

# DIGITAL INCLUSION PLANNING TOOLKIT



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We are inspired by this tradition in our work to share and preserve Queensland's memory for future generations.

## **Contributions**

This toolkit draws on previous digital inclusion research by the Digital Media Research Centre at QUT and the contributions of public library and Indigenous Knowledge Centre staff and stakeholders involved in the digital inclusion roundtable at the Future Libraries: Better Communities Stakeholder Symposium held at State Library of Queensland in 2023.

## **Copyright**

Content from this publication should be attributed as: State Library of Queensland Digital Inclusion Planning Toolkit. This report is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute the Library Board of Queensland. To view a copy of this licence, visit [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

This version published January 2024.

## **Contact**

Digital Inclusion Team, State Library of Queensland  
[digitalinclusion@slq.qld.gov.au](mailto:digitalinclusion@slq.qld.gov.au)

**Toolkit prepared by:** Dr Kim Osman, Dr Aimee Hourigan & Professor Michael Dezuanni



Digital Media Research Centre  
Queensland University of Technology  
Kelvin Grove, QLD 4059 Australia

[dmrc@qut.edu.au](mailto:dmrc@qut.edu.au)  
[research.qut.edu.au/dmrc](https://research.qut.edu.au/dmrc)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

**04**

**Introduction**

**11**

**Fostering Local Partnerships**

**05**

**About This Toolkit**

**13**

**Increasing Community Participation**

**06**

**Mapping the Inclusion Needs of Your  
Community**

**15**

**Responding to Change**

**08**

**Developing your Digital Inclusion Plan**

**17**

**Template**

**09**

**Designing Local Digital Strategies with  
Council**

**18**

**Resources**

# INTRODUCTION

---

Queensland public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) are invaluable community digital inclusion hubs. They are vital places of connection in the community, especially for people who may not have access to digital devices and connections at home.

To make Queensland truly an inclusive and connected state with opportunities for everyone to enjoy the benefits of a digitally-enabled economy, ensuring Queenslanders are digitally included is essential. Public libraries and IKCs are key to making sure that as we move ahead in the digital economy, no one is left behind.



In fact, it might be the case that digital inclusion is already a key focus for your library or IKC. You may spend time supporting members of the community to undertake digital tasks, helping them to access online services, and use digital technologies. You may also involve them in specific programs that give them the skills to use digital devices in new and exciting ways.

Whatever the case may be, digital inclusion is about more than programming or ad-hoc support; it's about embedding the possibility of gaining and maintaining individuals' digital capabilities within everyday business processes. Digital inclusion is for everyone and, as such, requires the involvement and investment of multiple stakeholders to be supported and achieved.

This strategic toolkit has therefore been created to help you develop a tailored Digital Inclusion Plan that will assist you to strengthen and grow the types of digital inclusion support and services your library or IKC provides. The toolkit uses a series of questions and reflections that will help you develop and assess your plan by guiding you to think about what being digitally included means for people in your community.

# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

---

This toolkit was created in response to an evaluation of the State Library of Queensland's digital inclusion programming (2016-2022), and further to the release of the Queensland Government's Digital Economy Strategy Action Plan (in which libraries and IKCs were highlighted as key sites of implementation for digital inclusion interventions and support).

The evaluation proposed four key recommendations regarding the immediate and future actions libraries and IKCs must take to support and strengthen digital inclusion in their communities:

## Local Strategies

**Public libraries and IKCs should be encouraged to develop long-term local digital inclusion strategies in collaboration with council staff.**

## Local Partnerships

**Local partnerships need to be fostered among broader public and private services to support long-term infrastructure investments that improved digital inclusion.**

## Increase Participation

**Digital inclusion programming needs to target a variety of participants and connect with disengaged and marginalised populations through outreach programs and partnerships.**

## Respond to Change

**Library resources and programming - including staffing capacity - needs to respond to evolving digital skills gaps among both staff and the community.**

Building on these recommendations, this toolkit guides library and IKC staff to develop a local, place-based approach, to support their council to address or improve digital inclusion in their community. Developing a local, place-based approach to digital inclusion builds on the existing trust and confidence between community members, libraries and IKCs as integral providers of access, inclusion, and support within the community. These approaches also seek to respond to the new and expanding challenges present within communities, such as the growing inequities presented by the cost of living crisis and the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Overall, the various components of the toolkit - including the auditing tool and action plan template - will prompt libraries and IKCs to consider the context specifics of their community, and to ensure that their digital inclusion plans are responsive to and further situated within the everyday experiences of community members.

