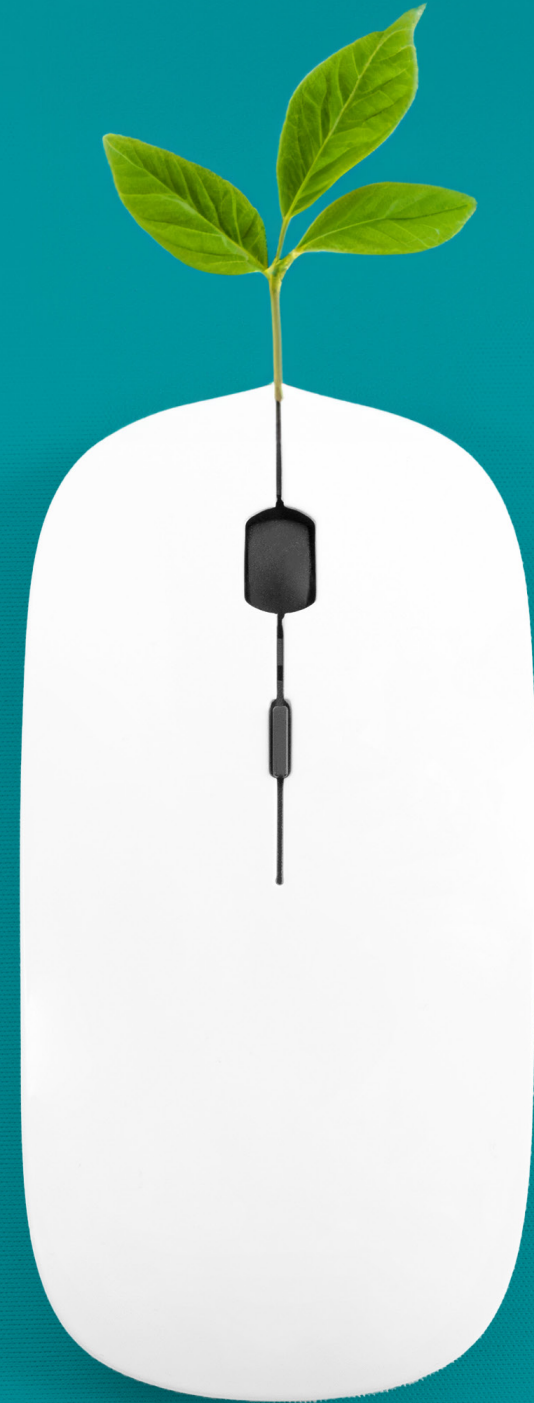


# CIVICA

{ Empowering public  
services: a greener,  
smarter tech future



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## Executive Summary

from Brett Barningham, Managing Director, Local Government and Social Housing, Civica APAC.

The digital and technological transformation of the Australian public sector is crucial for making Australia more productive and responsive to community needs. It's also a way to address resource shortages. We shouldn't miss out on this crucial opportunity to pave the way for our future. By investing in technology, IT skills, and change management in our local government areas, we can supercharge our recovery.

In this document, we take a deep dive into the challenges local councils face as they navigate the complex world of harnessing the potential of public sector data, promoting sustainability, and supporting their diverse communities in the digital age. These challenges include not only achieving carbon neutrality goals but also seamlessly integrating new technologies and data management into existing business processes. The document also emphasises the crucial role of data-driven decision-making as councils make complex choices to promote sustainable development.

We've gathered insights from council representatives at the recent PSN roadshows, from Perth in Australia to Auckland in New Zealand. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of the specific challenges and concerns related to technology needs. These perspectives highlight the wide range of obstacles councils encounter, from limited resources and community engagement difficulties to the complexities of policy implementation and adapting to new technology.

It's clear that a strategic and comprehensive approach is essential for councils to effectively promote sustainability, enhance community engagement, and advance their ambitious agendas. Addressing these significant challenges is not just a practical necessity; it's also a visionary imperative. Local councils have a critical role in shaping a greener and more sustainable future for their communities. Therefore, successfully overcoming these challenges will be a true test of councils' commitment and ability to usher in a new era of responsible and forward-thinking governance.



