

A digital futures plan for the Moreton Bay Region

May 2013



This strategy has been prepared by Explor Consulting Pty Ltd for Regional Development Australia Moreton Bay Inc, the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Queensland Government.

Explor Consulting is the leader in digital futures consulting.

We help communities and their governments to plan and build better futures, taking advantage of the opportunities of digital technologies and broadband services.

Explor works with governments and organisations at all levels: local, regional, state, territory, provincial and national.

We provide advice, we help develop digital strategies, we facilitate the funding and initiation of projects and we provide management assistance.

Explor's people have unique insights into how digital technologies and broadband services can be exploited to support economic, social and environmental development.



Table of contents

A digital futures plan.....	1
About this plan.....	3
The Moreton Bay Region	4
Digital technologies offer great opportunities	9
Building the digital future	15
Making it happen	26
References	29

A digital futures plan

The Moreton Bay Region in South East Queensland (SEQ) comprises diverse communities, landscapes and businesses. Since 2008, the Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC) has been the single local government authority for the region and is the third largest local government by population in Australia. Regional Development Australia Moreton Bay Incorporated (RDA Moreton Bay) is also an important contributor to the region's economic, social and environmental development.

Digital technologies, including the National Broadband Network (NBN), present new opportunities for developing the region. This document is a digital futures plan for the Moreton Bay Region, prepared to enable the people and businesses of the region to capitalise on these opportunities. RDA Moreton Bay and its funding partners the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Queensland Government commissioned Explor Consulting to prepare the plan.

The economic, social and environmental future

The Moreton Bay Regional Council, RDA Moreton Bay and the broader community have been working to identify their aspirations and preferred futures through plans such as the *Moreton Bay Region Community Plan 2011–2021*. That plan has identified clear goals for the region's future:

- Local jobs for residents
- Well-planned growth
- Digital literacy and commerce

- Safe neighbourhoods
- Healthy and supportive communities
- Strong local governance
- Healthy natural environment
- Diverse transport options
- Quality recreation and cultural opportunities.

Digital technologies can help the region achieve these goals.

The Moreton Bay Region also has three specific priorities which can be particularly addressed with digital technologies:

Transforming work patterns: A high priority for the Moreton Bay Region is to significantly improve the level of employment self containment and to reduce the number of residents commuting out of the region each day.

Strengthening the economy: Many existing businesses in the Moreton Bay Region face challenges and threats due to global market conditions, the strength of the Australian Dollar and the disruptions arising from new technologies. The economic profile of the region, with a large manufacturing sector, means that the region is particularly vulnerable.

Connecting varied communities: The Moreton Bay Region is extensive, made up of many different communities with their own identities and heritages. A challenge for the region is to harness the power, connections and efficiencies of a large region with a single strong local government authority, while preserving and celebrating the identities of the diverse local places and communities.

The digital future

This plan proposes a vision for the Moreton Bay Region's future, enhanced by broadband and digital technologies:

The Moreton Bay Region will be a thriving region of opportunity where people and businesses in the diverse communities confidently use digital technologies to connect within and beyond the region to support prosperous, sustainable and vibrant lifestyles.

The following goals are proposed to support this vision:

Capable people	The people of the Moreton Bay Region will have the confidence, capability and access to use digital technologies to support fulfilling, creative, healthy and socially connected lives.
Connected communities	The region's communities will actively use digital technologies to promote and celebrate their localities to residents and visitors.
Transformed work	A higher proportion of residents will work within the region through the availability of digitally equipped working spaces in "tele-centres" and in their own homes.
Thriving economy	The region's economy will be thriving and diversifying as existing and new businesses use digital technologies to grow their market shares, to improve productivity, to enhance their knowledge resources and to build new networks of suppliers and partners.
Social inclusion	Social disadvantage and isolation will be reduced by using online services to better connect people, improve the delivery of community services and help provide people with basic skills.
Environmental sustainability	Lifestyles will be more sustainable and the understanding of the region's natural assets and ecosystems will be higher, through the use of digital technologies, online information resources and smart infrastructure.
Access to services	The people and businesses of the region will have improved access to education, health and other services, delivered efficiently using digital technologies.

Strategies for creating the digital future

This plan proposes 6 digital technology strategies:

1 Lead and position as a digital region	The Moreton Bay Region should embrace and promote a vision and goals for its digital future, and commit to a clear set of actions to achieve these. Sound management arrangements should be put in place with allocated responsibilities and resources.
2 Create connected communities	The region should act to ensure that the diverse communities are provided with the digital infrastructure (including broadband services) that forms the foundation of a digital future. There should be suitable programs to provide residents of all ages and backgrounds with digital capabilities and literacy. Communities should be supported to create digital resources (including local online information) that promote their localities and help their residents to have healthy, safe and sustainable lifestyles.
3 Transform work patterns	The region should promote, broker and support flexible work patterns (such as tele-working) supported by digital technologies. These should include home based working and working in "third spaces" such as tele-centres.
4 Build business capacity	The region should drive practical programs to build the confidence and capacity of businesses, particularly smaller businesses, for using digital technologies. These programs should include a mix of awareness raising, information resources and targeted advice.
5 Stimulate innovation	The region should strengthen the innovation environment for businesses through measures that stimulate new attitudes, new ideas and new collaborations.
6 Enhance government and community services	The Moreton Bay Regional Council and other government and community services providers should enhance and integrate their services by using digital technologies in ways that broaden access, improve service quality and reduce delivery costs.

About this plan

Digital technologies including broadband services can help regions to create better futures, realise their visions and pursue their priorities. The most successful regions are those that adopt a strategic approach, with projects and actions that match their unique local characteristics and opportunities. That is why RDA Moreton Bay partnered with the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the Queensland Government to commission this digital futures plan.

The plan offers a vision of a better future for the region, enabled by digital technologies and a set of proposed strategies to achieve that vision.

This plan has been prepared by Explor Consulting, a consulting firm that specialises in developing digital strategies and in helping communities and their governments to plan and build better futures, taking advantage of the opportunities of digital technologies and broadband services. It was prepared in early 2013 through research and consultations across the region.