# MAPPING THE INCLUSION NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

---

## Using the Digital Inclusion Audit Tool (DIAT)

Before developing your Digital Inclusion Plan, it's important to understand your community's current experiences, capabilities, needs, and desires. This includes experiences relating to digital technology, like what access people in your community have to varied and affordable digital devices, but also their experiences in other aspects, such as social concerns relating to health and education.

To help you gather this information, we've created the Digital Inclusion Audit Tool, or DIAT. The DIAT is broken into three parts:

### COMMUNITY AUDIT

Gathering information about social and technological factors, like education, health, employment, and connectivity, to get a sense of the current social and digital inclusion gaps, needs, and concerns within your community.

### LIBRARY ASSETS AND TEAM AUDIT

Identifying the current steps or actions towards digital inclusion being made by your library or IKC and to understand and identify future priority areas.

### LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS AUDIT

Establishing which other organisations and services within your community are providing digital inclusion support and identifying possibilities for future meaningful and impactful collaborations.





**You can access the DIAT through the Public Library Connect website on the Digital Inclusion page.**

You will need to work through and answer the different prompts within the DIAT first before moving on to other sections of your Plan.

This is because the information you collect through the DIAT serves as a foundation to your Digital Inclusion Plan; it helps give you a baseline to work from as you start to think about what actions or initiatives you'll need to take to address the different digital inclusion concerns or needs within your community.

As you work through the remaining sections of this document, try to keep the DIAT close by so that you can continue to reflect on this baseline information as you move ahead.

Other potentially relevant or useful sources that could also help you map the digital inclusion needs of your community are listed in the Resources section of this document.



# DEVELOPING YOUR DIGITAL INCLUSION PLAN

---

Now that you have completed the mapping exercise using the DIAT, you are ready to start developing a Digital Inclusion Plan for your public library service or IKC. Creating this Plan will help you to identify priorities for your library or IKC and help you to think about how you can work to address the identified digital inclusion issues within your community.

## Creating a Mission Statement

To begin, it's helpful to think about why you are embarking on this journey towards supporting digital inclusion in your community. While the DIAT will have helped you to identify specific technology gaps or areas of need, it's also useful to think about the wider end goal or collective vision you (and your team) have for what digital inclusion could look like in your community. To create a vision or mission statement for your Plan, think about:



- Why is digital inclusion important to your community? If you do nothing, what does the future of your community look like?
- What value will this Plan have in helping to avoid further digital exclusion for your community?
- Who is this Plan for? Who does it ultimately benefit or serve?

You might like to write your responses to these questions out as a single compelling statement that can serve as a reminder of your end goal as you work to complete the various components of your Digital Inclusion Plan.

Once you've thought about your overarching objectives or aspirations for your Digital Inclusion Plan, you can then move on to considering the partners required for developing and implementing strategies to improve digital inclusion in your community.



# DESIGNING LOCAL DIGITAL STRATEGIES WITH COUNCIL

---

Developing a strategic and meaningful Digital Inclusion Plan for your public library service or IKC necessarily requires you to consider what other plans or strategies towards digital and social inclusion are already being implemented by key stakeholders within your community. In particular, you will need to consider how your local council is working to address digital inclusion, as the primary stakeholder responsible for providing essential services and infrastructure like digital technologies to your community.

It might be the case that the local council within your community is not currently working on any digital inclusion related strategies or action plans. Alternatively, your council might be actively invested in addressing digital inclusion but have little awareness of the growing digital demands you and your library or IKC are experiencing.



A key part of your Digital Inclusion Plan therefore needs to include how you will work with the local council to design, advocate for, and advance wider local digital inclusion strategies. As you start to think about how you will address this within your Plan, ask yourself:



- What existing plans or strategies developed by the local council and relating to digital inclusion are there for your community?
- How will your Digital Inclusion Plan align with these existing plans or strategies?
- What types of new initiatives or strategies between your library or IKC and the local council might be needed to further meet the digital needs of the community?
- What resources are needed and how can the local council specifically help to give/fund/provide these resources?

