BUILDING A CONNECTED REGIONAL CITY

A Digital Strategy and Action Plan for the City of Mount Gambier

November 2016

This digital strategy and action plan has been prepared by Explor Consulting Pty Ltd for the City of Mount Gambier.

Explor Consulting is a 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.

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

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

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

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This Strategy & Action Plan

Mount Gambier is a significant Australian regional city offering an enviable lifestyle in an area that is rich with natural assets and cultural heritage. The city has developed over more than 170 years into a strong community with a diverse economy. It is the second largest population centre in South Australia and serves a broad region that extends into western Victoria.

Like all cities throughout the world, Mount Gambier faces major changes, driven by powerful global forces and trends: economic, social, environmental and technological. These changes are bringing both threats and opportunities. The cities that are most likely to thrive are those that confront and actively respond to the changes.

The City of Mount Gambier recognises the reality of change and is determined to chart a future that addresses the threats and exploits the opportunities. It is developing forward-looking strategies including a new *Economic Development Blueprint*, due for completion in 2017. Two key plans have now been prepared: *A Futures Paper for City Development* and the *Community Plan – The Futures Paper 2016-2020*.

Digital technology will have a major impact on the city's future. It will cause disruption to many areas of life and business in the city but at the same time it will also offer many opportunities for securing a strong future for the city.

A main responsibility of city local government authorities has always been to manage and maintain the local infrastructure. This has primarily been physical infrastructure such as roads, pipes, public buildings and public spaces. In an era of pervasive digital technology, local government must also address and lead in local information and digital infrastructure.

This document, Mount Gambier's digital technology strategy and action plan, explains what the city will do to reap the benefits of digital technology for meeting its aspirations.

This plan builds on the city's recent futures planning and draws on insights about how other cities have been exploiting digital technology to secure their futures.

The plan has been prepared with the assistance of Explor Consulting, a digital futures consulting firm. A number of Council and community members and experts contributed to the preparation of this plan. Their advice has been valuable. A list is attached in Appendix A.

A City That Looks to the Future

Mount Gambier is actively shaping its own future. The community have identified aspirations that are based on enriching and building on its key assets:

1. The people
2. The location
3. The economy
4. The climate, natural resources, art, culture and heritage.

The city's plans are based on exploiting its opportunities and confronting its challenges.

Mount Gambier's Opportunities

Mount Gambier is a regional city with many opportunities.

Its population of around 26,000 people gives the city a solid critical mass of people, skills, facilities and services. Mount Gambier serves a broader geographic area with a community of close to 60,000 people, which has an ongoing demand for public and commercial services. The city also has a higher degree of agility compared to larger cities because its smaller population allows effective social, professional and commercial networks to flourish. These networks are also supported by a local culture of philanthropy.

Mount Gambier offers an excellent quality of life and has many strengths on which to build a bright future including:

- There is a strong social fabric including a diverse and active community sector.
- Housing is affordable, the physical infrastructure is good and the quality of public services is high.
- The city's size means that for most residents, the travelling time to work, education, retail outlets and other services is short.
- The city's status as a regional centre has helped it to attract and sustain excellent education, health and community service facilities.
- Universities and other institutions have invested in new facilities and are extending their local partnerships.
- The city is located in an attractive landscape with many natural assets. The region's unique geology offers attractions such as the Blue Lake and supports adventure tourism activities such as cave diving.
- The fertile soils support a thriving food and wine sector.
- The city and surrounding region also presents a rich human heritage encompassing indigenous culture and European settlement from the early nineteenth century.
- There is also a thriving artistic and cultural sector. Mount Gambier is arguably Australia's premier jazz music city.

Mount Gambier also has an attractive cityscape with significant public buildings and interesting public spaces. The Main Corner, the Riddoch Gallery and the renowned Mount Gambier Public Library are excellent facilities for visitors and the local community. The

former railway lands are being used and developed as a unique and exciting space.

Mount Gambier has a diverse and vibrant economy that reflects its location, its status as a regional centre and the resource base of the surrounding region. The retail and service sectors are particularly important sources of employment.

The tourism sector is a significant and growing contributor to the economy and local employment. The attractions of the region and the services available in the city make Mount Gambier an ideal overnight destination for tourists who drive the Adelaide to Melbourne touring route. The year ending June 2015 saw an increase of almost of almost 20% on visits to the region compared to the previous year.

Mount Gambier's Challenges

The city also has its challenges.

The level of socio-economic disadvantage is relatively high in some parts of the city, particularly the eastern districts. Mount Gambier's overall unemployment rate is around 8%, but the youth unemployment rate is nearly 17%. Underemployment in youth is also a significant challenge.

Automation and other trends have changed the local industry structure. Unskilled jobs have been disappearing while the new jobs that have appeared are requiring new sets of skills and

qualifications. However, qualification levels in Mount Gambier are lower than in much of the rest of South Australia.

The aspirations of young people are affected by family and community attitudes. On the one hand, some families have placed less importance on education and qualifications for securing employment because of the work experiences of earlier generations. On the other hand, many young people aspire to progressing their education, careers and social lives in larger cities including Adelaide.

Mount Gambier is a considerable distance from Adelaide, Melbourne and other major cities and the limited access to affordable transport is a challenge. Air transport is relatively expensive, there is currently no rail service and the use of public coach services is low.

The important tourism and retail sectors are dominated by micro-businesses, but a number of business operators lack the strategic business capacities and skills for steering their businesses into a future that is being buffeted by rapid change.

Digital Technology & Change

Over recent decades there have been dramatic developments in digital technologies related to speed, ubiquity and cost including:

- High speed, big data computing and analytics

- The miniaturisation of electronic equipment, low cost sensors and the emergence of the "internet of things"

- Mobile phones devices, including wearable technologies such as fitness and health bands

- The increasingly ubiquitous nature of the internet and connectivity

- The digitisation of information and audio-visual materials for use and re-use through many digital channels

- The advent of a multitude of digital channels for communication such as social media, apps, web and streaming services.

We now regularly use messaging, the web, social media (such as Facebook and Twitter), Smartphones and tablets. Importantly, these technologies have become affordable, prevalent and inter-connected.

Vast amounts of information and entertainment resources are in digital form and are easily accessed and shared. People across the world are instantly communicating through social media and other technologies.

The technology is becoming more pervasive. The internet not only connects people, it now connects our basic appliances and our national infrastructures such as our energy and transport systems.

The technology is helping to make us collectively smarter. The combinations of big data, analytics and artificial intelligence are giving us new insights and new tools.

However, the biggest changes are in how we use the technology to do things differently. We work differently, we play differently, we trade differently and we learn differently. These are the changes that cities such as Mount Gambier must adapt to.

Some changes are disruptive. The growth in online streaming services has swept away video rental shops. Other changes have created new opportunities. People can live in Mount Gambier and work with colleagues and clients who are thousands of kilometres away.

Responding to Change

The relatively low cost and increasingly ubiquitous nature of digital technologies can allow communities to thrive through new opportunities. However, communities like Mount Gambier must also plan for the threats that digital technologies present:

Opportunities to Exploit	Corresponding Threats to Mitigate
New ways of creating wealth through new business models, access to remote markets and the disintermediation of supply chains.	Some of the old ways we created wealth are being disrupted, sent offshore or are no longer profitable.
Innovative new ways of having a conversation with our regional customers – whether they are residents, visitors, potential investors or "tree changers".	The customer has raised expectations that services and information will be delivered in digital format through the channels that they wish to use. For the first time in history the customer can actually "talk back"; and through digital channels like social media, can inflict negative impact on brand and reputation.
Unexpected new, low cost solutions are emerging to old business, community and public policy challenges.	Some of the ways we used to solve community and business challenges are becoming untenable in a relatively reduced rate base or lower cost business structures.