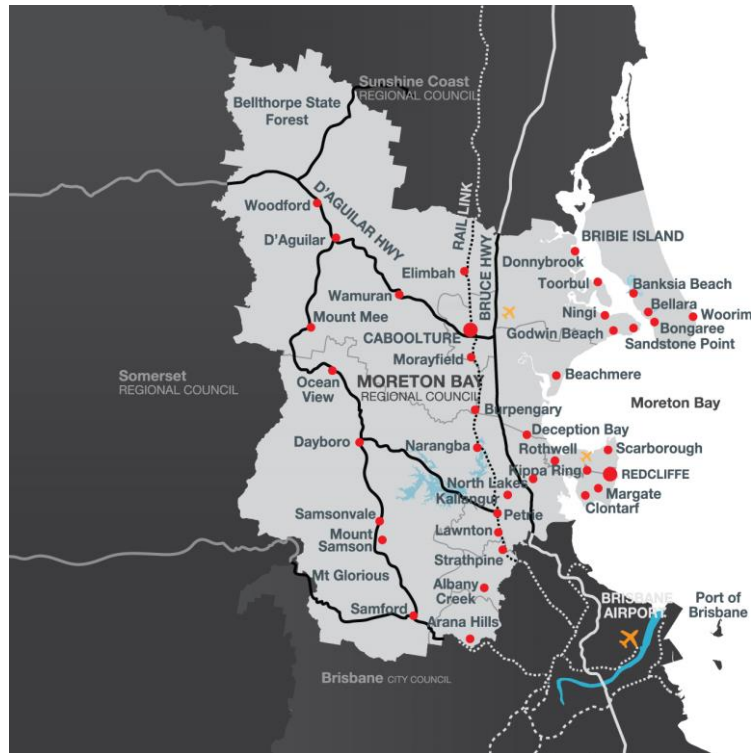
Explor Consulting acknowledges the time, advice and insights provided by those who participated in the consultations. Explor particularly appreciated the support provided by the staff of RDA Moreton Bay and the MBRC.

RDA Moreton Bay is part of a national network of 55 committees established in partnership between the Australian, state, territory and local governments to develop and strengthen the regional communities of Australia. RDA Moreton Bay is focusing on the economic, social and environmental issues affecting the region by working on three key priorities:

1. A driver of regional leadership and identity
2. A digitally enabled region
3. A future focused region.

The Moreton Bay Region

The Moreton Bay Region is a rapidly growing region, located between 20 and 44 kilometres north of central Brisbane. It offers great lifestyle opportunities with proximity to a capital city and major transport connections. The region has diverse landscapes and environments including urban centres, rural townships, mountain ranges, national parks, forests, bush land, beaches, coastal wetlands and agricultural land.



About the region

The region has a population of almost 400,000 people, currently growing at around 2% per annum. The overall land area is just over 2,000 km². The region's single local government authority is the Moreton Bay Regional Council, formed in 2008 through the amalgamation of the 3 former local government areas of Pine Rivers, Caboolture and Redcliffe. There are many diverse settlements in the region and the primary identity for many communities is that of their local settlement, over that of the large region.

The Moreton Bay Region is well connected to the Brisbane CBD, Brisbane Airport and the Port of Brisbane. The main road link for the region is the Bruce Highway which passes north-south from the Sunshine Coast to Brisbane. This is becoming increasingly congested, particularly at peak times. The Sunshine Coast railway line also passes through the region and there are Citytrain services between Brisbane and Caboolture. The Moreton Bay Rail Link between Petrie and Kippa-Ring (on the Redcliffe peninsula) is currently under construction.

The gross regional product of the Moreton Bay Region is around \$10 billion per annum, contributing over 4% to Queensland's economy. Manufacturing is currently the largest sector and accounts for about 12% of regional economic activity. This is followed by the construction sector at just over 11% and the health care and social assistance sector at just under 11%.

The 2011 census showed that the region had a workforce of 174,488 but 101,042 people had a place of employment outside of the region. This means that around 58% of the resident workforce leaves the region each day to commute to work.

The overall unemployment rate for the region is under 5%, which makes it lower than Queensland's overall rate, but there are areas such as Caboolture where the unemployment rate exceeds 10%. The retail sector accounts for the highest level of employment at over 16% of the regional workforce, compared to less than 12% for Queensland. By comparison, the professional services sector accounts for less than 10% of persons employed in the region which is well below the SEQ and state average.

The region's workforce is slightly less qualified than the state average. In the Moreton Bay Region, around 10% of adults have a bachelor degree or higher compared to around 13% for Queensland.

There are very few private or public sector head offices in the region and the private sector is dominated by small businesses. Over 95% of all businesses employ less than twenty employees and around 60% of businesses are sole traders.

Planning and development processes recognise the region's size and the diversity of its localities. A series of *Principal Regional Activity Centres* are being developed across the region including Caboolture - Morayfield, Redcliffe – Kippa-Ring and Strathpine. North Lakes is being developed as a major master planned community. The Moreton Bay Regional Council is also developing local area plans for many localities.

The region has 94 schools and colleges. There are also campuses within the region of Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and the Australian Trade College. The Australian Catholic University has a nearby campus.

There are two public hospitals and a range of public primary health service centres throughout the region. There are also existing private hospital services and a new private hospital is planned. The region has over 60 aged care providers. Demand for health and aged care services is growing and new facilities will be required.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council is developing a new planning scheme to shape the growth of the region to 2031 and beyond. The scheme will recognise that the region is made up of many distinct places of different types including urban areas of varying densities, activity centres, villages, industrial precincts, rural areas and natural landscapes and waterways.

Consultations for the new scheme have shown that the community wants:

- Walkable and safe neighbourhoods
- Diverse and connected places
- Diverse and growing employment options
- Integrated transport systems focused on east-west connections to local employment centres
- Accessibility for all ages and abilities, with an increased focus on walking, cycling and public transport
- Networks of healthy natural areas
- Productive rural areas and townships
- Affordable infrastructure.

The Moreton Bay Region has an age profile that is younger than the state average and the region is home to many young families. However, the population is ageing. As it grows to a projected 533,000 people by 2031, the proportion of people in the 65+ age group will triple.

The overall region also has a slightly lower level of social disadvantage than the national average but there is considerable variation between localities. Caboolture is an area of particular disadvantage. Housing affordability is a growing issue across the whole region.

The Moreton Bay Region has a strong volunteer culture and a large number of community organisations.

The region has rich natural assets and landscapes that support biodiversity and offer outdoor recreation experiences that are amongst the best in South East Queensland. Development pressures and the ecological footprint of the growing population pose environmental threats.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council is pursuing an economic development strategy which has identified the following industry sectors as having high growth potential:

- Building product manufacturing
- Machinery and equipment manufacturing
- Food and beverage manufacturing
- Professional services
- Transport and logistics.

The region's strengths

The Moreton Bay Region has many strengths:

Diverse localities: The region comprises a highly diverse set of localities, each with its own identity and local characteristics.

Quality of life: The region's location, community infrastructure, natural assets and housing costs offer a high quality of life to residents.

Transport connections: The region's location, road links, rail links and proximity to Brisbane Airport and the Port of Brisbane are major strengths. The new Moreton Bay Rail Link will be an important new asset.

Diverse skills: There is a large labour pool with diverse skills.

Strong manufacturing sector: Manufacturing is the largest sector of the region's economy with significant flow on impacts across the broader regional economy.