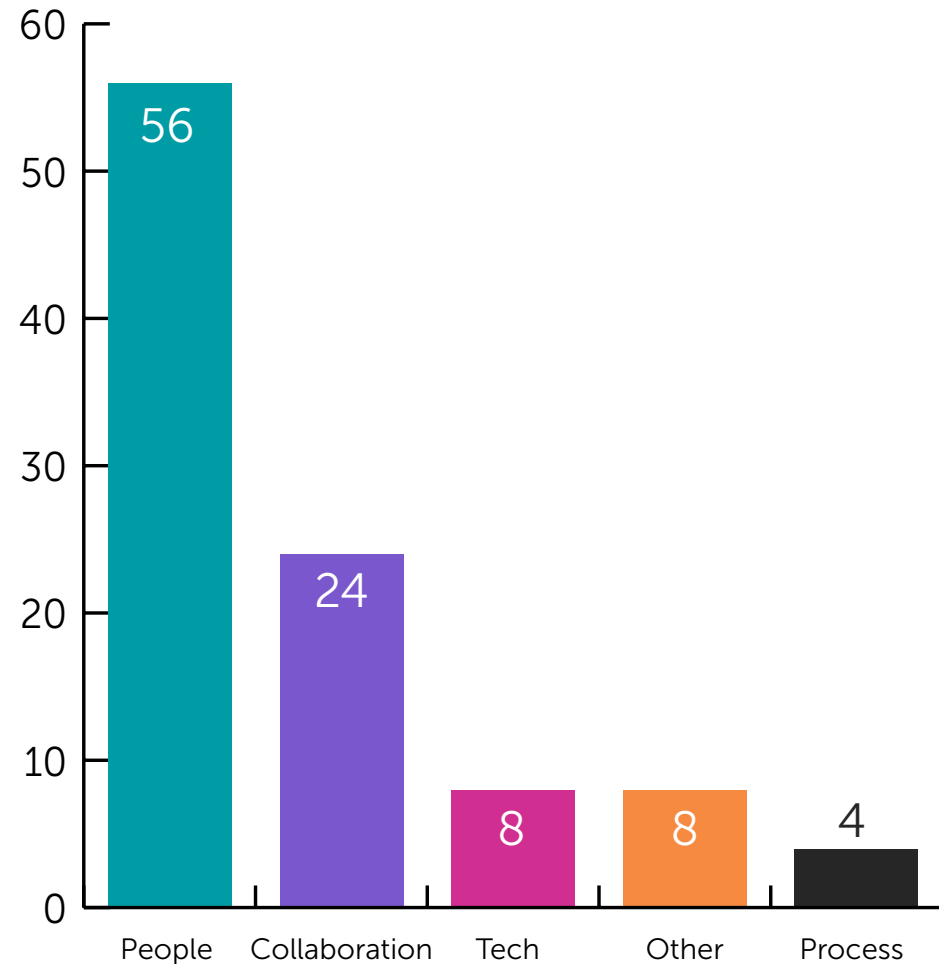
## Insights from Public Sector Network (PSN) roadshows\*

### Council's Greatest Strengths

The future is challenging but local governments can count on their people and collaboration.

However, it is crucial for local governments to embrace clear strategy to leverage technology to revolutionise their processes and interactions with citizens.

Council's greatest strengths to meet the challenges of the future.



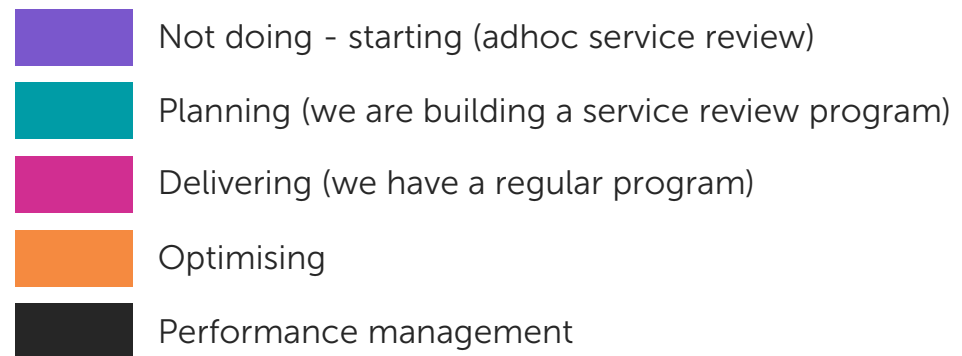
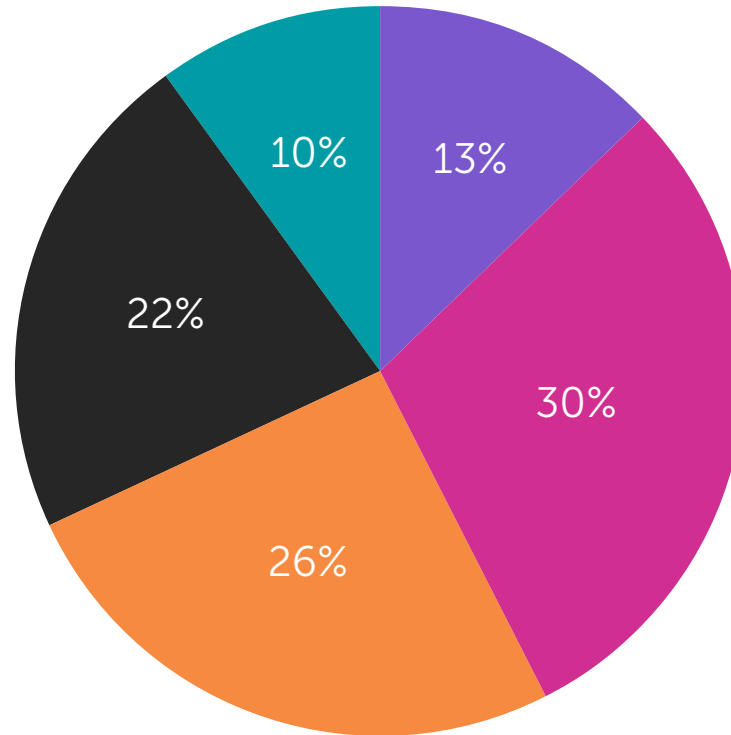
\*Statistics collected at the Public Sector Network Roadshows from local councils' representatives in Perth, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Auckland and Melbourne.



## Service Optimisation

How would you describe your organisation  
capability to review and optimise service?

