings show that digital exclusion driven by affordability differs markedly across the population, with some groups far more affected than others — a trend consistent with the 2024 research, which placed a stronger focus on cost of living impacts.

Responses to this question may also reflect differing attitudes about the importance of owning a new device versus continuing to use an existing one. While nearly all respondents (99%) reported owning a computer, laptop, or smartphone, further research is needed to assess the age or quality of devices respondents need for essential tasks.

I can't afford a new computer, laptop or smartphone but need one



1 in 5

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people



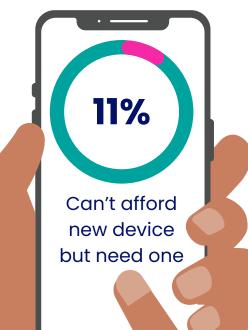
1 in 5

People with disability

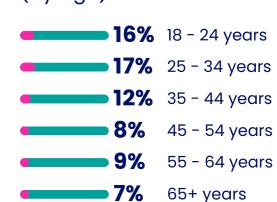


1 in 3

Culturally diverse people with disability



I can't afford a new computer, laptop or smartphone but need one (by age)

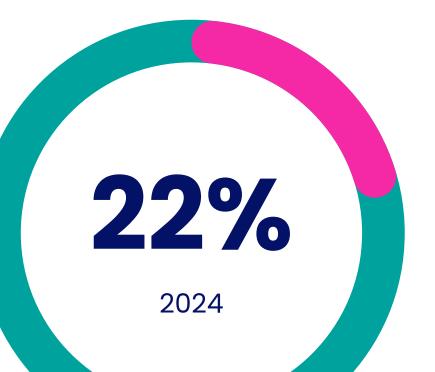




When it comes to connectivity barriers, more than one in four young people (26%) and people who speak a language other than English at home (27%) reported having unreliable internet access, compared with the national rate of 16%. Among culturally diverse people living with disability, this figure was even higher at 28%, highlighting ongoing challenges in accessing reliable connectivity for some groups. Interestingly, there was not a significant difference in the rate people experienced this barrier to getting online between regional and metro respondents in this survey.

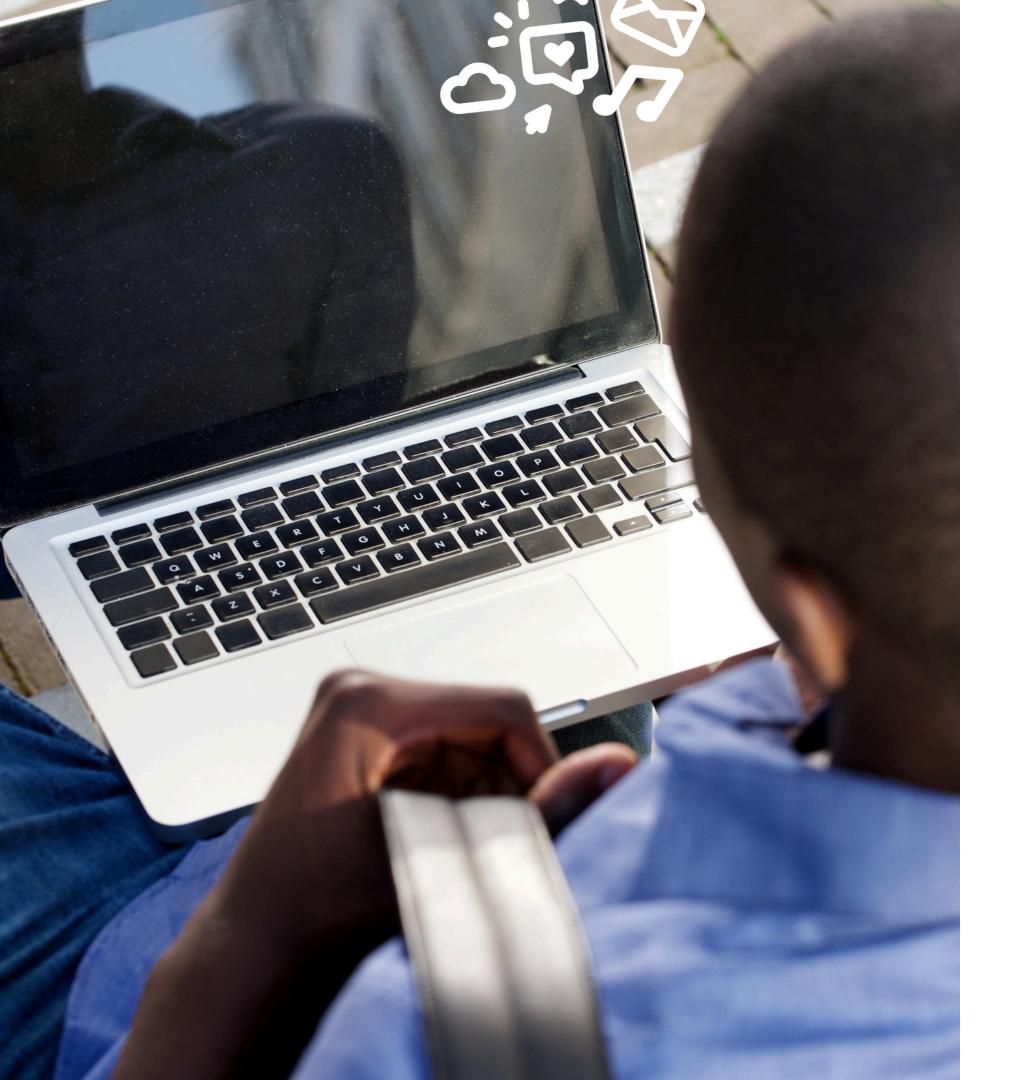
Encouragingly, the overall national rate of people citing unreliable internet as a barrier has improved — dropping from nearly one in five (22%) in 2024 to 16% in 2025.

Unreliable internet connectivity is a barrier to getting online









Conclusion

The consumer research examined in this report enables deeper understanding of contemporary attitudes in Australia towards getting online. In particular it highlights how many feel overwhelmed by constantly changing tech and the variety of technology available. The research illustrates the significant role of families and intergenerational support on attitudes to getting online, as well as people of all ages being impacted by different aspects of digital inclusion — from skills to affordability and access.

The research also demonstrates that there is an ongoing need to support people to learn digital skills and build confidence beyond existing digital skills programs, with a focus on Al literacy, online safety, using government services, as well as everyday essentials like scanning QR codes, online shopping and applying for jobs online. It is also recommended that digital skills support focuses on those more likely to be digitally excluded, including, but not limited to, people with disability, women, carers, grandparents, parents and culturally diverse communities. This is expected to have broad ranging positive impacts, including greater social inclusion and economic participation.

To have long term impact, digital skills programs and campaigns must go hand in hand with improved access and affordability measures. Helping people keep pace with emerging technologies is essential to closing the digital divide — ensuring everyone in Australia can participate fully, confidently, and equally in our increasingly digital world.

Methodology

This research by Good Things Australia was carried out on a national representative sample of 2,012 Australians aged 18 and over in September 2025.

The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that was independently conducted by MediaCast and verified by PureProfile.

It is important to note that given the collection methodology (online) the impact of digital exclusion may be even higher than the findings in this report illustrate.

About Good Things Australia

Good Things Australia closes the digital divide so no one is left behind. Good Things supports 4,000 community organisations nationwide to deliver digital skills programs, and partners with social impact organisations, industry and government to close Australia's digital divide.

Find out more: www.goodthingsaustralia.org