Proximity to education facilities: There are a good range of schools and vocational education institutions within the region and a number of university campuses near the region.

Community organisations: The Moreton Bay Region and its different localities have many successful and active community organisations.

Natural assets, diverse landscapes and waterways: The region has many natural assets. The diverse landscapes and waterways support a rich diversity of ecosystems and provide many recreation opportunities.

Commitment to sustainability: The community and regional council have a strong and active commitment to environmental sustainability.

Land for development: There is land available for development situated along transport routes throughout the region.

Business operating costs: The region is a lower cost business location than many other Australian localities.

The region's challenges

The Moreton Bay Region also faces challenges:

Lack of regional identity and brand: The Moreton Bay Region is an extensive region with a relatively new local government structure. The “Moreton Bay” regional identity and brand does not currently have a strong level of recognition amongst residents, potential visitors and potential investors.

Travel to work patterns: The travel pattern of 58% of the resident workforce departing the region each day is a major and growing problem. It creates traffic congestion, infrastructure deterioration, environmental degradation and reduced quality of life.

Population growth: Unless it is well planned and managed, population growth and land development will threaten existing infrastructure and the natural environment.

Global market forces: Global market forces including currency exchange rates pose threats to many businesses. The strong Australian Dollar is a major challenge for the manufacturing and other sectors.

Small business capacity: Many of the region's small businesses lack the management skills, strategic outlook, innovative cultures and other capacities to adapt to changing market conditions, threats and opportunities.

Professional & business services sector: There is currently a small number of local businesses in the professional and business services sector.

Limited university presence: The limited university presence within the region is a constraint on local education opportunities and means that students must travel out of the region each day. It also limits access by businesses to the innovation and other spin off benefits that can be available from a university with local research activities.

Areas of social disadvantage: There are a number of localities across the region with high levels of social disadvantage. In some areas, there is a growing demand on social services that exceeds the level of service provision.

Limited community transport: There is limited access to community and public transport in a number of localities.

Climate change: Climate change poses threats including increased risks of flooding and storm damage.

The region's aspirations for a great future

The Moreton Bay Regional Council, RDA Moreton Bay and the broader community have been working to identify their aspirations and preferred futures through plans such as the *Moreton Bay Region Community Plan 2011–2021*. That plan sets out a vision of:

A thriving region of opportunity where our communities enjoy a vibrant lifestyle.

The goals in the plan are:

- Local jobs for residents
- Well-planned growth
- Digital literacy and commerce
- Safe neighbourhoods
- Healthy and supportive communities
- Strong local governance
- Healthy natural environment
- Diverse transport options
- Quality recreation and cultural opportunities.

The Moreton Bay Regional Council has adopted a set of corporate goals that reflect those of the *Moreton Bay Region Community Plan 2011–2021*:

1. Regional and economic development
2. A community that takes pride in the region
3. A sustainable environment for all
4. Serving our community with integrity, pride and accountability.

Digital technologies offer great opportunities

Digital technologies can help the Moreton Bay Region to build on its strengths, to meet its challenges and to achieve its aspirations. They can help build new connections across the region and beyond the region.

Digital technologies are transforming our lives

The roll out of new ultra-speed broadband services through the NBN presents new opportunities for Australian communities, but this is only one element in the array of digital technologies that are transforming the way we live and work. Over recent decades there have been dramatic developments in many technologies such as:

- High speed computing
- The miniaturisation of electronic equipment
- Mobile phones and mobile devices
- The Internet
- The digitisation of information and audio-visual materials.

We now regularly use email, the web, social media, smartphones and mobile tablet devices. These technologies have become affordable, pervasive and inter-connected. We – our families, our businesses, our community organisations and our government institutions – are instantly and globally connected in ways that were previously unimaginable.

The big changes are in the way we are using the technologies to do things very differently. Individuals of all ages have changed the way they work, relax, communicate, learn and shop. Many businesses have changed the way they interact with their customers, their suppliers and their staff. Governments have changed the way they deliver their services and engage with their citizens.

The rise in computing power and the fall in the cost of data storage has created the phenomenon of “big data” – massive data sets of many terabytes of information that can now be analysed to create unprecedented insights. The capture, management and analysis of big data form a rapidly growing segment of the global technology sector and the Harvard Business Review has referred to data science as “the sexiest job in the 21st century”.

The McKinsey Global Institute has published a series of reports on big data and has highlighted ways that the use of big data can create value for public and private sector organisations by:

- Creating transparency
- Enabling experimentation to discover needs, expose variability and improve performance
- Segmenting populations to customise actions
- Replacing/supporting human decision making with automated algorithms
- Innovating new business models, products and services.

The McKinsey Global Institute has also identified that the use of big data will become a key basis of competition and growth for individual firms.

Digital technologies are both disruptive and transformative. For example:

- Online services are displacing face to face services, with huge impacts on sectors such as retail, banking and education.
- Broadband services and digital tools are enabling new patterns of work such as tele-commuting for individuals and new forms of relationships between businesses.
- Digitisation of information and entertainment resources is fundamentally changing the market for many traditional products such as books, newspapers and music.
- Global connectivity is enabling new and agile supply chains across all sectors of the economy.
- Online media is changing the way people find out about the places they want to visit, the experiences they want to have and the products they want to purchase.
- Smart technologies are creating new opportunities for energy saving through efficiencies in our buildings and our energy grids.
- People and businesses are becoming more demanding about how and when they interact with their governments, for both decision making and service delivery.

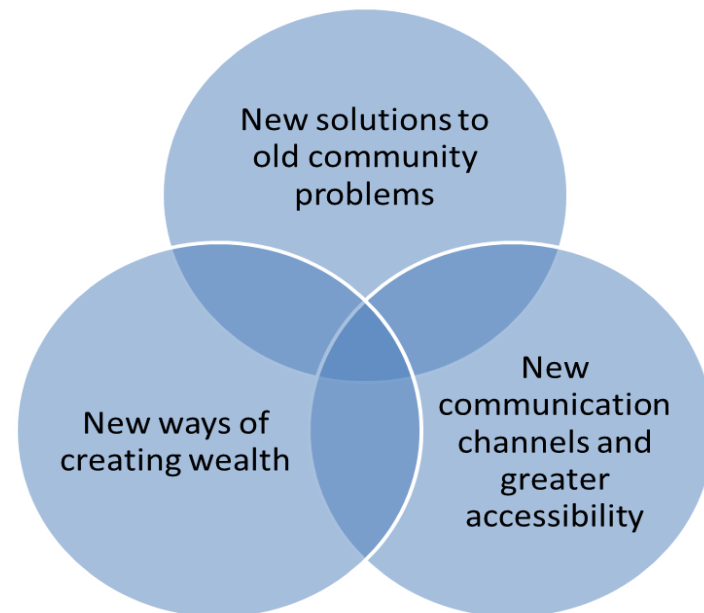
“One third of the Australian economy faces imminent and substantial disruption by digital technologies and business models”

- *Digital disruption: Short fuse, big bang?*, Deloitte Australia, 2012

Digital technologies can help communities develop

Forward thinking and practical planning helps communities to deal with the disruptions and opportunities that the new technologies create.