75% of councils  
interrogated  
regularly review  
and optimise  
services



## Council's top priorities

Council's top priorities for the next 12-24 months is to invest in new tech & digital services, as well as upskilling the workforce to use these technologies.



Advancing workplace culture and upskilling the workforce

39%



Investing in new tech & digital services

28%



Building resiliency & improving business continuity plans

19%

Top priorities for the next 12-24 months

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Drawing from the insights gathered during the PSN Roadshow and Conference 2023, Civica highlights the importance of leveraging technology to build resilient systems that facilitate open and inclusive dialogue. Local councils are facing multiple challenges including natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and economic issues.

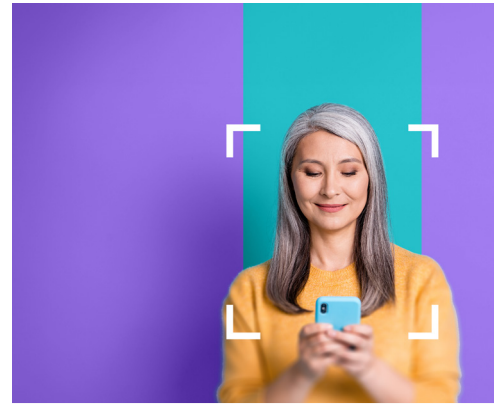
In four perspective pieces, we discuss strategies such as leveraging social media platforms for public outreach, utilising digital tools to enhance citizen participation in decision-making processes, and employing data analytics to gain insights into public sentiment:



Resilience in local  
government



The cost of climate  
change



Data management  
and reporting



Bridging the digital  
divide

## { Resilience in Local Government:

Navigating the changing landscape  
of Digital Media, Citizen and  
Political Engagement





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Digital Media has revolutionised the way we interact, consume information, and engage with political processes. With 59% of the world population actively using social media platforms, its impact on political engagement can't be ignored.

Technology has transformed the dynamics of political engagement by providing citizens with unprecedented access to information, facilitating communication, and fostering community connections. It is crucial for local governments to recognise this shift and embrace digital media including social media. By harnessing the right data and leveraging key insights, local governments have the potential to revolutionise their interactions with citizens, anticipate future community needs, and even proactively identify and assist vulnerable individuals.

It's imperative to empower communities and transfer some accountability to foster resilience. Often, leaders in local government hesitate to encourage community action due to perceived pitfalls. However, numerous examples exist, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to the ongoing natural disasters, where community members have reached out to their councils seeking assistance in overcoming barriers and making tangible positive changes. This power of community-driven action can be incredibly influential, enabling swift and effective resolution of issues. Civica Customers and local councils demonstrated resilience over the pandemic, the floods and embracing tech and e-services helped them served their community better.





## { Lismore City Council:

### Navigating the Aftermath of a Devastating Flood

Lismore City Council encountered an unprecedented challenge when a rare and severe flood event, occurring only once in a century, ravaged the region, causing substantial damage to council assets and infrastructure and affected 13% of the local homes. The aftermath of the flood was further compounded by the impact on over 4000 local businesses and the collection of a staggering 70,000 tonnes of flood waste, resulting in the disruption of essential infrastructure. Nonetheless, the council demonstrated remarkable resilience in their response, prioritising effective communication through social media channels to keep citizens well-informed, coordinate relief efforts, and facilitate the recovery process.

However, the council could have significantly benefited from a cloud-based system, which would have provided a clear advantage. By storing their data in the cloud, council employees would have enjoyed unrestricted access to information from any location, ensuring uninterrupted operations throughout the crisis. This advantage was exemplified by Ballina council, which promptly migrated their data to the cloud in the aftermath of the floods, enabling ease of access and becoming a crucial outcome derived from their experience with the disaster.

The aftermath of the flood was further compounded by the impact on over 4000 local businesses and the collection of a staggering 70,000 tonnes of flood waste, resulting in the disruption of essential infrastructure.







## { Melton City Council:

### Embracing Connection through E-Services

Embracing the transformative potential of digital connectivity, Melton City Council, a Civica customer, embarked on an impressive initiative in December 2019 by introducing an advanced e-services platform and a dedicated Community Portal. However, the council astutely identified two specific cohorts that exhibited low rates of adoption: the elderly population and individuals with disabilities. These communities necessitated a customised approach to address their unique needs and challenges.

Melton City Council exemplified the power of personalised engagement in overcoming the digital divide and cultivating resilience. They took proactive measures by providing in-person training sessions, ensuring that individuals from these cohorts received hands-on assistance in navigating the digital realm. Moreover, the council maintained regular connections with the community, fostering ongoing support and open channels of communication to promote accessibility and empower these individuals. By tailoring their efforts to cater to the specific requirements of these communities, Melton City Council illustrated the true essence of bridging the digital gap and nurturing resilience.

The council astutely identified two specific cohorts that exhibited low rates of adoption: the elderly population and individuals with disabilities.

## { Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries:

### Supporting the Elderly during the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries; a Civica Spydus customer identified the elderly as the most vulnerable cohort within the community. Leveraging data, the libraries initiated “caring calls” to over 8,000 members over the age of 70, offering support, tech assistance, and even book deliveries. This exemplifies how local government institutions can utilise social media insights and personalised outreach to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations.



