CITY OF MELTON
DIGITAL BUSINESS STRATEGY 2016–2019

VENTURE
MELTON

CITY OF
MELTON

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Mayor's message

The global digital economy is transforming the way we work, live and play. Technological advancements present new opportunities to access knowledge, information and services that will progressively advance our City in ways we never could have imagined in years past. Exciting new business models and ways of working will ultimately also enhance our economic prosperity and quality of life.

As one of Victoria's first metropolitan Councils to develop and launch a comprehensive Digital Business Strategy, the City of Melton is committed to maximising the opportunities ahead for our business community, visitors to our City and the local residents that have made it their home.

The City greatly appreciates the various business stakeholders and representatives from the community and government sectors who have played a key part in shaping this Digital Business Strategy. Progressing the various innovative projects and initiatives outlined in this important document will enable us to continue towards achieving our vision of being 'A proud community growing together'.

Mayor Cr Kathy Majdlik
GAICD

CEO's message

With the early roll out of NBN in the Melton Township and roll out in the Eastern Corridor suburbs in late 2017, now is the time for the business community to position itself for the digital economy and technological advances of the future. Not only will this activity continue to create employment for our future residents, it will present new and exciting ways for the local community to access information and services. Building the capacity of our businesses and entrepreneurs will also foster new opportunities for them to collaborate, network and develop new and innovative business models.

Through the implementation of the Digital Business Strategy, Council will strive to support you as the City's business community to access the information, tools and resources you need to take advantage of, and grow your business in the digital age. I welcome your interest in this Strategy and encourage you to participate in the digital programs and initiatives that will be delivered by Council over the next four years.

Kelvin Tori
Chief Executive Officer
City of Melton

'The City of Melton is committed to maximising digital opportunities ahead for our business community.'

What is a Digital Business Strategy?

The 2016–2019 Digital Business Strategy provides the overarching framework, strategic direction and guiding principles for building the capacity of the local business community through the delivery of information, resources, content, training initiatives and infrastructure. The strategy identifies important digital outcomes for the City through its action plan over the next four years and has been informed by

Melton City's Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2014–2030 and supports the recently developed Investment Attraction Strategy 2016–2019.

This Digital Business Strategy aims to guide the local business community towards a digital future by making the digital switch and also by attracting more businesses that operate in the digital space.

Council's role in digital business

With the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN), mobile broadband, smart phones, other devices, and social media platforms, the opportunity for Council to connect with local businesses is greater than ever. Council will endeavour to ensure that the city's digital technology capabilities are forward thinking, innovative and adaptable, which is crucial in sustaining the City of Melton as a key contender when it comes to investment attraction.

Whilst Council does not play a direct role in the provision of digital infrastructure, Council can support businesses in the provision of information and resources as well as advocate to other levels of government regarding infrastructure. Council also plays a key role liaising with NBN Co about the rollout of the National Broadband Network and in supporting the business community to understand how they can take advantage of high speed broadband technology in developing and growing their business.

Benefits of a Digital Business Strategy

There are many benefits to developing a Digital Business Strategy for the City of Melton.

Some of the main benefits include:

▶ businesses working smarter not harder

▶ new employment opportunities

▶ globalisation of local businesses

▶ stronger and resilient local economy

▶ new investment opportunities

Strategy development process

The Digital Business Strategy 2016 – 2019 was developed through combining a comprehensive background report, input from external research and a detailed survey to local businesses in the City of Melton.

01 BACKGROUND REPORT

▶ Details background information, benchmarking from case studies, summary of research data and recommendations, economic and demographic information, state and local directives and survey results.

02 CONSULTATION

▶ An online and postal survey (197 responses).

▶ Secondary research data collection.

▶ Face-to-face consultation with local businesses.

03 IDENTIFIED STRATEGIC AREAS AND VISION

▶ Infrastructure and technology.

▶ Online content and social media.

▶ Digital capacity and confidence.

▶ Digital innovation.

04 FOUR YEAR ACTION PLAN

▶ Specific actions under each of the strategic areas to aid its completion.