Digital technologies provide opportunities for communities to thrive in 3 areas:



Explor Consulting highlights 12 areas where digital technologies can help achieve social, economic and environmental benefits.

Connected households	Confident and capable people living in households with good broadband connections and digital services can have better access to services and are able to be more flexible in how, when and where they work.
Local information	Rich local information, delivered through interactive digital services, allows people to be more informed, supports greater community participation and helps to bring communities together.
Vibrant and sustainable living	Technology enabled buildings and infrastructure can reduce environmental impacts through better management of energy consumption and through reductions in required travel.
Community health and wellbeing	Online services in homes and community facilities can improve access to health and community care professionals. Online services and digital technologies can also enable many people with special needs to live independently.
Community education and skills	Access to education and training can be improved for students and learners of all ages through access to digital resources and online services in their homes, workplaces and other locations.
Community safety and security	Online services can provide better community access and sharing of information about local safety, security risks and critical incidents.
Engagement of the socially excluded	Online services can help socially excluded people to connect to other people, to access support services and to develop basic skills.
Democracy and open government	Digital tools can be used by governments to extend the way they engage with their citizens, to support collaborative decision making and to improve transparency through access to rich sets of government information.
Online government services	Carefully designed online services are integrated, efficient, timely and citizen centric.
Key economic sectors	Digital tools and online services are critically important for larger businesses and are used to support customer interactions, supplier interactions and internal operations.
Small business sector	For smaller businesses, digital tools and online services support customer interactions and other operations.
ICT sector and digital workforce	The presence of successful local ICT businesses provides employment opportunities for professional creative people and provides important technical support for other businesses and organisations.

Digital readiness

The Moreton Bay Region is making progress in each of these 12 areas.

Data from the 2011 census showed that 80.1% of dwellings in the region had an internet connection, compared to 78.3% for Queensland.

The roll out of the NBN will soon bring ultra-speed broadband services to a number of localities in the region. The NBN has already been installed in some areas, creating competitive advantages for these places. However, many localities may have to wait many years for their new services. A number of communities currently suffer from a lack of reliable broadband services.

The impact of digital technology on how we work is recognised in the report from the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, *Future Focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy*. It states: “The world of work is changing, driven by technology, globalisation, the advent of the knowledge economy, and the opportunities and challenges of the Asian century”.

Technologies and innovations within firms are reducing the demand for low skill occupations but increasing the demand for higher levels skills. Modelling for the strategy shows the strongest employment growth to 2025 will be for professionals and managers and the weakest growth will be for sales workers, labourers and machinery drivers and operators. Employers, employees and training institutes must adapt to these changes.

This finding has been confirmed in a study by Skills Queensland about the skills development implications of the digital economy. The study also highlighted the growing need for more specialist and general ICT skills.

Household digital literacy levels are improving but there are a number of groups in the community where digital literacy levels are too low.

Strong progress is being made in the use of online services by government and community organisations. The Moreton Bay Regional Council now provides a rich array of online services.

There is a wide variation in the adoption of digital technologies by the region’s businesses. Some businesses are using digital technologies in agile and transformational ways but many businesses lack fundamental capacities for adopting technologies in effective ways.

Key opportunities

The Moreton Bay Region has specific priorities and there are 3 key opportunities which can be addressed with digital technologies:

Transforming work patterns

A high priority for the Moreton Bay Region is to significantly improve the level of employment self containment and reduce the number of residents commuting out of the region each day.

Digital technologies are enabling new patterns of work, with employees of private and public sector organisations being productive and connected while away from their employers’ premises. There are also opportunities for freelancers and micro-businesses to thrive without traditional offices. The work arrangements can take a number of forms. They can include

home based working, working while travelling, working while on the premises of clients and working in “third spaces” such as tele-work centres and co-worker hubs. For employees of organisations based outside of the region, these tele-work arrangements can be occasional or regular.

Moreton Bay is an extensive region with many activity centres and precincts. Strategies to support tele-work must ensure that suitable facilities and services are available in multiple locations across the region.

Strengthening the economy

Many existing businesses in the Moreton Bay Region face particular challenges and threats due to global market conditions, the strength of the Australian Dollar and the disruptions arising from new technologies. The economic profile of the region means that the region is vulnerable.

The strategic and carefully planned use of digital technologies can provide many opportunities for established and emerging businesses. The report of the international Broadband Commission for Digital Development, *Broadband: A Platform for Progress*, highlighted 3 areas of business benefit:

1. Productivity
2. Innovation
3. The restructuring of value chains.

Manufacturing is a key sector for the Moreton Bay Region. The *Smarter Manufacturing for a Smarter Australia* report from the Prime Minister’s Manufacturing Taskforce identified that 2 of the key challenges in sustaining the manufacturing sector in Australia were:

1. Applying knowledge by value adding through innovation
2. Driving collaboration to develop new capabilities, new cultures and competitiveness.

Digital technologies provide powerful opportunities in both of these areas.

The Australian Government has adopted a National Digital Economy Strategy with goals in 8 areas:

1. The connection of homes to broadband services
2. The use of online services by businesses and not for profit organisations to drive productivity improvements, to expand their customer base and to enable jobs growth
3. The access to smart technology to manage energy use
4. The use of digital technology to improve health services
5. The use of digital technology to improve education
6. The growth in tele-working
7. The use of electronic government services
8. The development of Australia’s regions.

Connecting varied communities

The Moreton Bay Region is an extensive region, made up of many different communities with their own identities and heritages. The challenge for the region is to harness the power, connections and efficiencies of a large region with a single strong local government authority, while preserving and celebrating the identities of the diverse local places and communities.

Digital technologies provide opportunities to support efficient community and government services that are regionally co-ordinated but locally available. These include a range of social, education, health, cultural and development services.

Digital technologies also provide opportunities for local communities across the region to present information and stories that promote and celebrate their localities, local heritage, local businesses and local community organisations. For the Moreton Bay Region, the stories can be local but the technology platforms to support them could be regional.

Samford is one of the Moreton Bay Region's unique communities. It is an historic rural township with a picturesque setting, an active community and a very high proportion of home based businesses.

The community have developed *Samford Futures*: a plan that sets out their aspirations for the township's future under 8 headings:

1. Samford parklands
2. Development and village identity
3. The arts
4. People movement
5. Sustainable food culture
6. Community participation and decision making
7. Telecommunications and digital futures
8. Sustainable Samford.