In an era dominated by digital media, local governments must prioritise resilience and adaptability to effectively engage with citizens. By embracing the power of social media platforms and delivering personalised experiences, local government bodies can enhance their ability to connect with communities, respond to crises, and build stronger, more resilient societies. The case studies presented from Lismore City Council, Melton City Council, and Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries serve as valuable examples for local governments seeking to navigate the changing landscape of social media and citizen engagement with resilience.



The future will undoubtedly see increased digitalisation of services and we need to keep up with rapid advances and demand.

This will all help us achieve the ultimate goal of working with the community, not for them – providing what's really needed and improving local lives. By understanding this need for engagement, local government bodies can leverage technology including social media platforms to create targeted and relevant content that resonates with their constituents, resulting in increased trust and satisfaction. If we make these conversations trustworthy, meaningful, and really listen to our communities, we can deliver genuine, impactful change.

Overall, the integration of digital media into political engagement, along with the empowerment of communities, represents a paradigm shift that local governments should embrace. By doing so, they can unlock a plethora of opportunities to enhance citizen engagement, address pressing challenges, and ultimately create a more resilient and prosperous society.

## { Unlocking Sustainable Transformation:

Navigating the cost of climate change





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Public consciousness around climate change has been gathering pace for years. Governments worldwide have committed to carbon neutrality agreements such as the Paris Agreement and COP, and public and private sector organisations have followed suit, by outlining their own ambitions to make a difference for people and planet. However, many organisations struggle to accurately assess their carbon footprint and lack credible plans to achieve neutrality. Coupled with increasing public awareness of greenwashing and vague commitments, it is imperative for the public sector to translate their ambitions into tangible green actions.

Many organisations struggle to accurately assess their carbon footprint and lack credible plans to achieve neutrality.







## { The Challenge of Achieving Carbon Neutrality

Local councils with ever tighter budgets face the formidable task of achieving carbon neutrality whilst at the same time delivering critical public services for citizens. Striking a delicate balance between environmental objectives and economic considerations presents a multifaceted challenge that requires the pursuit of innovative solutions.

Councils often encounter difficulties in harmonising sustainability strategies with existing business models due to various constraints, a lack of technology, tools and innovation, and conflicting financial priorities.

Overcoming these barriers requires adopting a more comprehensive approach that fully embraces sustainability across all aspects of council operations. Additionally, local councils are compelled to implement greener services and initiatives without having a significant say in the legislative process, which is primarily governed by federal and state entities. This is particularly evident in the domain of waste management, where local councils have exclusive responsibility.





## { Empowering Resilient and Agile Supply Chains



In the era of modern supply chains, surpassing traditional resilience and recovery capabilities is essential. Through the strategic utilisation of streamlined processes and cutting-edge technologies, local governments and organisations can anticipate, prepare for, and respond to future risks and opportunities. With, climate-related extreme-weather events likely to become ever more common, the pivotal role of digital transformation and Industry 4.0 technologies becomes evident in optimising supply chain planning, data utilisation, supplier diversification, and the implementation of buffers.

Civica's Recover stands out as an industry-leading disaster management system that provides unwavering support to local and state governments in their recovery efforts, aligning with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). By accurately documenting and showcasing the restoration process of vital public assets, Recover empowers organisations to navigate the challenges that arise in the aftermath of an event. The comprehensive data captured through Recover serves as a valuable resource during the claims process, enabling councils to clearly articulate the extent of deterioration or loss incurred by public assets.

With a well-defined plan and unwavering agility, the technology sector stands ready to bolster local governments and organisations in their quest for greater resilience. By embracing these advancements, they can fortify their supply chains and confidently navigate the ever-changing landscape of challenges and opportunities.





## { Harnessing Technology for Social Housing

As a global provider of GovTech, we are keenly aware of the power of technology. AI-assisted technologies, Housing management systems such as Civica's Cx Housing, connected devices, and machine learning are becoming increasingly relevant for leaders in the housing sector. Leveraging these technological advancements can lead to more sustainable and efficient housing solutions. In a recent Civica survey, as part of our latest [Greener homes, Connected communities](#) [Changing Landscape](#) report, leaders across housing agreed – with more than 90% stating that AI assisted technologies, connected devices and machine learning would be more and more relevant in the future.







## { Driving Green Investments

Councils can prioritise green options and support local suppliers through procurement policies and investments. By prioritising green investments, councils can attract and retain staff, particularly the younger generation that is deeply concerned about climate change and animal welfare.

One way of doing this is by recognising the value of trees as crucial assets. By doing so councils can also align planning strategies with tree planting and canopy renewal or replacement initiatives. Exploring assistance programs for tree preservation on private properties, like initiatives in Queensland, can foster a healthier and more vibrant tree population. Civica's Arborsafe offers systematic and professional consulting arboriculture services to communities. This service effectively manages trees and promotes a healthier, long-lasting tree population, contributing to a cleaner climate.

As the urgency to address climate change intensifies, the public sector must rise to the challenge of transforming intentions into impactful actions. By integrating sustainability strategies, embracing technological advancements, prioritising green investments, and leveraging innovative solutions like Civica's Arborsafe and Recover, councils can make significant strides towards a sustainable and resilient future. Together, we can navigate the cost of climate change and pave the way for a cleaner and brighter world.