Action	Justification	Stakeholders	Resources	Success Metric
Involve local Council in designing a community-wide digital strategy	There are many complex infrastructural issues relating to digital inclusion in the community - such as poor connectivity - that Council need to take responsibility for and address.	Local council (maybe specific departments like business or infrastructure)	Funding (maybe community grant or long-term development funding)	Launch and dissemination of plan; actioning of strategy by local council; longer-term funding and support from council for library or IKC initiatives

The goal posts of digital inclusion are constantly changing, as new technologies emerge and community services increasingly become 'digital first'. As you're developing your Plan, you'll need to consider how often you'll return to check whether your outlined actions and goals still align with community needs. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, and to make sure that your Plan remains responsive, think about:



**How long is this Plan for?**  
**When will it be reviewed and revised?**

In the next section, you'll be prompted to consider how you can establish or foster partnerships with other organisations or local groups who can help to support or implement your Digital Inclusion Plan.



# FOSTERING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

---

Having strong local partnerships is a key part of how you will implement or action your Digital Inclusion Plan. As you might have found as you were using the DIAT, there are likely some areas of digital inclusion support or need within your community that your public library service or IKC will not be able to directly address.



Establishing strong and targeted partnerships can therefore help you to access additional or new resources or help you to refine or expand the types of services and programs you're able to offer to your community. Partnerships can also help you to connect with new audiences or user groups and can support community capacity building through existing social connections and trust. Perhaps most importantly, successful partnerships help to reinforce your shared vision for digital inclusion for your community.

To establish partnerships with local stakeholders in your community, ask yourself:



- Building on the mapping work you did as part of Step 3 in the DIAT, which of the listed organisations can offer you the greatest assistance or support to implement your Digital Inclusion Plan?
- What roles and responsibilities would each partner (your library or IKC included) have within the Digital Inclusion Plan? For instance, who would oversee project logistics? Sourcing funds? Marketing and communication? Measuring and evaluating impact?
- What reciprocal value would a partner gain from being involved in your Digital Inclusion Plan? What might their expectations for collaboration look like?

Action	Justification	Stakeholders	Resources	Success Metric
Partner with a local multicultural association	As shown through the DIAT, nearly 20% of people in the community speak a language other than English at home and there is a need to create digital resources within the library or IKC that better respond to the needs of these diverse groups.	Local multicultural association and/or a local community-led cultural groups.	Time, legal clearance, and potentially financial support to establish the partnership.	Establishing the partnership and seeing an increase in the number of CALD community members coming in to access digital resources within the library or IKC.

Evaluating the impact or effectiveness of your partnerships can come in many forms and will be responsive to the organisation you're partnering with and what type of partnership you will have with them. During the initial stages of establishing the partnership, you should dedicate some time to thinking about what information or data you and your partner will need to collect to measure or demonstrate that the partnership is effective and helps to strengthen digital inclusion in your community. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, think about:



### How will you monitor, evaluate, and communicate the impact of your partnerships?

In the next section, you will identify the target groups who will be supported through your Digital Inclusion Plan and further look for ways to increase the wider social inclusion, participation, and engagement of these groups within the library or IKC and the community.

# INCREASING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

---

Digital inclusion is for everyone and the types of support you offer within your public library service or IKC need to target and address the needs of a variety of community members. While some groups may be highly digitally included in your community, there are many others who are increasingly disengaged, marginalised, or otherwise excluded.

A key part of your Digital Inclusion Plan is therefore thinking about how you can seek out key cohorts to engage in library or IKC services to further support digital inclusion and digital equity within your community. You'll need to consider how you are engaging with these cohorts, and the ways you are designing specific initiatives or programs to respond to their interests, capabilities, experiences, and needs.

In thinking about how you reach and support individuals within your community, you also have an opportunity to consider how you can design and implement programs or activities which additionally respond to wider social demands and inclusion goals. For instance, you might spend time reflecting on how your digital inclusion actions support the wider inclusion needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals within your community and further how these actions contribute to advancing other national targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (such as those outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap).



To complete this section of the Plan, ask yourself:



- Who do you seek to support? What specific group/s will you target or prioritise within your Digital Inclusion Plan?
- How will your Plan account for and respond to the existing views, values, and experiences of this group/s? For instance, what levels of support does this group/s currently have in the community? Are there other threshold barriers that need to be addressed for the group/s first before targeting digital inclusion?
- How will you connect with/reach your target group/s?

