

### **Background**

In July 2013, AlburyCity and Wodonga Council joined forces to develop a Digital Economy Strategy for the region. Digital experts Attentive Consulting Pty Ltd were engaged to conduct wide consultation across the community and develop the Albury Wodonga Digital Economy Strategy. The strategy would deliver a five-year timetable of initiatives that will help local businesses and the wider community take advantage of a world that is moving increasingly online.

Council officers, business operators, residents and the wider community were encouraged to participate in the initiative and consultation was undertaken by way of a series of workshops on both sides of the border and an online survey where business owners and residents could have their say about developing a strategy dedicated to digital economies.

Attentive Consulting Pty Ltd have now finalised the Draft Digital Economy Strategy for consideration by AlburyCity and Wodonga Councils.

### **The Digital Economy**

The digital economy has been described by the Commonwealth Government as the 'global network of economic and social activities that are enabled by platforms such as the internet, mobile and sensor networks.' On 31 May 2011, the Australian Government, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy released the National Digital Economy Strategy (NDES) to support its aim of positioning Australia as one of the world's leading digital economies by 2020. The Australian Government's investment in the National Broadband Network will deliver super fast broadband to Albury and Wodonga from 2014. As such, both Albury and Wodonga Councils are especially keen to ensure that all sectors of the local community are aware of the opportunities this infrastructure will bring and the benefits that can be realised for local businesses and residents alike.

The Albury Wodonga Digital Economy Strategy will help drive the digitisation of our community. This will foster the development of the local digital economy over the next five years to support the financial and social prosperity of the cities.

### **The Value of the Digital Economy to Albury Wodonga**

The value of the digital economy to Albury and Wodonga is measured in terms of Gross Value Add per annum and is estimated to be worth between \$238M at the low level, \$571M at the high level, and \$857M per annum when fully optimised.

In terms of the readiness to accept and adopt the digital economy, the Albury and Wodonga Local Government Areas obtained score of 69% across 15 different measures.

### Digital Vision

Albury Wodonga will lead digital economy transformation through coordinated planning and delivery, connecting people and common infrastructure, and ongoing commitment to the community, government, education, health and business organisations. This will produce the right level of digital innovation, adaptability and productivity to achieve:

- ongoing economic growth, sustainability and diversity;
- an increased strength in digital skills and leadership in the workforce to engage the community through participation in the local, regional, state, national, and where appropriate the global economy;
- an increased capacity for collaboration across the region both in terms of sharing success stories and providing vital links of connectivity fostered through online activity;
- an increased awareness and application of eHealth technologies, providing greater access to online health care;
- a vibrant and digitally engaged retail community that leverages online shopping to support shop front operations; and
- an enhanced brand that increases the locational reputation of Albury and Wodonga as places to live, work and do business.

### Target: Digitally Diverse Albury Wodonga

Albury Wodonga's digital targets for the next five years are:

- high speed broadband is available to 100% of premises (both residential and commercial), providing the basis for mobility, and reducing the tyranny of distance across the region;
- 100% of businesses are supported to be digitally literate by 2018 assisting in championing digital leadership and literacy in the region, for the region, through online rich media programs;
- 100% of retailers are supported through online and local awareness raising of 'how to do' digital retail and financial modelling resources from Chambers of Commerce, local and Federal government agencies;"
- 50% of businesses have a Digital Business Strategy including a delivery roadmap to digitise their business to achieve sustainability, increased market share, increased profitability and/or increased productivity.

### Digital Priorities

Five digital priorities have emerged throughout the consultation and research phases of the project. Each priority relates strongly to the development of a successful digital economy for Albury Wodonga, as such they have been linked to relevant recommendations.