# { Data Revolution

Unleashing the Power of Information  
to improve citizens' lives



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We are in the midst of a data revolution. From online shopping, to streaming movies to health activities recorded on our smart devices, the information we generate is shaping virtually every aspect of our private lives. [Earth web](#) estimates that a staggering 3.5 quintillion bytes of data are generated daily, and the average internet user produces 1.7 MB of data every second.

Simultaneously, the public sector possesses vast reservoirs of invaluable data, waiting to be harnessed to its full potential. Data, when properly utilised, can provide actionable insights, optimise processes, and enable automation to ensure better outcomes for citizens. However, the realisation of these possibilities faces a significant hurdle – the poor level of data sharing and interoperability among different systems and organisations including local authorities.

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## { Unlocking the true potential of data requires a shift in mindset and approach.

By utilising data more effectively, governments - at local, state and federal level can personalise services and provide targeted assistance that meets the unique needs of individuals. Imagine a future where public services can anticipate citizens' requirements, delivering timely and efficient aid that aligns perfectly with their circumstances?

A key factor in making this vision a reality is building trust among citizens. In our daily lives, we willingly share personal information with various apps and services, trusting them to use our data responsibly and deliver enhanced experiences. However, when it comes to the public sector, the same level of trust is not always freely offered. This lack of trust was one of seven key trends identified explored in detail in our recent [GovTech trends report](#). To overcome this apprehension, public institutions must be more transparent about their data needs, assuring citizens of the security measures in place, and highlighting the benefits they will receive in return. By explaining the value of data-driven services, the public sector can foster trust and demonstrate the potential for a more efficient, personalised, and citizen-centric approach to governance.

Public institutions must be more transparent about their data needs, assuring citizens of the security measures in place, and highlighting the benefits they will receive in return.



## { Data revolution

An essential aspect of this data revolution is effective data management and sharing within and amongst public bodies. Many councils currently hold data across disparate systems but are still in the early stages of embracing data warehouses or data lakes. Adopting a more data-led approach will empower councils to capture and report on sustainability metrics effectively. A cohesive data strategy will not only optimise operations but also enable better decision-making, creating a solid foundation for a smarter and more sustainable future.

Panel discussions from the recent [Public Sector Network \(PSN\)](#) events across Australia and New Zealand have shed light on the path forward. A key takeaway is the need to prioritise dialogue and inclusion of both staff and citizens in technology changes, with a focus on process improvement. By involving all stakeholders, councils can ensure that technological advancements are not just imposed from above but are shaped collaboratively to meet the needs of the community



## { Privacy and data protection

It's also crucial to consider data protection and privacy at the forefront of any move towards greater digitalisation. Collaboration and shared responsibility in managing data can mitigate risks while maximising the potential benefits of data utilisation.

Additionally, diverse options for accessing council services should be made available, recognising that not all citizens may prefer digital channels. By providing multiple avenues such as digital, phone, and in-person interactions, local governments can ensure that their services remain inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

The data revolution presents an unprecedented opportunity for the public sector to transform governance and service delivery. By harnessing the vast amount of data at their disposal, governments can drive innovation, increase efficiency, and create a more personalised and citizen-centric experience for all. Embracing this data-driven approach, fostering trust, and ensuring inclusive collaboration will be the pillars of success in unlocking the full potential of information for the improvement of society.





# { Bridging the digital divide:

Empowering communities through technology





# CIVICA

From remote working to online medical appointments, digitalisation is revolutionising how we live, work and interact as a society. For most of us, digitalisation offers a measure of convenience and interconnectedness which would have been unrecognisable to previous generations. Digitalisation, however, has not impacted every part of society equally. A significant number of people in communities across the country have been unable to reap the rewards of digital public services and this has significant implications for public bodies, ranging from local councils to the federal government. In the case of a local council for example, a visual impairment may prevent a citizen from accessing the full range of online services offered by their local council, if they don't have available support.

A significant number of people in communities across the country have been unable to reap the rewards of digital public services





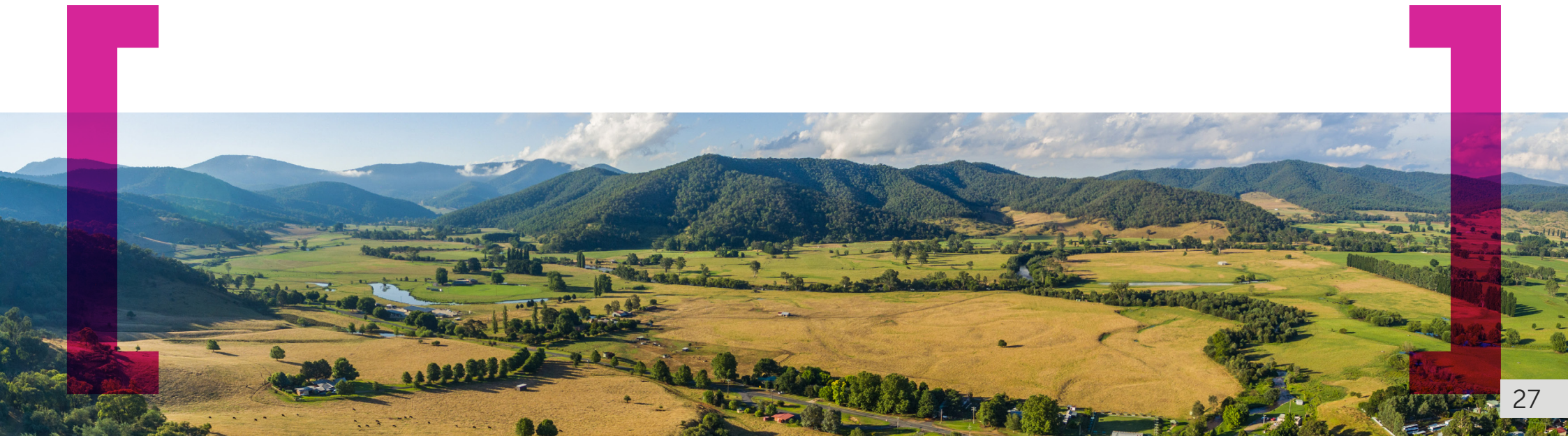
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At the heart of the digital divide lies the issue of accessibility. Beyond the obvious financial constraints that hinder access for those who cannot afford technology, there is a pressing need to drive connectivity in remote or underserved areas that lack broadband or 5G coverage. Improving eAccessibility, which refers to the design of digital products and services to accommodate individuals with disabilities, is equally important to ensure that no one is left behind.