The plan states: "The digital economy strategy for the Samford region needs to focus on an increased number of digital workforces, online engagement by not-for-profit organisations, digital hubs, interactive community information screens, increased access to online health and education and the ability to stay competitive in this digital world."

However, many areas around Samford currently lack reliable broadband services and the community have identified this as being a major constraint to the community's economic, social and environmental development.

Building the digital future

The Moreton Bay Region can build a better future enhanced by digital technologies by adopting a clear vision, clear goals and comprehensive strategies and actions.

Vision for the digital future

The region should pursue a digital vision for a future where:

The Moreton Bay Region will be a thriving region of opportunity where people and businesses in the diverse communities confidently use digital technologies to connect within and beyond the region to support prosperous, sustainable and vibrant lifestyles.

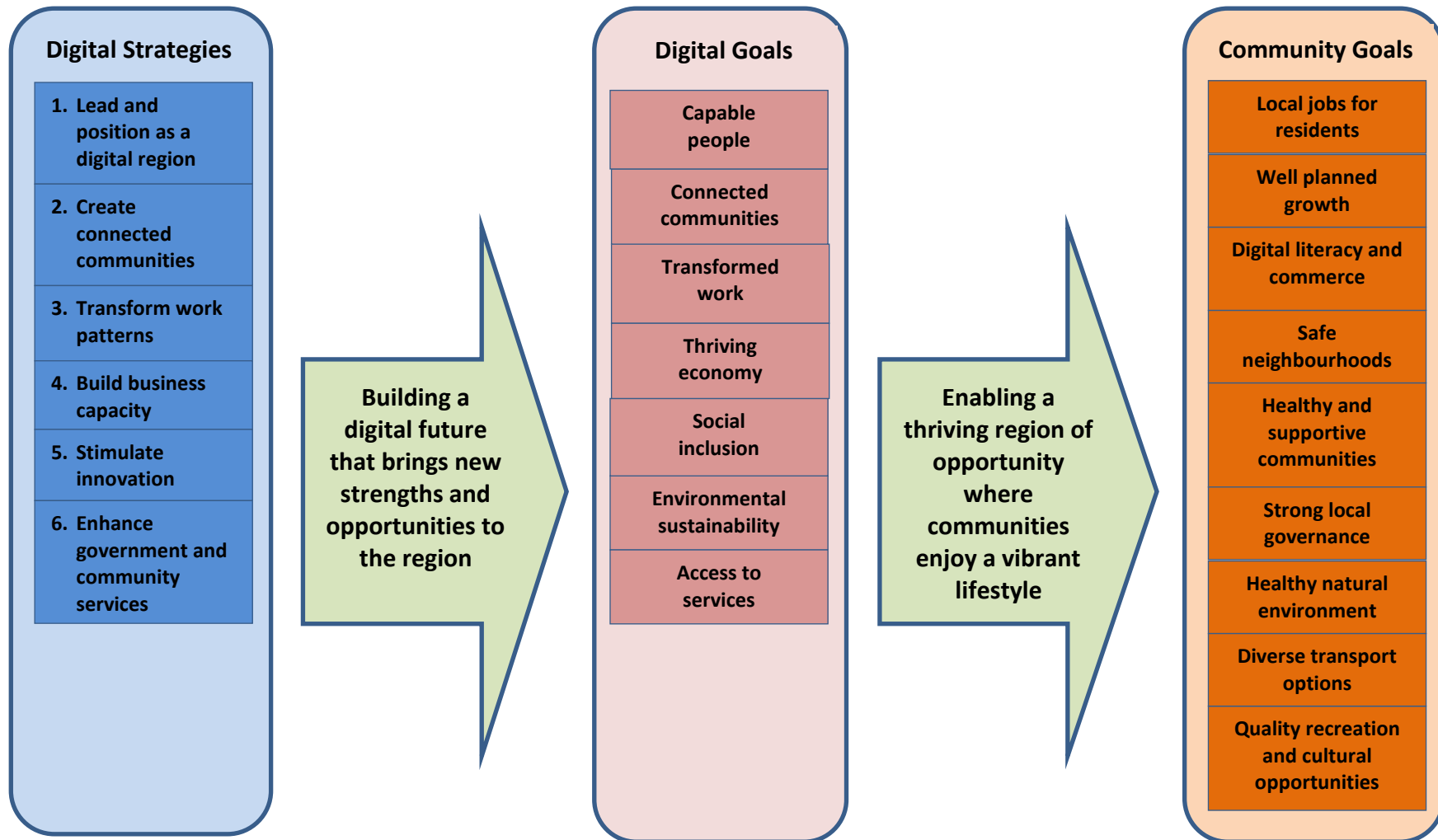
Goals for the digital future

The following digital goals support this vision:

Capable people	The people of the Moreton Bay Region will have the confidence, capability and access to use digital technologies to support fulfilling, creative, healthy and socially connected lives.
Connected communities	The region's communities will actively use digital technologies to promote and celebrate their localities to residents and visitors.
Transformed work	A higher proportion of residents will work within the region through the availability of digitally equipped working spaces in "telecentres" and in their own homes.
Thriving economy	The region's economy will be thriving and diversifying as existing and new businesses use digital technologies to grow their market shares, to improve productivity, to enhance their knowledge resources and to build new networks of suppliers and partners.
Social inclusion	Social disadvantage and isolation will be reduced by using online services to better connect people, improve the delivery of community services and help provide people with basic skills.
Environmental sustainability	Lifestyles will be more sustainable and the understanding of the region's natural assets and ecosystems will be higher, through the use of digital technologies, online information resources and smart infrastructure.
Access to services	The people and businesses of the region will have improved access to education, health and other services, delivered efficiently using digital technologies.

Strategies to build the digital future

The Moreton Bay Region should pursue 6 strategies to achieve the digital goals and support the community goals set out in the *Moreton Bay Region Community Plan 2011–2021*:



1. Lead and position as a digital region

The Moreton Bay Region should embrace and promote a vision and goals for its digital future, and commit to a clear set of actions to achieve these. Sound management arrangements should be put in place with allocated responsibilities and resources.