# Albury Wodonga Digital Economy Strategy

## Summary Overview

Delivering this Strategy with a strong focus on these digital priorities will build a prosperous local digital economy for the benefit of Albury Wodonga residents and businesses:

1. Proactive leadership and championing a digital culture.
2. Increasing digital literacy in small business and retail.
3. Digitisation of AlburyCity and Wodonga Councils (eGovernment).
4. Supporting the development and expansion of telehealth.
5. Digital innovation, collaboration and diversification.

This Digital Economy Strategy incorporates 30 recommendations for change and transformation in Albury Wodonga which is based upon the following strategic foundations:

**LEADERSHIP** – displayed by digital champions and organisational representation from government, health, education, business, retail, and community groups. The emphasis will be to empower organisations to use the right digital tools and systems that are essential for success. It will also mean taking control of the future of Albury Wodonga’s digital economy in a planned way.

**FINANCIAL** - digital technologies must become intrinsic to organisations at all levels. This will require support at the ‘grass roots’ level but for some will mean the difference between not only expanding their business but of survival.

**SOCIAL** - providing the means for communities to be empowered to connect online, collaborate, and lead the way in better access to services across the LGAs and into the wider community for things like health, education and support groups.

The Strategy comes equipped with a five year road map to assist in the prioritisation of projects and investments and a two year project plan to assist with key aspects of the delivery.

**A summary of recommendations is provided below:**

Recommendation	Description	Summary	Time Frame
1	Establish a Digital Economy Strategy (DES) Working Group	AlburyCity and Wodonga Councils to take a leadership role in the delivery of the DES by establishing a working group of key stakeholder organisations to prioritise, manage, resource, implement and monitor project actions and outcomes.	6 months
2	Scope resource requirements and examine external funding sources to support the effective rollout of the Digital Economy Strategy	AlburyCity and Wodonga Councils to work collaboratively to determine the resource requirements for program leadership, oversight, direction and delivery, and identify and secure available external funding.	6 months
3	Create and deliver change management, communication and community engagement strategy	The Councils will collaborate to develop a communications and community engagement strategy. This strategy should be aimed at promoting digital adoption within the community by raising awareness, promoting training and events, and reporting on program delivery.	6 months

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4	Deliver eGovernment project to expand Council services online – eservices	The Councils will expand the level of online services provided to the public beyond their current offerings. They will be designed to be simple and easily navigated by the community. For example innovation using digital technologies, the evaluation of potential new channels of service delivery, knowledge management, business process management, business case development	6 to 24 months
5	Deliver Rich Media marketing and communications project	The Councils Marketing and Communications divisions to deliver a range of rich-media projects to improve community engagement and digitisation. This includes expanding their use of YouTube channels, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ to distribute rich media content and communications in a variety of forms such as online video, animation, broadcasting, vodcasts (video broadcasts) and info-graphics.	6 to 24 months
6	Expand transformation and change management capability within Information Management/Services	The Councils Information Management/Services teams will deliver change management and transformation to support continued organisational digitisation through the implementation of the internal recommendations of the DES. These teams must continue to increase their change management and transformation capacity utilising methods such as IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and Projects in Control Environments (PRINCE2), but applied to smaller organisation context.	6 to 24 months
7	Deliver desktop client video call/booking project for community engagement and internal corporate use	Monitor the provision video calling and online booking services on Council's websites to improve community access and engagement and organisational productivity. This service will enable members of the public, businesses, and visitors to book and conduct online calls with Council Officers, saving time and money, and improving access to services for younger and marginalised or socially disadvantaged members of community.	6 to 24 months
8	Councils will create a Council-wide "bring your own device" policy	The Councils will continue to provide or create Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policies for Councillors and officers. Implementation will require access to Council systems through mobile devices and security procedures for devices and data.	6 to 24 months
9	Lobby and promote the delivery of the Albury Wodonga Digital Economy Strategy regionally and nationally	The Councils will work in collaboration with other key stakeholder organisations and or leadership partnerships/groups to promote the delivery of the Digital Economy Strategy to local, regional, state and national audiences.	6 months
10	Establish a "Digital Retail Champions" network for collaboration to address barriers to digital retail	Albury Central and Albury, Northside and Wodonga Chambers of Commerce will collaborate to establish a "Digital Retail Champions" network to facilitate collaboration, encourage information sharing between retailers, engender discussion and 'how to' of ecommerce and address barriers to digital retail amongst Albury Wodonga operators. The stakeholders will determine how best to structure and manage the network to ensure it aligns with their member service offer and benefits.	6 months
11	Deliver project to raise awareness of the benefits of eCommerce in retail	Albury Central and Albury, Northside and Wodonga Chambers of Commerce will collaborate to deliver a project to raise awareness of the benefits of eCommerce in retail including transacting online, reaching new markets, advertising, promotion and championing, and providing a range of online shopping statistics that can assist businesses in eCommerce planning.	6 months