There are Big Disruptions

It has been claimed that the retail and media sectors are the "canary in the coal mine" for other industry sectors yet to feel the full force of economic disruption arising from digital and online technologies. Prior to the Global Financial Crisis in 2008-09, Australians were only conducting 3% of their retail transactions online. Recent data shows that the transaction rates have risen to 27% - 30% in 2015. The disruption to traditional media forms such as newsprint and free-to-air television is equally powerful. Regionally based video production and provision facilities have many opportunities arising from high speed broadband and many threats that equally must be addressed. In Mount Gambier, regional media organisations such as *The Border Watch* are cognisant of both threats and opportunities

Deloitte's 2014 revision of their original report *Big Bang, Short Fuse* provides evidence that one third of the Australian economy faces imminent and substantial disruption by digital technologies and business models. **This disruption will be felt hardest in industry sectors and enterprises that are under prepared and lack the digital capacity to respond to these rapid changes.**
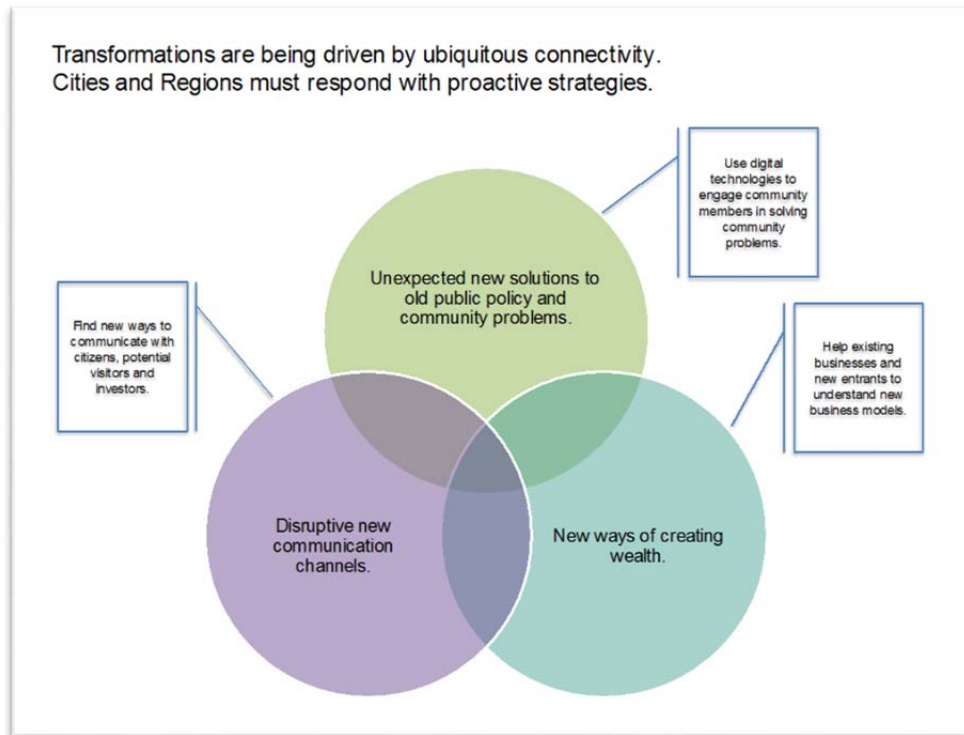
Areas of government service delivery and online engagement are not immune from these significant threats. Due to the prevalence of mobile consumer devices, citizens are increasingly expecting to interact with all levels of government via a sophisticated online channel. This expectation is rapidly growing and is particularly acute during times of community crisis. Increasingly, communities are self-organising using social media platforms during and after

McKinsey's 2013 report *Disruptive Technologies: Advances That Will Transform Life, Business, And The Global Economy* identified the top 12 disruptive technologies - including the mobile Internet, autonomous vehicles, and advanced genomics - that have the greatest potential for economic impact and disruption by 2025. They estimated the potential economic impact that each technology would have by 2025 and concluded that these 12 technologies alone had "the potential to drive direct economic impact in the order of $US 14 trillion to $US 33 trillion per year in 2025".

Assuming an Australian GDP growth is 3% and McKinsey's estimates of the potential economic impact of these 12 digital technologies along with their distribution of the impact on developed economies is applied, it results in an annual economic impact on the Australian economy in 2025 of $497b - from these 12 digital technologies alone.

natural and other crisis events. Government agencies and institutions that are unable to communicate effectively with citizens through these new digital channels will be severely impacted.

Demand for health and ageing services in Australia is growing at 18% pa, but the supply to meet this demand is constrained by government revenues growing at around 3% pa. It is the regions and communities like Mount Gambier that are best able to adopt digital and online solutions to augment health and ageing service delivery that will be best placed to bridge this increasing gap.

Transformations are being driven by ubiquitous connectivity. Cities and Regions must respond with proactive strategies.

Find new ways to communicate with citizens, potential visitors and investors.

Use digital technologies to engage community members in solving community problems.

Unexpected new solutions to old public policy and community problems.

Help existing businesses and new entrants to understand new business models.

Disruptive new communication channels.

New ways of creating wealth.

The Landscape for Business is Changing

Businesses of all sizes face massive changes. Technological and digital innovation has facilitated an enormous new capacity to create, capture, analyse and disseminate information. There is great potential to create start-up businesses that have the capacity to revolutionise production and distribution of products and services on a national and global scale.

Outsourcing white-collar tasks to more efficient or productive economies is now the norm, but equally, regional Australia has the opportunity to build businesses that exploit online and digital technologies to sell products and services to urban and major city markets.

There is no doubt we are living through a pivotal period in regional economies. The question for regional Australia and cities such as Mount Gambier is whether **we can build the capacity to be creators of technological innovation, or just simply remain as consumers.**

"Place is supplanting the industrial corporation as the key economic and social organising unit of capitalism. Density, the clustering of creative people - in cities, regions and neighbourhoods – provides a key spur to innovation and competitiveness."

– Richard Florida, The Creative Class

For Mount Gambier, developing pathways and support mechanisms that spawn, encourage, support and network entrepreneurs and ideas will be vital for success.

According to IBIS World's white-paper *A Snapshot of Australia's Digital Future to 2050*, 15 different industry sub-sectors face extinction due to factors such as size, international competitiveness, the potential for displacement, and technology.

Entrepreneurs need to understand how markets might be eroded or enhanced by emerging technologies a decade from now: how technologies might bring new customers or force them to fight for existing ones. Governments, community leaders and business networks will need to decide how to invest in new forms of education and infrastructure, and how to create an environment in which people with ideas can build prosperous futures.

Planning for the Digital Future

Forward thinking and practical planning will help cities such as Mount Gambier to deal with the disruptions that new technologies are creating, and to build on the opportunities that are available.

The digital future is a key pillar in creating a vibrant community future.

Charles Landry is a global thinker and facilitator about the future of cities. In his publication *The Digitized City: Influence & Impact*, he stresses the important role of local government: "Cities, and their public entities, must be active players in this emergent city, both shaping it and being shaped by it". He also offers wisdom on how this should be approached: "The twin conditions to foster new solutions to problems and to harness opportunities are openness and collaboration".

Digital Technology Offers Many Possibilities

There are many areas of community life that Mount Gambier should focus on when planning for a digital future:

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 Business 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.

Strategic Areas for Action

The digital strategy and action plan that is set out in this document has been developed to support the aspirations that have been developed through the city's community plan. The strategy builds on the opportunities, responds to the challenges and addresses some key focus areas.

Focusing on the Future

There are some important elements for Mount Gambier to focus on as it exploits the power of digital technology to help confront the opportunities and challenges. These are the key focus areas:

1. Equitable access to technology by everyone is important. Digital technology will become increasingly important for providing access to community, education, commercial services and government services.

2. Small business will be the key driver of economic and employment, particularly in the tourism sector. These businesses will need the capacity to ensure they are effectively connecting to their customers and their potential customers.

3. Some businesses will arise from local ideas, inventions and innovations. Digital technology creates new opportunities for these to be developed. Such businesses are more likely to flourish if there are better opportunities to create new innovations and there is some support for turning the ideas into practical businesses.

4. Tourism presents some of the best opportunities to grow the local economy. A 10% growth in annual visitor nights injects an extra $20M pa into the local economy. A challenge for Mount Gambier is to make visitors more informed about the attractions and activities already on offer, and to create new attractions and activities.