However, mere availability and connectivity won't suffice if people lack the necessary skills to leverage technology effectively. Education plays a crucial role in bridging this gap. Efforts must be made to raise awareness about the benefits of being online and to address any apprehensions people may have towards new technologies, particularly concerns around data privacy. Empowering communities through digital literacy initiatives can equip individuals with the skills needed to participate in the digital economy and enhance their overall quality of life.

A startling fact from the UN emphasises the scale of the challenge: nearly 3 billion people, accounting for

**37% of the world's population, do not have access to technology or have never used it.**





In Australia, First Nations people and people living in regional/rural Australia are particularly at risk for being digitally excluded. Equal digital inclusion of First Nations peoples has been recognised as essential to [Closing the Gap](#), being identified as one of the 17 national targets to ensure equal access to information and services in the National Closing the Gap Agreement. Currently, **First Nations peoples are 7.9 points below the national average ADII (Australian Digital Inclusion Index) score for digital inclusion.**

According to a recent survey conducted by [Good Things Foundation](#), a program initiated to close the digital divide for refugee and migrant women, 68% of community organisations in regional areas reported receiving requests for support from people aged 18-50 years, seeking help with access to devices, data, and digital skills. In comparison, only 51% of metropolitan-based network partners identified this need. This suggests that the location of a household may intersect with their experience of data poverty and the demand for digital skills support.

This digital exclusion not only limits economic opportunities for these individuals but also hampers societal progress. **For First Nations and those in remote communities, this opens significant risk of families experiencing data poverty, which may have flow-on effects to digital capabilities.**