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Recommendation	Description	Summary	Time Frame
12	Establish cross-sector “Digital Champions Network and Industry collaboration groups” to address barriers to digitisation in manufacturing, tourism and hospitality services, small business and property development	Albury Central and Albury, Northside and Wodonga Chambers of Commerce and other key industry stakeholder organisations will collaborate to identify and appoint local digital champions from a range of industry sectors. The network will provide a platform for regular communication and information sharing in relation to e-commerce projects, addressing barriers and providing progress updates on digitisation in their sectors and DES implementation. The stakeholders will determine how best to structure and manage the network to ensure it aligns with their member service offer and benefits.	6 to 24 months
13	Deliver project to raise awareness of the benefits of digital business	The Councils, Regional Development Australia Murray and Hume, Albury Central, and Albury, Northside and Wodonga Chambers of Commerce and other key industry stakeholder organisations and or leadership partnerships/groups will collaborate to deliver a project to raise awareness of the benefits of e-commerce across the community through advertising, promotion and championing.	6 to 24 months
14	Collaborate to implement Digital Hume: A Digital Strategy for a Smart Region and the Albury Wodonga Digital Economy Strategy.	Wodonga Council and RDA Hume will cross-promote their respective Digital Economy Strategies via the communications and marketing channels of each organisation with a focus on raising general awareness of the projects and their specific recommendations.	6 months
15	Create and submit a business case for Federal Funding Under the Digital Local Government Program and, subject to success, deliver the Digital Local Government Program	Both Councils to actively monitor information in relation to the Digital Local Government Program and subject to availability/eligibility, create and submit business cases for the expansion of eGovernment services to local businesses and residents which may include the introduction of video call/booking technology.	6 months
16	Deliver the Digital Enterprise Program to assist business digital transformation through the development of an online Digital Business Trading Portal/Repository and Webinar Series for the creation of digital business strategies and a hands on “show, do, go” training model for small to medium enterprises and not for profit organisations	The Council’s will work in partnership to deliver the Australian Governments Digital Enterprise Program with assistance from digital training organisations. Councils will use the funding to deliver group training in digital business and one-on-one mentoring training to local organisations to build their digital business capabilities and support their development of a digital strategy for their business. All small to medium enterprises and not for profit organisations will be eligible to participate.	6 months
17	Create and submit an application for Federal funding under the Digital Hubs Program to create a digital hub in the library or in the absence of funding, create a Digital Literacy Program	The Councils economic development and library teams will work in collaboration with local education institutions, including schools, to increase digital access and digital inclusion for members of the local community. The creation of a Digital Hub or Digital Literacy program will address accessibility and affordability concerns, ensuring all local residents can learn about and access the latest digital technologies in a shared environment to build their digital literacy.	6 to 24 months
18	Review and update relevant Council strategies and policies to support eGovernment and the development of a digital workforce that may include digital working practices such as teleworking and bring your own device (BYOD)	AlburyCity will review and update current Council strategies and policies to support the ongoing transition to eGovernment. This will include the Corporate Plan, Information Management Strategy and relevant Information Management policies. If necessary, the Flexible Work Arrangements Procedure should also be updated to encourage digital working practices such as teleworking and BYOD.	6 to 24 months