5. An overriding focus for Mount Gambier must be to tell compelling stories about itself to residents, visitors, potential visitors, investors and others. Digital technology enables new channels and new creative techniques for reaching different audiences. It also raises the importance of image, branding and presentation.

Five Strategic Areas

The plan sets out actions to be taken to meet requirements in 5 strategic areas:

Connectivity: Residents and visitors to the city need to be able to connect to online services, whatever their circumstances.

Capacity: Residents, businesses, the council and other organisations need the understandings and skills to effectively use digital technology.

Content: The services, information and stories that are made available through digital technology are all based on rich sets of data and digital content. Data and content about the city are the raw materials and need to be assembled.

Creativity: New innovative and creative business, based on technology-based ideas, can be supported.

Channels: The different audiences can access services, information and stories through different digital channels such as mobile apps, social media, video channels and websites.

Long-term effort is required in each of these strategic areas but the plan also sets out immediate actions to start building momentum.

The city council must take a leadership role for the overall strategy but other organisations in the city will have important roles.

The next sections explain the actions to be taken for developing each of the 5 strategic areas.

Focus on new conversations, new markets, new stories about Mount Gambier

Channels

Capacity

Creativity

Content

Connectivity

Strategic Effort & Investment in Five Areas

Figure 1: Mount Gambier Digital Strategy High Level Conceptual Model

Developing Connectivity

Mount Gambier will be recognised as being amongst the most connected regional cities in Australia by investing in new infrastructure and planning to exploit existing assets to create economic and social growth opportunities. Mount Gambier will use its relative advantage in telecommunications to connect with potential investors, business migrants and "near-shoring" opportunities.

Connectivity through broadband telecommunications is the foundation of a digital future.

Mount Gambier Should Build Digital Connectivity

In order to future proof the city and provide a platform for innovation, economic and social growth, Mount Gambier should foster the development of a rich environment of broadband networks that support digital applications, ensuring that these networks are available throughout the city and to all citizens.

Regional cities that plan for and attract the provision of easy access to broadband should include an infrastructure that combines cable, optical fibre, and wireless networks. This will offer maximum connectivity and bandwidth to citizens and organisations located in the city.

Regional cities are most effective when they work with a mix of service and infrastructure providers that accelerate connectivity in critical areas around the city such as universities, business centres, technical and research institutes, government offices and emergency response units.

The long-term goal of enabling and attracting broadband infrastructure of all types is to facilitate an open broadband network that the entire city - its organisations, companies, local government and individuals - can use. This widespread availability of fast Internet speeds has been shown to lead to the development of innovative approaches to particular social challenges and to the establishment of new businesses and business models.

In addition to the wired broadband networks that are necessary for regional cities, wireless broadband is becoming ever more in demand, especially with the explosive popularity of mobile applications, smartphones, the increased connectivity of smart devices, the Internet of Things (IoT) and the drop in costs of sensors and radio frequency identification (RFID) technology. These networks are fundamental to ensuring high-speed access to the Internet and to any e-services that the city plans to offer its resident and visitors.

Telecommunications will be a major factor in transforming, rather than reforming, the way region communities do business and live their lives.

Geraldton – Using Connectivity to Attract New Industry

A new type of mining is making its mark in Western Australia: data mining. The arrival of the National Broadband Network in towns like Geraldton is set to attract IT entrepreneurs.

With the supercomputing abilities of the Pawsey Centre in Perth and the big data services offered by the Geraldton Data Centre some 400 kilometres up the coast, the rollout of the National Broadband Network is changing how many businesses work, and it is attracting new IT entrepreneurs to the region.

The point of connection for the northwest of Australia is the port town of Geraldton, one of the first in regional Australia to get on the network.

Geraldton is a town with a lot going for it. Known for its beaches, tomatoes and shipwrecks, it has a busy port, servicing agriculture and fishing industries worth $1 billion and $300 million respectively, and it is the point of connection for the multi-billion-dollar mining industry. But with the resources downturn and retail businesses struggling, the town is keen to make the most of fast internet speeds available over the NBN.

Solutions provider Market Creations signed a deal with IBM to build the Geraldton Data Centre, the first commercial data centre in regional WA, offering high speed internet business services, cloud computing, data management and disaster recovery solutions to businesses throughout WA.

The centre's operations manager Colin Smith has said: "There's a big demand for what we do. It's pretty common to have power outages, even in the city, so companies naturally want to protect their data."

With that in mind, the first Digital and IT Professionals networking event was held in March 2105 at the CityHive to hear leading IT entrepreneurs talk about technology trends and discuss future possibilities.

It is hoped the event, which is backed by AMCOM Upstart, Pollinators Inc, Regional Development Australia Midwest Gascoyne, Mid West Development Commission and the Australian Government's Digital Enterprise program, will become a regular fixture in the city.

Meanwhile, Geraldton Data Centre is planning a second operation at the new technology park being built next to the city's airport, and the Durack Institute of Technology is building an annex there.

Regional Cities Should Provide Free Wi-Fi

The arguments are now strongly in favour of regional cities providing free broadband Wi-Fi services for residents and visitors. Whether it be driven by genuine economic and social outcomes, the growth in free Wi-Fi services in Australia has been rapid and widespread. This alone makes **free Wi-Fi necessary to boost regional competitiveness in the visitor economy.**

However, there is now evidence that deployed strategically and used as an engagement and communications channel, free Wi-Fi can make a contribution to equity and digital inclusion, to service and infrastructure efficiencies, to civic engagement, to community building, to economic development, to local innovation and to safety and security.

There are three key lessons to be learned from other regional cities' investment in free Wi-Fi services. Cities must:

1. Clearly understand resident and visitor user-needs
2. Clarify rationales and reasons for the investment
3. Identify robust and sustainable technical and business models.

Connectivity Advantages Unique to Mount Gambier

With great foresight, the Mount Gambier Council previously participated in a joint bid with UniSA to create a Point of Interconnect (PoI) of high speed optic fibre that links campuses of universities across Australia. The bid was successful and the resulting optic fibre asset connects the relatively new UniSA Mount Gambier campus via very high-speed optic fibre to Adelaide and the rest of the Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet).

AARNet is a national resource – a National Research and Education Network (NREN). AARNet provides unique information communications technology capabilities to enable Australian education and research institutions to collaborate with each other and their international peer communities. The UniSA fibre connection located at the Mount Gambier campus is now owned and operated by AARNet. UniSA buy connectivity services off AARNet but the remaining capacity of the fibre link is massive and largely unused.

Typically, AARNet also has arrangements with commercial providers so that untapped bandwidth on AARNet owned assets can be wholesaled to create commercial connectivity opportunities.

Further to this connectivity that is external to the city, Mount Gambier is fortunate to have optic fibre assets that run through sections of the city's central business district and beyond. These assets were originally built and owned by the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA). Those assets were transferred to ETSA's successor, South Australia Power Networks, which in turn has executed commercial arrangements with one or more commercial wholesale providers.

These two optic fibre assets in a city the size of Mount Gambier is largely unique – perhaps only equalled in Australia by Geraldton In Western Australia. The opportunity to work with commercial

partners to build out, enhance and exploit these assets is very real but also quite complex. It is clear that these assets are currently largely untapped. However, if potential opportunities are strategically addressed, the assets could be used to:

- Build commercial opportunities to attract investment in broadband intensive call centres and data centres in Mount Gambier

- Augment the lifestyle attraction of Mount Gambier with high speed, low cost broadband for families, small business and home office businesses.

- Drive broadband costs down and speeds up so that Mount Gambier could approach business, government and residential costs equivalent with those in large Australian cities.

Therefore, the city and Mount Gambier's commercial sector should pursue this opportunity strategically. UniSA would strongly support such an approach and would be a key player in developing understanding the appropriate strategic approach.