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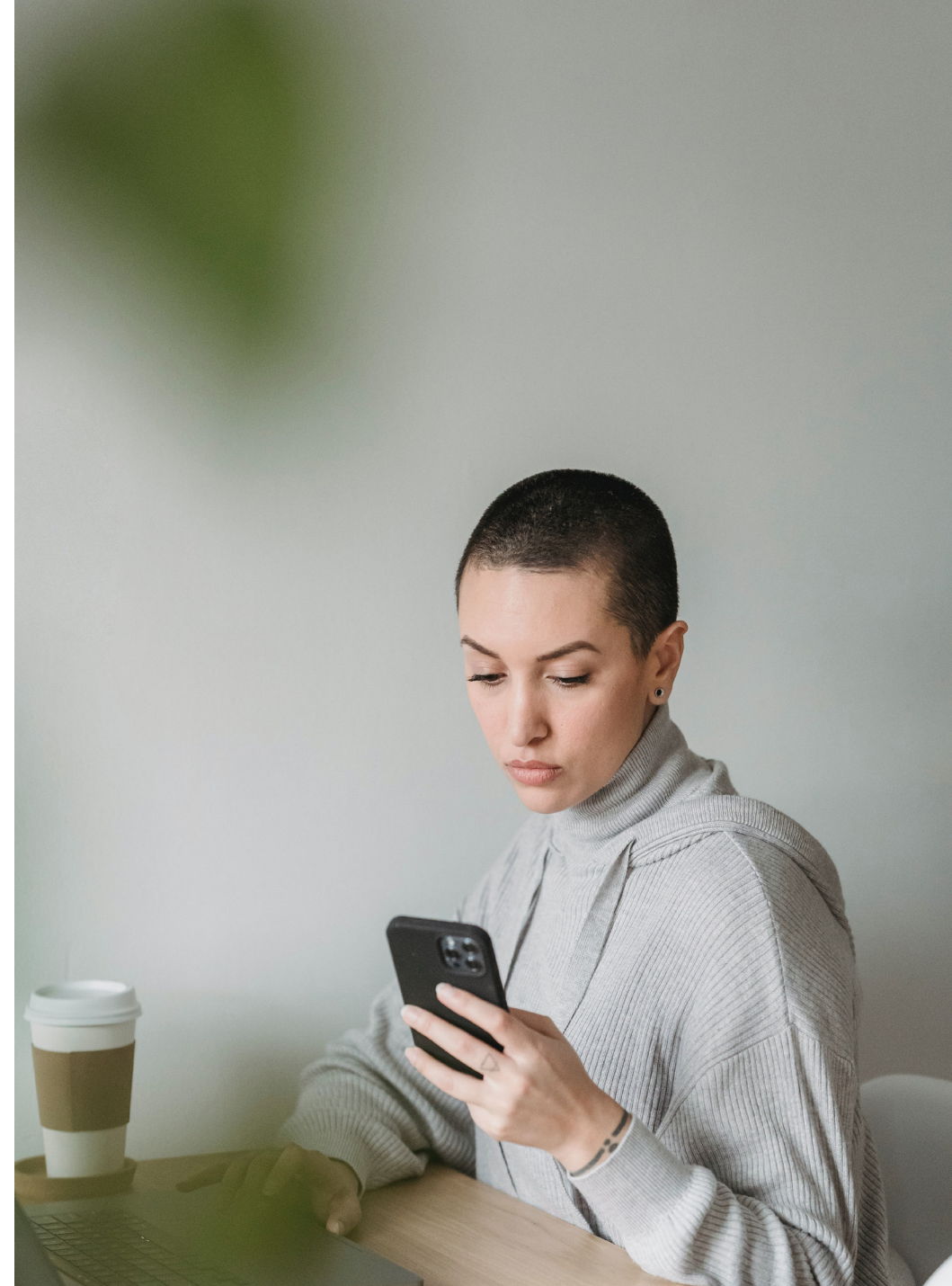
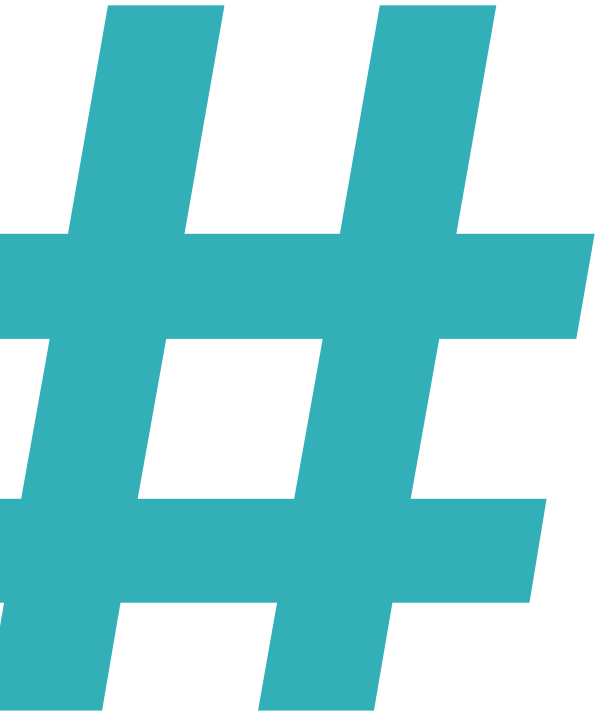
Libraries can also play a pivotal role in narrowing the digital divide. By providing access to technology and promoting digital literacy, they act as vital community hubs that enable people to stay connected and engage in the digital world. Their efforts contribute significantly to reducing the disparities arising from limited access to technology.

[Yarra Ranges Council](#) is an example of a local government that values public transparency and recognises the challenges posed by the digital divide in its large, remote municipality. To address this, **they have implemented [Civica's Modern.gov](#), a system that facilitates easy access to council meetings and meeting papers. Despite limited internet coverage in some areas, the council provides itemised agenda lists, making specific information readily accessible.** They actively encourage public participation through various means, including live-streamed meetings, online question submission, and petition presentation. **The Modern.Gov app has been well-received, allowing ratepayers in remote locations to subscribe to specific topics and receive updates and notifications on their phones.**

Empowering communities is a key aspect of bridging the digital divide. Local governments must empower citizens to participate in decision-making processes, allowing them to take ownership of their communities' development. Encouraging community action can lead to innovative and effective solutions, as demonstrated during various crises like the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Trust is a crucial element in fostering meaningful community engagement. Local leaders must build trust with their constituents, actively listen to their concerns, and ensure that conversations are transparent and inclusive.

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Looking ahead, the future will undoubtedly witness an increased digitalisation of services, driven by rapid technological advancements and growing demand. Local governments must remain agile and adaptive, keeping up with these changes to deliver impactful solutions that truly meet the needs of their communities. By embracing innovation, building trust, and prioritising the needs of their constituents, local governments can work hand-in-hand with their communities to create a more inclusive, digitally-enabled future for all. Only by working together can we achieve the goal of improving local lives and building a truly equitable society in the digital age.







## Our smart software is helping deliver the public services of the future.

Civica creates smart software that helps public services organisations address the challenges they face. All are under pressure to deliver a wide range of essential services for less money and with fewer resources. They are expected to adapt to societal change while constantly finding new, innovative and efficient ways to improve. With 30 years of proven experience, unrivalled software expertise and an exceptional people-first culture, we're helping public service organisations around the world harness the power of smart software, cloud and data, to deliver the public services of today - and the future.

## Innovation is in our DNA.

We take great pride in putting together exceptional teams and a culture to help everyone be an innovator.

Our innovation lab, NorthStar is focused on delivering innovative public services using fresh ideas around data, automation, and new technologies. Working with our customers and partners, we harness new thinking and improve outcomes for our communities.



## Key takeaways

Our world continues to evolve. Let's be ambitious and confident as we move forward

1.



### Create connected communities to build resilience

Expand your networks, share data, use social media, and embrace cross sector thinking and technologies to create resilience and deliver positive outcomes for everyone.