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19	Coordinate the strategic sourcing of digital ICT services as an aggregated supply across multiple retail businesses.	Albury, Northside and Wodonga Chambers of Commerce, Albury Central, Victorian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and NSW Business Chamber will collaborate to identify local, professional IT service providers. This information can then be collated and presented as a valuable resource tool for local small to medium enterprises and not for profit organisations looking to engage IT support. The key stakeholder organisations may also coordinate the aggregation of services for businesses wishing to use joint purchasing power to engage expertise.	6 to 24 months
20	Create model offerings for the delivery of an ICT shared services model (hybrid) to other Local Government Authorities	AlburyCity will consider sharing its ICT including back office systems, data centres and disaster recovery capability with other regional NSW Councils. In order to do so it will continue to build its capacity for ICT sharing via further project management training for Information Management and its transition to eGovernment services.	24 months
21	Create model offerings for the delivery of data back-up services to other Local Government Authorities for offsite disaster recovery purposes	Wodonga Council emphasises data availability and security in its IT Strategy. Once NBN fibre is available it could create model offerings for providing offsite data back-up and ICT services to other Victorian Councils.	6 to 24 months
22	Establish and ICT Inter-Council Discussion Forum	To further the alliance between the two organisations, AlburyCity and Wodonga Council will establish an ICT Inter-Council Discussion Forum where Information Management and Services Officers meet biannually to discuss ideas for increased local government digitisation, share knowledge and experiences and collaborate on relevant joint projects.	6 months
23	Deliver a project to migrate away from redundant legacy network systems such as DSL and Microwave Links by connecting to the NBN	A - AlburyCity will analyse the opportunity to migrate appropriate internet connections to the NBN once established, which may provide a feasible alternative to the 2016 capital expenditure identified for replacing current network connections.	2-5 years
		B – Wodonga Council will analyse the opportunity to migrate appropriate internet connections to the NBN once established, which should provide increased opportunities to provide online services and reduce connection costs.	2-5 years
24	Review city brand and add digital City elements and digital marketing themes	The Councils will review their marketing and communications brand to include a digital city flavour to enable Albury and Wodonga to be promoted nationally as leading digital cities.	2-5 years
25	Deliver a project to create online digital literacy training for Council Officers	The Councils Information Management/Services teams will develop and facilitate regular online training for Council officers at various levels of computer literacy to ensure skills are up-to-date and relevant officers are aware of new digital applications and eservices available.	6 months
26	Review Wi-Fi in Wodonga	Wodonga Council and Wodonga Chamber of Commerce to review Wi-Fi offerings in Wodonga	6 to 12 months
27	Expand public access Wi-Fi to all AlburyCity buildings	AlburyCity will extend its existing public access Wi-Fi network to all Council sites over this financial year to encourage and facilitate the further digitisation of the community and improve engagement between Council and the community.	6 to 12 months

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28	Deliver expanded public access Wi-Fi project in Albury to meet community needs and promote the model nationally	AlburyCity will work in collaboration with CountryTell, a not for profit communications company, and MurrayNow so they can install and test public access Wi-Max/Wi-Fi in strategic locations across the city such as business precincts, major sporting facilities and public open spaces.	6 months
29	Increased awareness of health models and introduction of NBN funded telehealth scheme	Leaders in the Albury Wodonga health sector should collaborate on the creation of business cases to be used to seek Federal and respective State Governments and private sector investment in telehealth trials across the region and digital health care projects that can build upon innovative practices already occurring in the sector.	6 months
30	Deliver a mobile broadband testing and mapping project focussed on improving the capacity and network reach of mobile networks provided by large telecommunications companies	The Councils, in partnership with RDA Hume and RDA Murray identify mobile and internet black spots and review in conjunction with the deployment of the NBN.	12 to 24 months