Proposed Actions

To progress this strategic priority action area, the city and its stakeholders should consider the following actions:

	Action	Description
1.1	**Develop Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Network**	The city should identify and map high potential Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the city and surrounding region. It should publish locations through appropriate online channels. The city should extend the number of Wi-Fi hotspots. 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.
1.2	**Extend Free Wi-Fi Hotspots to Socially Disadvantaged Areas**	The city should extend free Wi-Fi to less advantaged areas of the city. The city should identify and secure key partners and attract them to trial innovative data plan sharing programs, enabling data plan remainders to be gifted to less advantaged community groups or residents.
1.3	**Extend and Invest in Community Assets to Enable Digital Access Progams**	The city should extend the digital infrastructure available to residents in community facilities including the public library. In addition to Wi-Fi and public access computers, consideration should be given to the provision of mobile tablet devices for loan.
1.4	**Engage with NBN Co and Encourage Take Up**	The city should work with NBN Co for joint promotion of the take up of new links as the NBN roll out occurs through Mount Gambier. NBN Co are running regional forums for communities and businesses in regional Australia and the city should use this opportunity to brand, promote and enhance its messages to the community about the importance of digital technology.

	Action	Description
1.5	**Plan to Exploit Mount Gambier's Relative Connectivity Advantages**	The city should form and lead a co-operative group of up to ten businesses and community organisations that would benefit from higher bandwidth and lower costs, called *Connect Mount Gambier*. *Connect Mount Gambier* should develop a plan to identify demand for high speed broadband in Mount Gambier, and approach AARNet to partner with the city to engage with appropriate commercial wholesalers. *Connect Mount Gambier* should build strong relationships with the City of Greater Geraldton to inform the strategy.
1.6	**Strategically Plan to Create a Data Intensive Research Hub in Agribusiness**	Following the formation of *Connect Mount Gambier*, the city should build on the initial broadband demand identification by strategically building more broadband demand. The city should work with UniSA and other research and education partners, together with the agricultural industry sector, to create a plan for an agriculture/agribusiness research hub to be located in Mount Gambier.
1.7	**Strategically Plan to Attract Data Intensive Investment to the City**	Following the formation of *Connect Mount Gambier*, the city should build on the initial broadband demand identification by strategically building more broadband demand. The city should work with the SA Government's economic development arm to create a plan to attract data intensive industry, and to attract investments in facilities such as data centres and call centres.

Developing Capacity

Mount Gambier's residents, businesses and community organisations will have the confidence and capabilities to use digital technologies to support their current needs and their future opportunities. The city council will lead the use of digital technology across the community and be an exemplar.

The capacity to use digital technology is now a necessity. People, businesses and organisations that lack the capacity will be left behind.

Residents' Digital Ability

Many of Mount Gambier's residents currently lack the ability to use technology effectively. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index provides quantitative measures of access, affordability and digital ability for regions across Australia. The 2016 index measured the digital ability score for the South East Region of South Australia as being 38.3, against a score of 43.2 for the state and 46.0 for Australia as a whole. Older people and people with a disability are more likely to have lower digital abilities.

The city is already addressing digital inclusion issues through programs offered by the public library. These programs include practical sessions on using technology products. There are opportunities for local community organisations to deliver digital literacy programs to specific groups in the community such as older people. The library is well placed to help co-ordinate such activities.

Digital Capacity of Small Business

There are strong opportunities for economic and employment growth from sectors such as tourism and retail services, which are dominated by small businesses. Their future prospects will depend on the way they adopt technology to reach their customers, to connect with their suppliers and to manage their operations efficiently. Many of Mount Gambier's small business operators currently have limited strategic and practical understandings about the application of digital technology in their businesses. A number of business operators lack an understanding of how their potential customers, including customers who live overseas, interact with social media. They often lack the capacity to use social media and other online channels effectively.

Such businesses need practical, well targeted advice and information, that reflects their local circumstances. The Chamber of Commerce is connected to a range of local businesses. Although it currently does not facilitate coaching and training about digital technology for small business, it is well placed to take on a lead role.

Digital Capacity of the City Council

This strategy has short term actions but a long term focus. It will need regular updating as circumstances change. Importantly, the strategy will need ongoing leadership and co-ordination.

The city council leads the social, economic and environmental development of Mount Gambier through initiatives such as the *Economic Development Blueprint*. The council should lead the digital strategy and co-ordinate the actions that are undertaken through it.

The city has strong foundations to build on. It is strengthening its economic development capacity and already has effective internal information technology operations. It should also lead by example and embrace digital technology for engaging with its community and with the audiences beyond the city. The city should also facilitate actions and resources where a common, citywide approach is most effective. Branding, and the development of contemporary designs for use in digital media channels, is an area where a citywide approach that is facilitated by the council will be beneficial.

Geelong Chamber of Commerce

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce is an active supporter of businesses in its local area. The chamber operates the "Small Business Smart Business" program that brings "quality low cost resources to small businesses to help them start, grow, consolidate and reinvent". In addition to foundational topics such as "Management capabilities" and "Building your business", the program includes "Digital engagement and implementation". The program is delivered through methods including individual mentoring and group tutorials, and there is a program website that offers articles on topics including the use of technology.

The main website of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce also contains a rich set of resources for local businesses. These include "SME TV", a set of locally produced 15-minute videos that provide practical and accessible advice for small businesses, with a strong emphasis on the use of social media.

Proposed Actions

To progress this strategic priority action area, the city and its stakeholders should consider the following actions:

	Action	Description
2.1	**Extend Community Digital Literacy Programs**	Community organisations in Mount Gambier should provide digital literacy programs, including mentoring programs using volunteers, targeted at specific groups such as older people. The public library should extend its facilitation role with community organisations, drawing on initiatives such as the national "Go Digi" program. An initial step should be to establish and train a group of local digital mentors.
2.2	**Provide Training for Digital History**	The public library should extend its computer training courses and offer support for using technology for telling stories about local history. The library should work with its local partners including the Mount Gambier Local History Group and education institutions. Training should be provided on digitising, preserving and managing images, oral history recordings and other historic resources. Training should also be provided on storytelling using digital platforms. A "best digital story" competition about the history of the city and its people should be considered.
2.3	**Facilitate Advice and Resources for Small Business**	The Chamber of Commerce should arrange for "digital business" advice to be made available to local small businesses, particularly micro-businesses. In addition to generic business advice about using and managing technology, specific information related to local business should be offered including insights on how customers are interacting with social media. An initial step should be to adapt or develop a short series of videos and include these on the chamber's website.

	Action	Description
2.4	**Provide Digital Leadership from Council**	The city council should establish a digital leadership role in the organisation, allocated to a senior officer. The role should have overall responsibility for managing and co-ordinating this strategy and action plan. The role should also have responsibility for driving digital transformation within the council itself. An initial priority should be to extend the online council services available to residents.
2.5	**Build Digital Communication and Branding**	The city council should build its capacity to use digital media for communications about the council and the city as a whole. It should extend its use of social media and video resources. It should also build capacity for multi-lingual publishing of local online resources, so as to reach overseas audience including potential visitors in Asian countries. An initial step should be to review the city's branding in ways that present a strong identity and take advantage of digital channels. New graphic assets should be developed for use by the council and for the city as a whole.

Developing Content

There will be rich and growing sets of data and digital content about Mount Gambier which will be available to help plan and build new services, provide valuable information, tell engaging stories and support new visitor experiences.

Data and content are the raw materials for digital technology.

Council Managed Data

The city council's computer systems already hold a rich array of data sets about the city's infrastructure, properties and other subjects. These data sets are recorded within the systems that support specific functions undertaken by the council such as planning, development approvals, infrastructure maintenance and rates collection. Such data has wider value and can be used by local innovators to develop apps and other online services, for many different business and community purposes. The potential of council data can be expanded when it is combined with data sets from other sources including data that is managed by agencies of the state government and the Australian Government.

The council's data sets are currently not available for use by innovators and external parties. This is largely because the council does not yet have an "open data portal" – a website through which data sets are made available. The council is also yet to develop the information management practices for identifying, assembling and publishing open data. These are important to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, security and quality of data.

Data for Business

Businesses of all sizes that are actively planning to grow need access to a range of data. There are already many important sets of data about Mount Gambier that are valuable for businesses. These include data sets managed by the council, managed by the state government and managed by Australian Government agencies including the Australian Bureau of Statistics. There are also gaps.