Effective leadership, positioning and management underpin the other strategies. This proposed strategy also aligns with the community goal for strong local governance.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
1.1	Commit to a digital future	The key regional bodies – the Moreton Bay Regional Council and RDA Moreton Bay - should agree to a digital futures plan for the region and provide active ongoing support for its promotion and implementation. They should align other regional strategies and programs with the digital futures plan.
1.2	Allocate responsibilities and resources	The key regional bodies should implement appropriate management arrangements for the digital futures plan. They should allocate responsibilities and allocate resources. They should ensure that there are clear accountabilities and effective program/project management. Program and project plans should set out the intended impacts in terms of community goals and detail the “who”, “when” and “how” of actions.
1.3	Seek partners and funding	The key regional bodies should advocate to potential partners and funders including federal and state governments. They should also seek partnerships with other regions that are implementing digital futures plans in SEQ and throughout Australia.
1.4	Promote the region through digital channels	The key regional bodies should develop and implement online promotion strategies for the region and its communities. There should be strategies to target potential visitors, potential settlers and potential investors. Rich, compelling digital and social media resources should be created for each target group.
1.5	Promote the digital future	As a complementary action, the region’s digital future should be promoted through online and other channels to local residents, potential new settlers, local businesses, potential new businesses and digital program partners. Compelling messages should be presented about the future that the region aspires to, and the strategies, programs and resources that will help achieve that future.
1.6	Monitor progress	The key regional bodies should develop regional digital development measures and then monitor progress against those measures.
1.7	Review and adjust	The key regional bodies should regularly review progress and adjust the digital futures plan and programs.

2. Create connected communities

The region should act to ensure that the diverse communities are provided with the digital infrastructure (including broadband services) that forms the foundation of a digital future. There should be suitable programs to provide residents of all ages and backgrounds with digital capabilities and literacy. Communities should be supported to create digital resources (including local online information) that promote their localities and help their residents to have healthy, safe and sustainable lifestyles.

A “thriving region of opportunity where communities enjoy vibrant lifestyles” is a region where communities are connected within themselves, across the region and beyond the region. The digital foundations for connected communities are digital infrastructure, household digital capability and community digital resources.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
2.1	Advocate for broadband connections	The key regional bodies should monitor the introduction of ultra-speed broadband services (through the NBN program) and actively advocate rapid introduction to areas that are yet to be connected.
2.2	Create Wi-Fi hotspots	The key regional bodies should work to extend the number of Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the region. Priority should be given to places that are most valuable for residents using online services to learn, to tele-work and to access key services. Wi-Fi hot spots should also be provided in areas of value to visitors. There should be Wi-Fi hot spots in important regional activity centres (particularly near cafes and libraries) and in parks.
2.3	Publicise NBN and Wi-Fi availability	The key regional bodies should actively publicise the availability and locations of NBN infrastructure and Wi-Fi hotspots to residents, businesses, potential investors and developers.
2.4	Nominate community digital champions	The key regional bodies should nominate a number of “community digital champions”. They should be respected local people who can promote the opportunities of digital technology within the community and encourage community organisations to support improvements to digital literacy.
2.5	Expand community hubs	The MBRC should expand the number of community hubs throughout the region and ensure that each hub offers a range of basic digital literacy programs, suitable for different groups in the community.
2.6	Facilitate community digital literacy programs	The key regional bodies should facilitate, promote and support a range of well targeted digital literacy programs, including programs delivered by community hubs, libraries and community organisations. The programs should incorporate suitable resources, information sessions and one on one support. The digital literacy programs should draw on volunteers of different age groups.

Project/Action	Scope & Approach
2.7 Hardware access programs for disadvantaged groups	The key regional bodies should consider supporting hardware access programs managed by community organisations which provide access to computer hardware, including second hand hardware, for disadvantaged groups.
2.8 Create digital stories about how people are embracing digital technology	The key regional bodies should support the creation of short digital stories that show how different people across the region are embracing and benefiting from digital technology.
2.9 Support the creation of digital resource about local places	The key regional bodies should support the creation by individual communities of rich digital resources and engaging content about their heritage, people, environment, events and local amenities. Community organisations and schools should be encouraged to create such content. The support could include the provision of common region wide systems for hosting and presenting the content.
2.10 Commission apps that support outdoor recreation	The key regional bodies should commission, or support the commissioning of, mobile device apps which support outdoor recreation activities throughout the region by residents and visitors. Apps should be developed about local walking trails.
2.11 Commission and promote apps that support sustainable living	The key regional bodies should partner with other regions including the Sunshine Coast Region to commission and promote mobile device apps which support sustainable living. The apps could include content that has been developed through the <i>Living Smart Program</i> .
2.12 Link communities to “digital sister communities”	Individual local communities should consider creating links with “digital sister communities”. Such links should use digital means, rather than physical travel, to create educational, cultural and business links with other communities around the world.

One of the major development projects underway in the Moreton Bay Region is at North Lakes where a new master planned community is being created. The locality will have new sustainable residential areas, commercial and business precincts, a health precinct, schools and many other amenities.

The Australian Government has contributed funding for “The Corso”, a major community facility that will incorporate a modern library, youth spaces, a civic centre and commercial spaces. The Corso has great potential to host a community hub offering digital literacy programs, free Wi-Fi and other forms of access to digital resources. It could also be a hub for tele-work and businesses incubation.

3. Transform work patterns

The region should promote, broker and support flexible work patterns (such as tele-working) supported by digital technologies. These should include home based working and working in “third spaces” such as tele-centres.

The Moreton Bay Region must improve employment self-containment and enhance the sustainability and quality of residents’ lifestyles. Digital technologies provide strong opportunities to transform patterns of work in support of these goals.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
3.1	Advocate and negotiate for tele-work in the region	The key regional bodies should advocate and negotiate with major public and private sector employers to support tele-work by their employees who live in the Moreton Bay Region.
3.2	Plan and establish major tele-work hubs	The key regional bodies should plan and promote the establishment of major tele-work hubs in the region’s principal activity centres. These should provide facilities for employees of larger organisations (including organisations based in the Brisbane CBD) and self employed workers. Planning could be undertaken in partnership with other SEQ regions. Investment for the hubs could involve both private and public funding.
3.3	Support the establishment of local tele-work hubs	The key regional bodies should also support the establishment of smaller tele-work hubs in other localities throughout the region. Some of these hubs could be located in community facilities.
3.4	Facilitate a home based business network	The key regional bodies should facilitate and support a network of people who operate home based businesses in the region. The network should enable participants to share knowledge, experiences, resources and social support. The network should promote contacts between members through online and face to face means.
3.5	Identify and promote appropriate flexible work practices	The key regional bodies should help address issues that impede the adoption of flexible work practices, including issues relating to work hours, occupational health and safety, insurance and access to corporate systems. They should identify and promote appropriate practices, work arrangements and policies. The key regional bodies should adopt these practices for their own employees.

4. Build business capacity

The region should drive practical programs to build the confidence and capacity of businesses, particularly smaller businesses, for using digital technologies. These programs should include a mix of awareness raising, information resources and targeted advice.

Many local businesses in the Moreton Bay Region face challenges due to global market conditions and other factors. There are opportunities for businesses that carefully plan and adopt digital technologies but many existing and emerging enterprises lack the capacity and confidence to do this.