Action	Justification	Stakeholders	Resources	Success Metric
Implementing a digital skills program for school leavers	From the DIAT, only a small portion of the community complete Year 12, moving into apprenticeships or other vocational employment positions.	Local schools and education providers; Council; local, regional, or state education departments and agencies; families and school leavers	Financial support from local or regional education departments and agencies; venue and schedule for implementing the program, accessible learning material; program facilitator; promotional material and recruitment support from local schools and education providers	Active sign up and participation by school leavers in the program; high completion rates of program; positive feedback

As we've discussed previously, your Digital Inclusion Plan must remain responsive to the changing or expanding needs of your community. Creating pathways for community feedback throughout the design and implementation of your Plan further strengthens its values as a place-based strategic approach to digital inclusion. Beyond gathering basic feedback, incorporating avenues for community listening and more layered forms of participation again strengthens the wider social responsiveness of your Plan. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, think about:



**How will you involve members of the community, such as your target group/s, in the planning and implementation of your Digital Inclusion Plan?**

In the next section, you will identify the target groups who will be supported through your Digital Inclusion Plan and further look for ways to increase the wider social inclusion, participation, and engagement of these groups within the library or IKC and the community.



# RESPONDING TO CHANGE

---



Future-proofing digital inclusion in your community requires consideration for how your Plan addresses the short-term needs of your community whilst also remaining flexible and adaptable to the community needs or situations that may arise 'down the road'. Crucially, library and IKC resources and programming—including staffing capacity—need to respond to the evolving digital skill gaps that exist between both staff and the community.

Increasing the digital skills and capabilities of your library and IKC staff strengthens the ways in which your public library service or IKC can continue to support individuals within your community, and further how library and IKC staff can help individuals to increase their own levels of confidence and self-efficacy in using digital technologies. These future-facing actions may also help to break long-term cycles of exclusion and disadvantage that continue to limit the levels of

social and digital inclusion that key groups of individuals within your community can experience.

As you consider the ways that your Plan will respond to or embrace future trends and opportunities presented by digital technologies, ask yourself:



- How will you plan for sustainability? For instance, what will you need to do to continue to build the digital skills capability of your staff in both the short and long term?
- What are some future trends or scenarios that might impact or challenge digital inclusion in your community?
- How does your Plan account for these trends?

Action	Justification	Stakeholders	Resources	Success Metric
Building the digital skills capacity of IKC staff	Ongoing skills support is in high demand in IKCs, particularly for project officers who provide direct support to the community	IKC staff, incl. project officers; skills training provider; State Library; Good Things Foundation	Digital skills learning program (freely available from Good Things Foundation); venues; digital resources (such as laptops or other devices to learn on/about); access to digital platforms like Zoom for virtual learning	Increase in self-expressed confidence levels of staff; new programs that feature more complex digital skills; less enquiries about digital skills help (flow on effect for community)

Future-proofing your Digital Inclusion Plan also depends on the processes of monitoring and evaluation that are embedded throughout your planning journey. Part of this may involve considering how you can share your learnings and practices with other libraries or IKCs within your region and across the state more broadly. Whilst your Plan is place-based and responds to the needs of your community, accessing existing models or strategies designed by other libraries and IKCs can help to streamline the planning process and reduce the need for you to 'reinvent the wheel'. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, think about:



**What documentation are you gathering of your processes? How are you contributing to a wider community of practice for libraries and IKCs across Queensland?**

# TEMPLATE

The following template guides you to write out the specific actions that form the basis of your Digital Inclusion Plan. The template is split into the four overarching priority areas, with columns for identifying why an action is needed (Justification), who will need to be involved or responsible for that action (Stakeholders), what resources will be needed to achieve that action (Resources), and consideration for what successfully achieving that action will look like (Success Metric).

ACTION	JUSTIFICATION	STAKEHOLDERS	RESOURCES	SUCCESS METRIC
LOCAL STRATEGIES				
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS				
INCREASING PARTICIPATION				
RESPONDING TO CHANGE				

# RESOURCES

---

<https://accan.org.au/>

<https://accc.gov.au/consumers/telecommunications-and-internet/broadband-performance-data>

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/industry/queensland-innovation-precincts-and-places-fund>

<https://austintexas.gov/page/digital-inclusion-strategic-plan>

<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/young-mentors>

<https://birraus.com/regional-connectivity-program/>

<https://digitalinclusion.org.au>

<https://digitalinclusionkit.org/>

<https://infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/internet/regional-connectivity-program>

<https://longbeach.gov/globalassets/ti/media-library/documents/digital-inclusion/resources/long-beach-digital-inclusion-roadmap-july-2021>

<https://qcross.org.au/data/community-profiles/>

<https://regionaltechhub.org.au/https://statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles>

<https://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/business/regional-innovation/icf/digital-inclusion>