Currently, Mount Gambier lacks access to a comprehensive register of local businesses. Some partial directories are available including lists managed by the Chamber of Commerce and the council. Our understanding that the City is currently developing a City Growth Strategy. That Strategy will include a business audit to support a comprehensive register that will be a valuable resource for existing businesses that were seeking to invest or establish partnerships in Mount Gambier. It would also be valuable for providers of business support services.

Many local businesses and business promotion organisations would also benefit from access to detailed information about customer behaviour. For example, the tourism sector would benefit from

detailed data about the background, preferences, behaviours and even the minute-by-minute movements through the city of visitors.

Cultural & Historic Content

Documents, images, audio recordings and video recordings are resources for researching the history and telling the cultural and historic stories of a place. The digitisation of such resources is vitally important because it helps to capture memories, to preserve the resources and to allow better access to the resources by a wider audience.

The public library is actively involved in the digitisation of such resources and offers access to specific collections about Mount Gambier including the *Les Hill Photographic Collection* and the *ForestrySA Mounted Photographic Collection*. The library uses a number of online platforms including services managed by the State Library of South Australia and the National Library of Australia. There are opportunities to digitise more resources about Mount Gambier and the surrounding districts. These include privately owned historic photographs and oral history recordings.

Digital Mapping

Visitors and others are increasingly using Google Maps, mobile apps and similar online channels to find services and attractions, and to learn about the places where they are. Special apps are being developed for these purposes. These channels depend on

Sensing Tourist Travel in Tasmania

The University of Tasmania's *Sense-T* program is exploring the use of data and real-time sensing technology for solving practical challenges in a number of industry sectors. In early 2016, a project was undertaken to gain insights into tourist visits to Tasmania. Using smartphones and an app, information was gathered about where visitors go, how they move around, and what influences their decisions. Data was produced about how travel patterns differ according to age, home country, length of stay and reason for travel. This included detailed information on how long someone stands at a lookout, walks through a national park or browses an art gallery.

The project tracked the precise movements of almost 500 visitors. They were handed smart phones that recorded accurate, real-time data of their travel patterns through a purpose built app replaying GPS location information. The app also generated pop-up surveys to capture the personal insights of participants at different locations.

The project has created a highly valuable set of data that is being used for planning to improve visitor experiences, with a view to increasing visitor number and extending their stays.

suitable data and content being available that is tagged or "geo-coded" with the location co-ordinates.

There are many opportunities to geo-code content and data about places, attractions and services in Mount Gambier. For example, geo-coding can help tourists find public toilets, picnic grounds and parking places for recreational vehicles. The geo-coding of historic photographs and other cultural resources can help support apps which provide interpretative advice on walks through the city.

Tourism Information

In the past, visitors have used physical visitor centres to find practical information and interpretative information about the places that they are visiting. There is a rapid change underway with a decline in the use of physical centres and an increase in the use of online channels. There will be less demand for printed brochures and more demand for content in digital forms.

Mount Gambier will need to increase visitor publication information in digital forms.

Proposed Actions

To progress this strategic priority action area, the city and its stakeholders should consider the following actions:

	Action	Description
3.1	**Provide Council Open Data**	The city council should establish an open data portal to allow access to comprehensive sets of data from its own databases. It should introduce information management practices for identifying data sets for release, and for maintaining privacy, confidentiality, security and quality. The council should also facilitate the release of open data about Mount Gambier that is managed by other organisations.
3.2	**Develop Register of Businesses**	The Chamber of Commerce should lead the development and maintenance of a database providing a comprehensive register of all businesses in the city. The database should be made accessible through a number of online channels.
3.3	**Assemble Tourist Behaviour Data**	The city council should facilitate a project to collect a detailed data set about the behaviour of visitors to the city. The project could draw on experiences of similar projects including that of the Sense-T Program in Tasmania (see side box). The data should be analysed to inform future economic development planning and the implementation of the city's tourism industry plan.
3.4	**Assemble Foot Traffic Data**	The city should use Wi-Fi tracking software to build data sets around foot traffic and movement through the city. The resulting data sets should be shared with business and community and enhance planning for city amenity.

	Action	Description
3.5	**Extend Digitisation of History Resources**	The public library's services for digitising historic photographs and similar resources should be extended. Additional equipment should be acquired and appropriate marketing undertaken to encourage local people and organisations to bring forward their photos and recordings. The library should work with local groups, including the Mount Gambier Local History Group and aged care providers, to create and capture oral histories from older residents. The library should ensure that rich sets of contextual information are recorded with the digitised resources.
3.6	**Assemble Content for Tourists**	A digital publishing program should be established to assemble a comprehensive collection of digital content about the city for visitors. The content should be created in discrete "chunks", suitable for easy adaptation and presentation through different channels such as mobile apps, websites and large screen projections. It should support the increased use of such digital channels, reducing the use of paper based brochures. The content should cover practical information and interpretative information about local history, culture and natural heritage. The content should draw on resources including data managed by the city council and the Chamber of Commerce, and historical resources that have been digitised. It should also include the work of local artists. Key texts should be made available in multiple languages. Geo-coding should be applied to relevant content.

Developing Creativity

Mount Gambier will develop a culture, approach and programs that encourage and support new business, innovation and start-up investment. Mount Gambier will be recognised around the nation as a regional city that invests in and attracts innovation and technology-based or technology-enabled businesses.

Cities and regions that have a clear innovation eco-system succeed.

Business Growth

To ensure that Mount Gambier mitigates the threats of digital disruption, and that Mount Gambier retains its per-capita share of potential growth, an estimated 300 new businesses should be created over the coming decade. Without this, significant potential economic growth will be lost to national and international competitors.

Mount Gambier Has Some Early Building Blocks

The recent success of programs like *Unleashed* and *STEM Summit 2016* point the way to a more comprehensive approach to an

Absolute Domestics was established in 2004 and moved to Mount Gambier soon after. The advent of dial-up internet mean that the proprietors could move back to their home city still provide services across Australia. Absolute Domestics provides domestic cleaning services in 5 states of Australia. The business is run entirely online by Leonie Fartch from Mount Gambier and employs or contracts over 100 people Australia-wide.

Leonie says "If anyone is considering operating a national business from Mount Gambier, I would highly recommend it, with the way technology has improved over the years, and computer services available to us today, anything is possible.

innovation eco-system for Mount Gambier. The city is fortunate to host a UniSA campus, a TAFE campus, the James Morrison Music Academy and a highly innovative library service. These are all potential building blocks of an innovation eco-system and support network.

While the potential for technology-<u>based</u> start-ups may be somewhat limited, the potential for technology-<u>enabled</u> start-ups and high growth companies located in Mount Gambier is an opportunity.

Regional Innovation Eco-Systems Have Some Common Elements

By studying international models such as Silicon Valley, Boulder and Israel, together with those closer to home like Wollongong, the Sunshine Coast and Geraldton, we can start to understand the common elements that cities and regions must put in place to build an innovation support network. Mount Gambier must consider the following key ingredients of a start-up and innovation eco-system, which are largely missing, underdeveloped, or disconnected in the city:

1. An eco-system needs champions to provide a driving force. A champion is a catalyst that accelerates interest and activity, which is particularly important in the very beginning or when entering a new growth phase. But champions also play important roles in keeping stakeholders focused and moving forward on an ongoing basis. Beyond passion, a champion must

inherently understand the necessity for an eco-system. Ideally, they seek to benefit from the eco-system but also wish to see it developed for the benefit of the broader community.

2. It is essential to develop an entrepreneurial culture within a region, not only among the entrepreneurs themselves but also among all stakeholders. The irony of the regional mindset is often that despite its familiarity with small businesses, it struggles to understand how a "start-up" is something different that requires different support for growth.

3. Today's regional start-ups represent a completely new way of doing business, and despite their regional location, they often aim to operate on a global scale from the very beginning. The entrepreneurial culture must reflect this paradigm shift.

4. Working in isolation, an entrepreneur is doomed to fail. A strong and diverse network of other entrepreneurs, mentors, service providers, investors, etc helps entrepreneurs share ideas, access resources, receive encouragement and advice, overcome barriers, and learn about new opportunities. Although individuals have their own set of relationships, an eco-system can help formalize, expand, and activate an entrepreneur's network.