Project/Action	Scope & Approach
4.1 Establish an active awareness raising program	The key regional bodies should establish an ongoing and active awareness raising program for small businesses about the importance of digital technology for business survival and growth, and about the impacts on work and skills. The program should incorporate well targeted marketing approaches and information sessions.
4.2 Consider a Moreton Bay Region digital business event	The awareness raising program could include a Moreton Bay Region digital business event. This could be arranged in partnership with Brisbane’s successful <i>Click! Digital Expo</i> .
4.3 Create practical video resources	The awareness raising program should also include the development of video resources targeted at specific business sectors.
4.4 Establish a digital enterprise facilitation program	The key regional bodies should establish a digital enterprise facilitation program. This program should provide digital enterprise facilitators who can provide practical advice to many small businesses about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The business impacts and opportunities arising from digital technologies 2. The practical steps and resources for responding to these impacts and opportunities by using digital technologies.
4.5 Establish sectoral digital support networks	The key regional bodies should facilitate and support a series of industry sector digital support networks across the region. The networks should enable participating businesses to share knowledge, experiences and resources. The networks should promote contacts between members through online and face to face means.
4.6 Empower digital service providers to better support local businesses	The key regional bodies should arrange information sessions for local technology providers so that those providers are better able to provide the broad technology advice and services required by many businesses.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
4.7	Provide businesses with digital planning toolkits	The key regional bodies should arrange for the development and provision of digital planning toolkits for the region's small businesses. This could be undertaken in partnership with other regions throughout Australia.
4.8	Facilitate online marketing courses	The key regional bodies should consider facilitating the delivery of local courses in online marketing for small businesses.

Darlene Brown is a masseur, operating her own business in Kallangur. She is one of many thousands of sole traders in the Moreton Bay Region. Since establishing her massage practice, Darlene has had to develop both her professional abilities and her small business management skills.

Darlene did not originally have a strong understanding of digital technologies, but she knew that she needed to build good ongoing relationships with her clients and to operate her business efficiently. Darlene realised that technology could help so she sought out basic technology courses and mentors to help her develop a practical technology plan.

Digital technology now underpins Darlene's business. As well as a website and systems to support accounting and administration, Darlene is an active use of social media. This allows her to build enduring relationships with her clients through "value adding" communications: everything from advice on healthy lifestyles through to messages about this week's special offers on massages.

5. Stimulate innovation

The region should strengthen the innovation environment for businesses through measures that stimulate new attitudes, new ideas and new collaborations.

The achievement of the Moreton Bay Region’s economic, social and environmental goals will require change. It is particularly important that local business develop new products, new services and new methods. Digital technologies provide particular opportunities for supporting and strengthening innovation.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
5.1	Promote the region as a base for start up technology businesses	The key regional bodies should promote and market the region as a good place to establish new technology businesses. They should highlight the region’s advantages and resources, drawing on information from sources such as <i>The Australian Innovation Atlas</i> being collated through the <i>Australian Government’s Enterprise Connect</i> program.
5.2	Investigate the establishment of a distributed business incubation support program	The key regional bodies should investigate and scope a distributed business incubation program, with a particular focus on technology based businesses. The program should offer business mentoring and related services. The proposed tele-work hubs could be used as the incubation spaces (see 3.2).
5.3	Partner with other SEQ councils for access to entrepreneurial experts and mentors	The key regional bodies should explore partnerships with the Brisbane City Council and other SEQ councils to provide access to entrepreneurial experts, mentors and “pitch coaches” for technology based start up businesses based in the region.
5.4	Promote contemporary funding models to businesses	The key regional bodies should partner with the Brisbane City Council and other SEQ councils to raise awareness by start up businesses about contemporary funding models including crowd sourcing models.
5.5	Promote connections and collaboration for innovation	The key regional bodies should actively promote and facilitate connections and collaborations between research intensive organisations (particularly universities) in SEQ and innovative businesses (such as technology based businesses) in the Moreton Bay Region. A key purpose of these collaborations should be to stimulate opportunities for the development of new technology based products and new technology enabled processes. The proposed sectoral digital support networks (see 4.5) could be used.
5.6	Promote understanding and uptake of new technologies for manufacturing	The key regional bodies should consider ways to promote better understanding and uptake of new digital technologies for the manufacturing and related sectors. This could involve support for local initiatives such as “Fab Lab” (see side box).

Project/Action	Scope & Approach
<p>5.7 Investigate a research and development project about “big data” in manufacturing</p>	<p>The key regional bodies should investigate a possible research and development project about “big data” in the manufacturing sector (see side box). The project could involve manufacturing and digital technology businesses in the region. It could also involve other Australian regions with large manufacturing sectors and universities in SEQ. There may be opportunities to support such a project through the <i>Industry Innovation Precincts Program</i> announced in the Australian Government’s recent industry innovation statement: <i>A Plan for Australian Jobs</i>.</p>

In 2012, the McKinsey Global Institute published *Manufacturing the future: The next era of global growth and innovation*. The report summarised the trends and opportunities facing the worldwide manufacturing sector and highlighted the role of digital technology and information. The report stated: “Across manufacturing industries, the use of big data can make substantial improvements in how companies respond to customer needs and how they run their machinery and operation. These enormous databases, which can include anything from online chatter about a brand or product to real-time feeds from machine tools and robots, have great potential for manufacturers – if they can master the technology and find the talent with the analytical skills to turn data into insights or new operating improvement.”

One of the major technology developments for manufacturing has been “3-D printing” which allows complex objects to be created using equipment that has become affordable for small workshops and homes. This is disrupting the manufacturing sector and creating new opportunities for small manufacturing firms.

In response to this and other trends, the global “Fab Lab” network has developed from a concept that originated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). A Fab Lab is “a fully kitted fabrication workshop which gives everyone in the community, from small children through to entrepreneurs and businesses, the capability to turn their ideas and concepts into reality”. Fab Labs can enable new innovations and new business opportunities for manufacturing businesses.

The Fab Lab movement has come to Caboolture. Andrew Dahl of Pozieres Printing believes that the use of new technologies present exciting opportunities for the Moreton Bay Region’s manufacturing sector and has established a Fab Lab facility at Caboolture’s Axis Industrial Park.

6. Enhance government and community services

The Moreton Bay Regional Council and other government and community service providers should enhance and integrate their services by using digital technologies in ways that broaden access, improve service quality and reduce delivery costs.

Effective and efficient government and community services are important for the region’s economic, social and environmental well being. Digital technologies offer many opportunities to enhance services.

