

**Digital Strategy 2**  
**Manukau City Council**  
**Submission**

Manukau City Council is pleased to have this opportunity to make a submission on this important revised strategy. In essence, the draft strategy offers a solid platform from which to strive toward the vision for “New Zealand to be a world leader in using information and technology to realise its economic, social, environmental and cultural goals, to the benefit of all New Zealanders.” This vision can be realised by developing policies that will ultimately lead to providing fibre optic connections to every urban home (FttH) by 2015.

The strategy is very inclusive and far sighted especially its emphasis on enablers. Council would like to congratulate the Ministry of Economic Development for including collaboration as a critical enabler in a revised strategy. Manukau agrees that local government has a significant role to play and also agrees that a regional collaborative approach is the best way forward.

Council is pleased to note that Digital Inclusion and Advocacy forms a part of the government's new strategy. Manukau considers that Inclusion programmes (spanning the delivery of access to hardware, networks, technical support, education and awareness and relevant content into the community) and Skills Development (such as broadband network engineering and deployment, broadband service creation and service delivery) programmes are fundamental to developing the new broadband networks and services in Manukau. Collaboration between Council, government, volunteer groups, business, education sector and the telecommunications industry is essential for the successful delivery of such programmes. We suggest that there is a provision of contestable funding for such programmes.

The strategy at a high level is very good; however, New Zealand will only realise the strategy's vision by committing significant funding by telecommunication providers augmented by substantial central and local government interventions. Council recognises that the large investments announced by Telecom and Vector will not move New Zealand very far up the OECD broadband ladder because the ‘last mile is still copper’. These investments will make significant improvements to the existing broadband access and speeds experienced by most residents, but will not ensure long term fibre connectivity as per the Auckland Regional Broadband Advisory (ARBA) group white paper and other recent publications from the New Zealand Institute.

As a result, Council suggests that government allocates additional funding for ‘urban fibre network’ extensions or loops in urban areas such as the Auckland regional urban fibre network proposal as advocated by ARBA and the Auckland regional territorial authorities. Council also strongly supports the strategies for its inclusion of further investments in open-access fibre networks through public-private partnerships similar to the North Shore City/Vector partnership initiative for expanding fibre connections to schools and public facilities.

In summary, Manukau City Council welcomes and supports the revised Digital Strategy. As a high-level visionary document, it provides a pathway towards an enhanced digital society.