5. In a regional context, the eco-system must ensure ongoing engagement among key stakeholders, including entrepreneurs; local, state, and federal governments; service providers (eg accountants, lawyers, and consultants), educational and

research institutions; mentors; investors; media; and, most importantly, entrepreneurs.

6. To build capacity in a region, there must be a clear process, or runway, that will lead entrepreneurs from idea to commercialization to growth (or sometimes exit and re-investment). All other stakeholders must understand and "buy in" to this process, and every aspect of the eco-system should be designed to support and further develop it.

7. Entrepreneurs need a place to work and benefit from the availability of co-working space. Having a suitable place to run

events and programs also helps to bring the people and the ideas together and to stimulate an environment of strategic risk taking and entrepreneurship. Thus, the physical space becomes a means of sharing information and knowledge, building a community, and fostering the necessary culture.

These elements are integrated:

Figure 2: Elements of Regional Innovation Ecosystem

Proposed Actions

To progress this strategic priority action area, the city and its stakeholders should consider the following actions:

	Action	Description
4.1	**Establish an Innovation Eco-system**	The city should work with its partners in business and education to establish a clear innovation eco-system. The eco-system should focus on encouraging many business ideas that are technology enabled, and some that are technology based, to start and grow in Mount Gambier.
4.2	**Establish a Digital Innovation Hub**	The city should establish a start-up hub as a physical, multi-tenant space that is a digitally-enabled business incubator supporting local entrepreneurs and small business start-ups. It should be equipped with high-speed Internet, video-conferencing rooms, hot-desks and space for "pop-up stores". This hub would be a convening space for mentoring and sharing ideas to incubate new business ventures.
4.3	**Establish a Digital Youth Hub**	The city should establish an age-appropriate physical space for young people that is safe and multi-purpose with free and fast wireless connections, with the physical spaces designed in consultation with youth as a place to congregate, collaborate and create. It should include high-performance networks for gaming. It should promote education on the appropriate uses of social media, such as privacy, security and civility. The space should be run by youth under adult supervision and have the support of local schools to help young people build global connections, develop global perspectives, and, importantly, nurture ideas for creating new enterprises into the future. The space could be a part of the overall digital hub but have a particular focus on young people

	Action	Description
4.4	**Create and Foster a "Start-up Mount Gambier" Network**	Together with the Chamber of Commerce, the city should create and foster a network of individuals and businesses focused on technology-enabled growth. The network should meet regularly and draw in UniSA people together with business mentors. The network should act as a clearing house for access and knowledge about relevant state and federal government support programs and should help guide the development and evolution of a start-up community and innovation eco-system.
4.5	**Build Events to Create Deal Flow**	The city, together with its partners in the business community, "Start-up Mount Gambier" and UniSA, should attract and develop programs and events that build a culture of entrepreneurship into the eco-system. These events should build capacity and capability on how to build start-ups and how to create and grow technology enabled businesses. They should connect members of the community to each other, creating synergy and opportunity. Events could be in the form of networking, hackathons, pitch clubs, entrepreneurial learning programs, guest speakers and mentoring clubs.

Geraldton's Start-up and Innovation Hub

CityHive, run by Pollinators, is regional Australia's largest and longest-established co-working space operating from an inspiring heritage listed building on Geraldton's main street. CreativeHub has also been established in the main street of Geraldton, spread across two heritage buildings, as a new co-working space for creative industries.

All three buildings had been vacant for more than a decade before their regeneration as hubs for collaboration and the new economy. Around the buildings the city collaborated with artists, volunteers and retailers to fill spaces with urban art, pop-up shops and community gardens.

Pollinators is regional Australia's leading member-based organisation focused on growing innovations and entrepreneurship.

Members connect, collaborate and benefit from member perks while growing stronger communities. Members get access to regular events, online forums, newsletters and collaborative projects ranging from pop-up restaurants to festival

Pollinators offers a diverse mix of learning events and programs to members and the wider community. There's something for everyone: accelerators for high-growth commercial ventures, coding clubs for kids, and support for community organisations to be financially self-sustaining.

Pollinator programs respond to member and community needs, feature world-class experts and address topics ranging from strategy, marketing, peer mentoring, sustainability, leadership, technology and more.

Developing Channels

Mount Gambier will consistently engage the community, residents, visitors, potential visitors and audiences across the nation and beyond through exciting new digital channels. The city and its partners will explore innovative ways of creating dynamic online conversations with customers through digital channels.

Ubiquitous connectivity has opened multiple new channels.

The fact that nearly everyone is now connected via a digital device, be that a smart phone, GPS or wearable – has driven transformations in many areas of work and recreation. Foremost is the transformation that this connectivity has driven in the variety and velocity of channels to have a conversation with our customers. Mount Gambier has many different audiences such as:

1. Citizens transacting with the council or engaging with the cultural and economic life of the city

2. Visitors arriving in the city to engage in the cultural, retail or tourism economy

3. Potential visitors to the city who are planning a trip from Melbourne to Adelaide or return

Encouraging the Community to Engage

Online competitions that provide incentives in the way of prestige and recognition can be as effective as monetary rewards. One bushfire-affected region in Victoria engaged the community in bushfire recovery by establishing low cost smart-phone photo stations in accessible bushland recovery areas. The signage encouraged citizens and visitors to engage in active community recovery by taking a photo of the ever-changing bush vista and posting it on Twitter. The result after three years was thousands of photos taken from the same spot that could be transformed into compelling, digital content to share around the world.

4. Potential "tree or sea changer" migrants to the city from other states or countries

5. Potential investors in the city who are looking for investment opportunities in property or business establishment.

Prior to the digital disruption that we are now experiencing, Mount Gambier would have had narrow and few channels through which to engage each of these audiences. Further, the supply chain or value chain between Mount Gambier and each of these audience groups would have been complex, expensive and populated by intermediaries.

For example, attracting visitors to the city previously may have included travel agencies and high cost advertising on free to air television in target markets. Now, free content created by the community can be shared through multiple digital channels including apps, websites, social media and others.

New Channels Mean New Styles of Conversation

Previously, cities like Mount Gambier would have had a top down approach to developing marketing collateral and endeavoured to maximise the value and reach by working through intermediaries (eg advertising agencies, newspapers, tourism agencies or television stations) to inform target market customers.

Due to the ubiquitous nature of connectivity and new digital channels, the customer can now talk back– via platforms like *AirBNB, TripAdvisor* and *SnapSendSolve*. In the new digital channel

New channels are replacing physical visitor assets

- 63% of US travellers use Apps to discover new cities and what's on
- 57% of people commence researching a trip using their smart phone
- 90% of people use their smart phone to search for local information when travelling
- 86% of mobile time is spent in Apps
- 16 million Australians owned a smart phone in 2015

Source: Google Mobile Planet Australia 2015, ACMA and Flurry.

dominated world, they should be encouraged and incentivised to do so. New thinking about non-monetary "currencies of change" can drive more and more customers to interact with the city and in doing so create more compelling content at low cost.

New Channels Drive Expectations of Two Way Transparency

The emergence of customers able to engage in new channels and new conversations through smart devices has also driven the growth and expectation of two way transparency. Initially, through platforms like eBay in the early 2000s, where buyers could rate their seller and sellers could rate their buyer, digital consumers now expect to be able rate experiences and transactions in micro-survey form. Cities, retailers, tourism businesses and other organisations should encourage this and provide the necessary options on websites, platforms, apps and social media to do so. This two-way transparency will not only drive more shareable content creation but also improvement in service and experience quality.

Businesses and local government can employ simple strategies to encourage this behaviour. For example, a hotel operating in a remote mining town of Western Australia offered free beer to customers who wrote and returned with a TripAdvisor review of their premises. In doing do that hotel is now rated more often than any other regional hotel in the whole state.

With two-way transparency comes the need to act authentically when having a conversation with a customer through new digital

channels. Businesses and government seeking to exploit new channels to drive new customer engagement must develop a bias for two way conversation and migrate from old one way habits of delivering information.