2.



### Prioritise green investment

Understand your current investments and prioritise green, local and innovative solutions. You can make significant strides towards a sustainable and resilient future.

3.



### Build trust amongst citizens

Explain why you need citizens data, reassure about security, and explain the value citizens will get in return.

4.



### Educate your community on GovTech

Ensure your GovTech technology is available to everyone, especially the most vulnerable or isolated.





## Conclusion

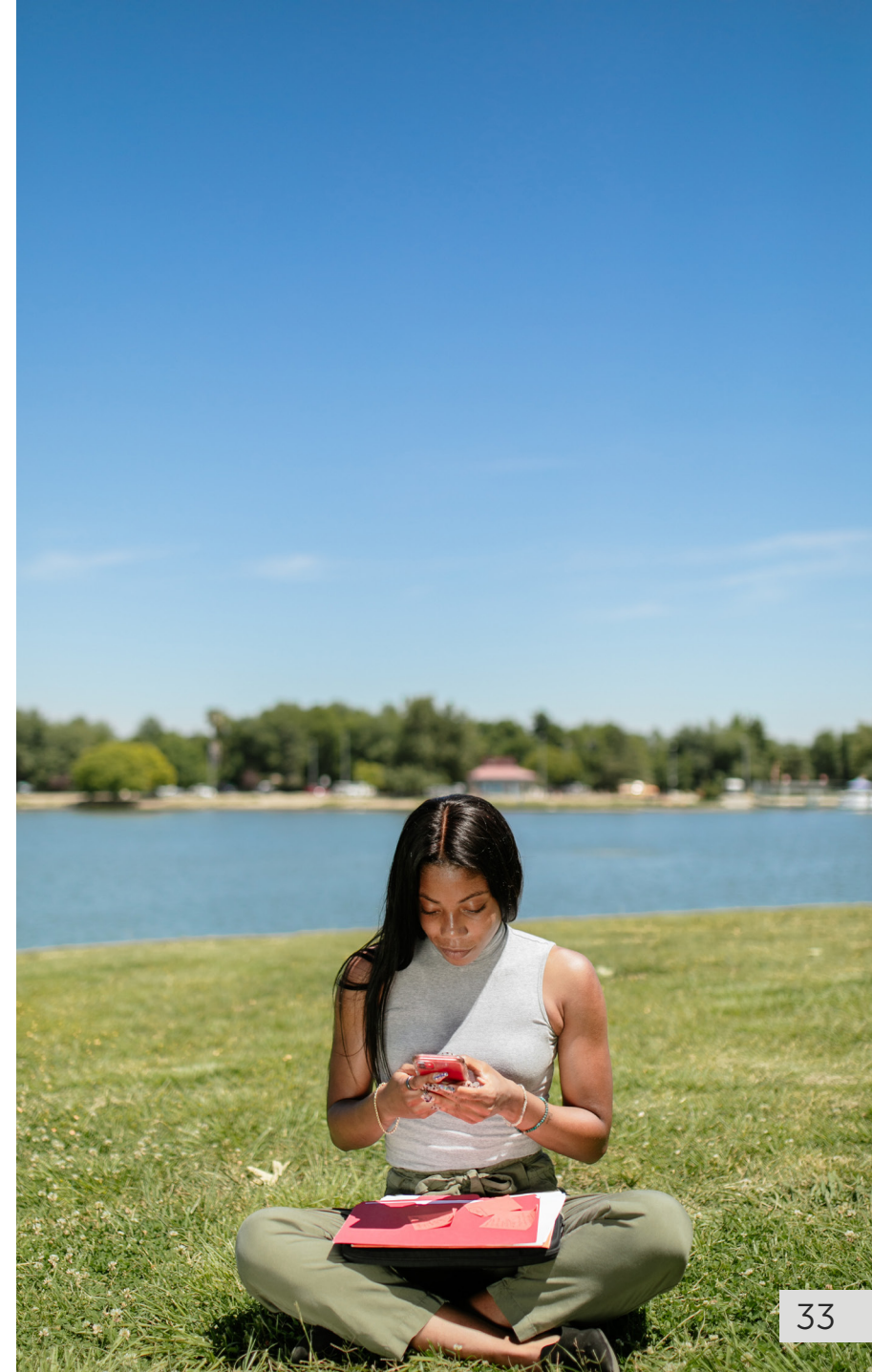
In every aspect of life, digitally enhanced experiences have changed the way we live and work and become the norm. As citizens and consumers, we expect everything, including our public services, to be better, faster, innovative, and more convenient. We wish to interact 24/7 with our councils to pay rates or request a dog permit whenever convenient.

Local governments must recognise and embrace it to revolutionise their interactions with citizens and anticipate future community needs. Moving councils' enterprise management systems to the cloud improves access and interaction with residents.

With an evolving technology platform like Civica Authority Altitude, local government could support community areas including:

Enhanced communication and transparency between councils and citizens, improved safety and crime deterrence, parking and traffic management and environmental sustainability. These areas contribute to better places for living, enabled by Community.

For further information on our report or Civica Authority, contact us: [lgenquiries@civica.com.au](mailto:lgenquiries@civica.com.au)





Start the conversation and get in touch with us

If you would like to know more about Civica and our GovTech solutions, contact us at:

[lgenquiries@civica.com.au](mailto:lgenquiries@civica.com.au)



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