	Project/Action	Scope & Approach
6.1	Continue to extend and promote MBRC online council services	The MBRC should continue to extend and promote its online services. It should further develop its online presence to offer resources and services that are integrated and presented in ways that address specific client needs. The suite of online services for businesses should be extended.
6.2	Digitise MBRC information	The MBRC should give priority to the digitisation of valuable information that is currently paper based. Particular priority should be given to information that is of value to the region’s businesses.
6.3	Open up MBRC data	The MBRC should open up access to key data holdings, including geo-spatial data holdings, so that local technology companies and others can create new digital resources that are of benefit to businesses, residents, visitors and investors.
6.4	Promote online services for sustainable transport	The key regional bodies should promote the availability of online services and digital tools, including apps that support sustainable transport options. These could include services that provide information and support for public transport services, safe cycle routes and car pooling.
6.5	Promote collaboration in education and health sectors	The key regional bodies should promote collaboration and co-operation in the use of digital technologies and resources by public and private providers of education and health services.
6.5	Promote development of new digital age skills	The key regional bodies should promote the training and development by training institutes in the region for the new sets of skills that will be required by businesses embracing digital technologies.
6.6	Convene a community sector digital working group	The key regional bodies should convene a working group of community organisations across the region to explore ways for co-operating and sharing the use of digital technology resources.
6.7	Support the provision of digital planning toolkits for community organisations	The key regional bodies should support the provision of digital planning toolkits for community organisations. These could be developed through the community sector digital working group and could be adapted from the proposed toolkits for the region’s small businesses (see 4.7).

Making it happen

This plan has set out a vision and goals for the Moreton Bay Region's future, enhanced by broadband and digital technologies. It has also proposed strategies and actions for achieving that future. The region now has the opportunity to set out on the journey to make that a reality.

Committing to the digital future

The Moreton Bay Regional Council and RDA Moreton Bay are well placed to take leading roles. The very first steps to be taken are the first two actions proposed in the first strategy: **Commit to a digital future** and **Allocate responsibilities and resources**.

Success will require leadership, commitment, management and accountability. This should be reflected in the Moreton Bay Regional Council's Corporate Plan, Financial Plan and Operational Plan.

Securing resources and partners

Some of the proposed projects and actions could be undertaken using available resources but others will require new resources and partners. A number of the proposed projects will need detailed planning and budgeting.

There are departments and agencies of the Australian Government that are strong potential partners. The *Department*

of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has lead responsibility for the National Digital Economy Strategy and operates a number of supporting programs that align closely with the proposed digital strategies for the Moreton Bay Region. The *Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport* manages the *Regional Development Australia Fund*. The *Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research* also manages relevant programs such as the *Industry Innovation Precincts Program*.

The Queensland Government is developing its approach to supporting the state's digital economy. The *Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts* has announced a number of relevant strategies including:

- Build business awareness and adoption of innovation enablers and digital technologies to access new customers and improve productivity
- Build business capacity to maximise the benefits of the digital economy.

Some of the proposed projects and actions could be undertaken in partnership with other regions that also have a focus on their digital future. There are many opportunities to work with other SEQ regions but there are also opportunities to work with regions in other parts of Australia.

Early actions

The following priorities should be considered for the early years of implementation.

Strategy	Early Year Priorities
1 Lead and position as a digital region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement online promotion strategies for the region • Establish progress measures and commence progress monitoring
2 Create connected communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake advocacy for broadband connections • Plan and commence introduction of new Wi-Fi hotspots • Nominate first community digital champions • Plan and commence introduction of new community hubs • Plan and commence introduction of digital literacy programs • Consider hardware access programs for disadvantaged groups • Investigate provision of common region wide systems for hosting and presenting local content and stories • Commence commissioning of apps to support outdoor recreation opportunities and sustainable living
3 Transform work patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence advocacy and negotiation for telework in the region • Undertake planning for tele-work hubs • Facilitate the establishment of a home based business network • Undertake work to identify and promote appropriate flexible work practices

Strategy	Early Year Priorities
4 Build business capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and establish an active digital technology awareness raising program for business • Plan and commence a digital enterprise facilitation program • Facilitate and support the first industry sector digital support networks • Work with other regions to provide digital planning toolkits for the region’s small businesses • Facilitate a number of online marketing courses for businesses
5 Stimulate innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence promotion of the region as a base for start up technology businesses • Investigate and scope a distributed business incubation program • Develop partnerships with other SEQ councils to provide experts, mentors and advice to start up technology businesses • Commence work on promoting connections and collaborations for innovation • Plan and introduce effective ways to promote better understanding and uptake of new digital technologies for the manufacturing and related sectors • Commence investigation of a possible research and development project about “big data” in manufacturing
6 Enhance government and community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further extend MBRC online services • Digitise additional MBRC information • Identify MBRC data for open access • Commence commissioning of apps to support sustainable transport • Identify collaboration opportunities in education and health sectors • Convene a community sector digital working group

Continuing into future years

Beyond the early years, ongoing activities should continue and the larger projects that were planned in the first year should be converted into action.

Progress should be monitored and relevant opportunities, including funding opportunities, should be pursued. The region's digital futures plan should be regularly adjusted.

References

Australian Catholic University, *Food and Beverage Supply Chain Project: Moreton Bay Region – Summary Report*, 2012.

Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, *Future Focus: 2013 National Workforce Development Strategy*, 2013.

Brisbane Marketing, *Digital Brisbane – Strategy for a Digitally Driven Economy*, 2013.

Broadband Commission for Digital Development, *Broadband: A Platform for Progress*, 2011.

Deloitte Australia, *Digital disruption: Short fuse, big bang?*, 2012.

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, *National Digital Economy Strategy*, 2011.

Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, *A Plan for Australian Jobs: The Australian Government's Industry and Innovation Statement*, 2013.

IBISWorld, *A Snapshot of Australia's Digital Future to 2050*, 2013.

McKinsey & Company, *Manufacturing the future: The next era of global growth and innovation*, 2012.

Moreton Bay Regional Council, *Economic Development Strategy Review – Final Report*, 2012.

Moreton Bay Regional Council, *Moreton Bay Region Profile*, 2012.

Moreton Bay Regional Council, *Moreton Bay Region Community Plan 2011-2021*, 2011.

Moreton Bay Regional Council, *Moreton Bay Region Draft Strategic Framework*, 2012.

RDA Moreton Bay Inc, *Regional Roadmap 2012-2013*, 2012.

RDA Moreton Bay Inc, *2011 Census Results for Moreton Bay Local Government Area* (Presentation slides), 2012.

RDA Moreton Bay Inc, *Engaging with Our Region in Building Prosperous Inclusive Communities*, 2012.

RDA Moreton Bay Inc & Moreton Bay Regional Council, *Moreton Bay Region Business Confidence Survey*, 2012.

Prime Minister's Manufacturing Taskforce, *Report of the Non-Government Members*, 2012.

Samford Progress and Protection Association Inc, *Samford Futures*, 2013.

Skills Queensland, *The Digital Economy and impact of the National High Speed Broadband Network – A literature review: Implications for skills development in Queensland*, 2013.

The New York Times, *Data Science: The Number of Our Lives*, 11 April 2013.