New Markets Use Different Digital Channels

Mount Gambier's emerging visitor markets, such as China, may not be directly accessible via digital channels such as social media platforms that are popular in Australia. Specific content in languages other than English deployed via digital channels that are widely popular in China. *Sina Weibo* and *WeChat* are the most popular platforms in China but there is much more to it than that. Chinese social media is much more complex and fragmented than Australian business has come to terms with.

TASMANIA'S dated visitor information centres are set for a digital revamp in an overhaul of how the state deals with booming tourist numbers.

Visitors will be able to book, buy, download, recharge and talk with "local ambassadors" at new Visitor Experience Centres to replace the pre-digital information centres.

The new Visitor Experience Centres aim to become tourist attractions in their own right.

The strategy, a first for Australia, calls for an integrated digital platform and booking system which is "consistent and visitor-centric, not company or booking specific and not competing or conflicting with other platforms".

It says "a consistent brand and narrative should be available throughout the visitor journey."

Developed by the Department of State Growth and tourism bodies across Tasmania, the new approach has personal interactions at its heart.

"The personal interaction that the visitor has with Tasmania will be the story they tell when they return home. It will be the way they engage and experience the island, the first and the last memory they gather. It will be our core strength," the strategy says.

Proposed Actions

To progress this strategic priority action area, the city and its stakeholders should consider the following actions:

	Action	Description
5.1	**Refine Key Mount Gambier Websites**	The city's key websites should be refined and re-branded overtime with the brand values that Mount Gambier wants to promote to the world. The websites to be re-developed should include the council's main website, the Chamber of Commerce's website and an enhanced visitor information website. When redeveloping all websites – whether they are citizen focused or visitor focused – particular attention should be given to making them actively mobile device friendly.
5.2	**Implement Search Engine Optimisation & Re-Marketing**	The city should engage a high quality commercial partner to develop a Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) approach and an ongoing Adwords and Re-Marketing campaign. The city should use SEO, Adwords and Re-Marketing techniques to directly target potential visitors, migrants and investors in key areas.
5.3	**Develop Visitor App**	The city should work with its stakeholders in the tourism sector and engage a commercial partner to develop a visitor app for free download, marketed to potential visitors through SEO and re-marketing techniques. The app should encourage visitors to use the Mount Gambier Free Wi-Fi network in order to enable data collection and other re-marketing opportunities. The app should provide access to rich sets of content about the city and its attractions.

	Action	Description
5.4	**Establish Innovative Engagement Projects**	The city and its stakeholders should deploy an ongoing series of innovative digital engagement projects. An early project could include a smart-phone photo co-creation competition around the iconic Blue Lake. This project would encourage to create and share photos and/or videos of the changing colours of the Blue Lake, leaving a legacy of low cost but high value shareable digital content.
5.5	**Extend Online Council Services**	The city should focus on developing applications for council services. While citizens are likely to have a high usage of smartphones and notepads, services also must be available through a website for users without mobile technology. This would reduce the number of incoming calls and workload at the city's customer service and front desk. Prioritising the online-booking module of the city's core management system and deploying it to citizens in a mobile friendly way would be relatively low cost and low risk.
5.6	**Implement a Citizens Engagement Platform**	The city should invest in an innovative platform for direct citizen engagement and consultation. Rather than running one off consultations on specific issues – with the associated participant acquisition costs each time – the city should see online citizen engagement as a new "always on" utility channel. Geo-located data collected should be built on and used longitudinally to make better decisions about the city and its assets. Platforms such as *BangTheDrum*, *PlaceSpeak* and *SocialPinPoint* should be investigated against these criteria.
5.7	**Facilitate Engagement with New Market Social Media**	The city should work with the tourism sector to develop and disseminate an understanding of the online behaviours and the preferred online platforms of the key overseas target markets, including China. This understanding should draw on an analysis of tourist behaviour data.
5.8	**Select and Implement a "Whats On" Platform and App**	The city should investigate the selection and implementation of a platform and corresponding app that can be used by citizens, businesses, community groups, arts and cultural organisations and the council to promote and engage residents and visitors in events. Platforms and apps like *WhatsOnIn* and others which provide comprehensive data insights into who is doing what in the city should be considered so that the data can be used to inform event and promotions planning.

	Action	Description
5.9	**Re-imagine and redevelop Visitor Centres as 'digital first' channels to market**	The City should review its visitor centre assets and re-cast budgets to fund a growing digital channel to market. The re-imagined centres should establish a "digital first" approach that means every interaction with visitors and potential visitors prioritises digital channels before traditional channels.

Singleton in NSW has developed an App to Engage Visitors

For an investment of under $10,000, the small regional town of Singleton in the Hunter Valley now engages visitors and residents alike through a downloadable free App. Visit Singleton provides instant access to the best of this historic town, which is only 2 hours from Sydney and home to some of the best wine and food producers in Australia.

Designed for locals and visitors alike, find out where to eat, sleep and play.

How to Make Use of Chinese Social Media

While marketing through social media tends to have a lower profile than other channels in Australia, in China, engaging through social media is essential for connecting with customers and marketing your product.

Suggestions for using social media in China include:

- Use social networks to do your own consumer research by checking what customers are saying about products and brands.

- Always post content that is highly user-oriented and entirely authentic.

- Be willing to listen and learn from feedback. By doing so, you can modify your content and adapt it more towards your audience.

- Put your users centre stage and involve them through offering competitions, asking for views, input and ideas.

For more in-depth assistance and advice on marketing through Chinese social media there are a number of specialist Australian social media firms that can tailor content to the Chinese audience.

Making it Happen

Over the next 3 years the city will invest strategically in initiatives within budget capacity and will encourage the Mount Gambier community to co-invest appropriately.

Indicative Costings

Strategic investment in proposed actions and projects will incur both internal staff costs and external costs in suppliers and advisory in most cases. Some projects will have an ongoing recurrent cost in order to maintain or continue effort.

There is potential to reduce these costs to the City by engagement with external stakeholders, external grants and business community involvement.

All costs outlined in this table are estimates only. Final costing will be greatly affected by scope and scale of projects – further work will be required. These costing are designed largely to indicate relativity between projects and between internal and external effort required.

Proposed Action	Internal Staff Start-up Costs ('000)	External Start-up Costs ('000)	Estimated Recurrent Costs ('000)
1.1 Develop Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Network	$10-25	$25-50	<$10
1.2 Extend Free Wi-Fi Hotspots to Socially Disadvantaged Areas	$10-25	$25-50	<$10
1.3 Extend and Invest in Community Assets to Enable Digital Access Programs	$10-25	$25-50	<$10
1.4 Engage with NBN Co and Encourage Take Up	<$10	<$10	<$10

Proposed Action	Internal Staff Start-up Costs ('000)	External Start-up Costs ('000)	Estimated Recurrent Costs ('000)
1.5 Plan to exploit Mount Gambier's relative connectivity advantages	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
1.6 Strategically Plan to Create a Data Intensive Research Hub in Agribusiness	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
1.7 Strategically Plan to Attract Data Intensive Investment to the City	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
2.1 Extend Community Digital Literacy Programs	<$10	<$10	$50-100
2.2 Provide Training for Digital History	$25-50	<$10	$25-50
2.3 Facilitate Advice and Resources for Small Business	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
2.4 Provide Digital Leadership from Council	<$10	<$10	$100-150
2.5 Build Digital Communication and Branding	$25-50	$25-50	$10-25
3.1 Provide Council Open Data	$10-25	<$10	<$10
3.2 Develop Register of Businesses	$10-25	$10-25	<$10
3.3 Assemble Tourist Behaviour Data	$25-50	$25-50	<$10

Proposed Action	Internal Staff Start-up Costs ('000)	External Start-up Costs ('000)	Estimated Recurrent Costs ('000)
3.4 Assemble Foot Traffic Data	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
3.5 Extend Digitisation of History Resources	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
3.6 Assemble Content for Tourists	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
4.1 Establish an Innovation Eco-system	$25-50	$25-50	$10-20
4.2 Establish a Digital Innovation Hub	$10-20	$25-50	$10-20
4.3 Establish a Digital Youth Hub	$10-20	$10-20	$10-20
4.4 Create and Foster a "Start-up Mount Gambier" Network	$25-50	$10-20	$10-20
4.5 Build Events to Create Deal Flow	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
5.1 Redevelop Key Mount Gambier Websites	$25-50	$50-75	$25-50
5.2 Implement Search Engine Optimisation & Re-Marketing	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
5.3 Develop Visitor App	$25-50	$25-50	<$10

Proposed Action	Internal Staff Start-up Costs ('000)	External Start-up Costs ('000)	Estimated Recurrent Costs ('000)
5.4 Establish Innovative Engagement Projects	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
5.5 Extend Online Council Services	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
5.6 Implement a Citizens Engagement Platform	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
5.7 Facilitate Engagement with New Market Social Media	$25-50	$25-50	$25-50
5.8 Select and Implement a "Whats On" Platform and App	$25-50	$25-50	<$10
5.9 Re-imagine and redevelop Visitor Centres as 'digital first' channels to market	$50-100	$100	$100 (re-cast existing visitor centre budgets)

Prioritising the Proposed Actions

Over the next three years, the city and the Mount Gambier community should implement projects and initiatives strategically, commencing with the "no brainers" and "low hanging fruit" in order to create high profile demonstration to the wider community.

The first step for the City to take should be to attract a digital specialist leader to work in Council. This person will be a leader in digital but also understand how to co-ordinate, facilitate and collaborate with others in Council and in the broader community to get things done. Recruitment of this position should begin immediately and responsibility for the overall implementation of actions resulting from this report should be given to this position.
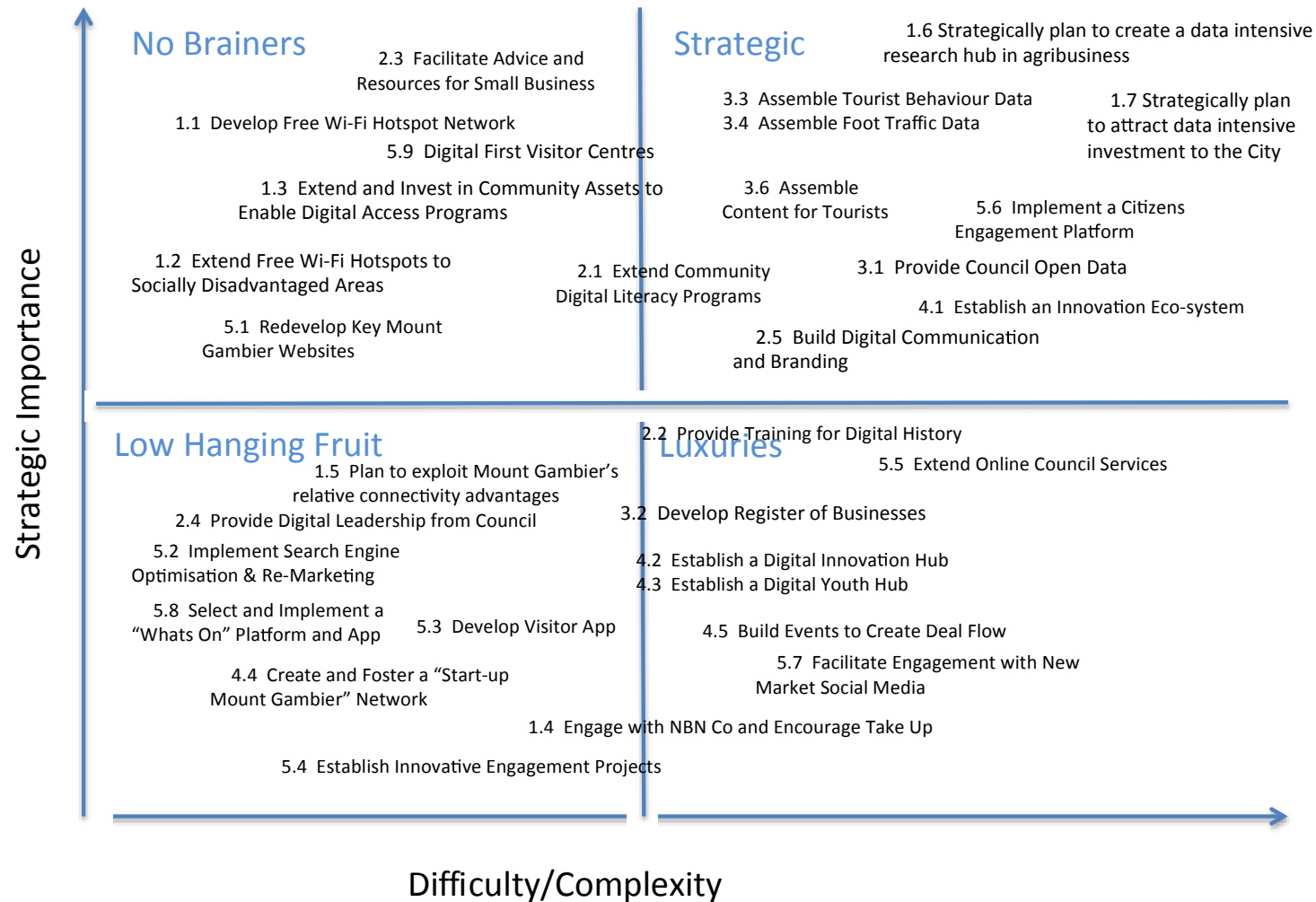
No Brainers

2.3 Facilitate Advice and Resources for Small Business

1.1 Develop Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Network

5.9 Digital First Visitor Centres

1.3 Extend and Invest in Community Assets to Enable Digital Access Programs

1.2 Extend Free Wi-Fi Hotspots to Socially Disadvantaged Areas

5.1 Redevelop Key Mount Gambier Websites

Strategic

1.6 Strategically plan to create a data intensive research hub in agribusiness

3.3 Assemble Tourist Behaviour Data
3.4 Assemble Foot Traffic Data

1.7 Strategically plan to attract data intensive investment to the City

3.6 Assemble Content for Tourists

5.6 Implement a Citizens Engagement Platform

2.1 Extend Community Digital Literacy Programs

3.1 Provide Council Open Data

4.1 Establish an Innovation Eco-system

2.5 Build Digital Communication and Branding

Low Hanging Fruit

1.5 Plan to exploit Mount Gambier's relative connectivity advantages

2.4 Provide Digital Leadership from Council

5.2 Implement Search Engine Optimisation & Re-Marketing

5.8 Select and Implement a "Whats On" Platform and App

5.3 Develop Visitor App

4.4 Create and Foster a "Start-up Mount Gambier" Network

Luxuries

2.2 Provide Training for Digital History

5.5 Extend Online Council Services

3.2 Develop Register of Businesses

4.2 Establish a Digital Innovation Hub
4.3 Establish a Digital Youth Hub

4.5 Build Events to Create Deal Flow

5.7 Facilitate Engagement with New Market Social Media

1.4 Engage with NBN Co and Encourage Take Up

5.4 Establish Innovative Engagement Projects

Strategic Importance (vertical axis)

Difficulty/Complexity (horizontal axis)

Figure 3: Strategic Project Prioritisation Matrix

Appendix A: List of Parties Consulted

Explor Consulting undertook an extensive set of conversations with community leaders and business representatives including the following:

Elected Members of the City of Mount Gambier

Tourism Industry Development Manager (Limestone Coast LGA) - Tourism

UNISA - Education

SX Asset Management - Retail Sector

Colliers - Retail Sector

The Border Watch - Media

Boandik Lodge - Aged Care

Mount Gambier Hospital

Tennison Woods College (Education)

Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce

SA Education (South East) - Education

Education Department (Education)

Tourism Mount Gambier Board Member - Hospitality/ Tourism

Representatives from: UniSA IT Department, AARNet and the South Australian Government.

Youth included: Cameron, Evan, Drew, Rayden, Callum, Alex and Brendon.

Council Staff included:

CEO

Director-Operational Services

Director-Corporate Services

Records and IT Team Leader

Manager Community Services and Development

Library Manager

Economic Development Coordinator

Economic Development Manager/Consultant