Vision

Our vision is to create an environment within the City of Melton which fosters and encourages digital growth, creativity and innovation for businesses that supports new investment and future business growth.
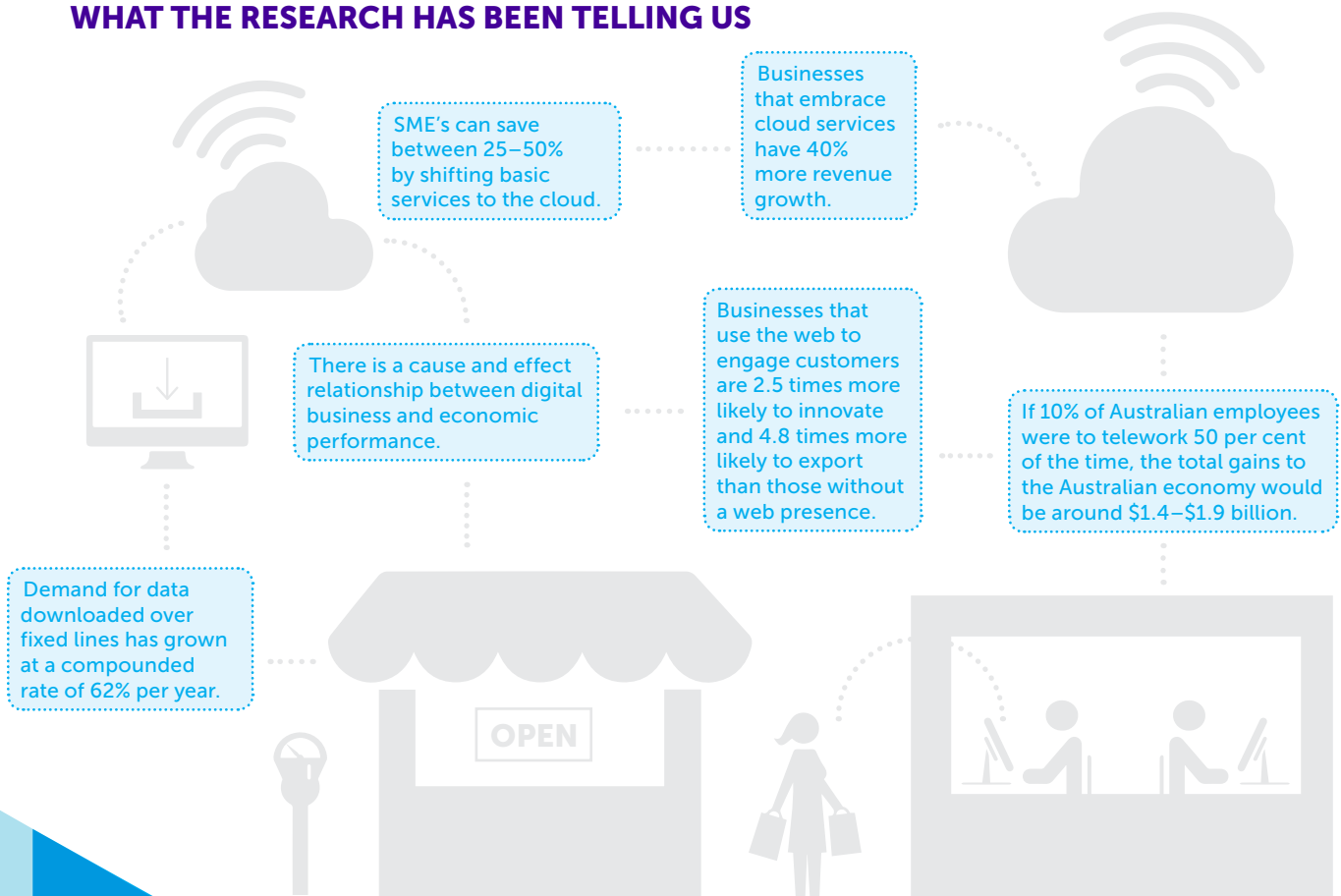
Digital Business

In the development of the Digital Business Strategy, information was gathered through desktop analysis, a digital census (online and postal survey, 197 businesses responded) and face-to-face consultation with key stakeholders from the business community. This research has enabled Council to understand the current climate, in regards to digital confidence for the business community, and identify the key elements which currently influence the capacity of businesses to engage in the digital age both now and into the future.

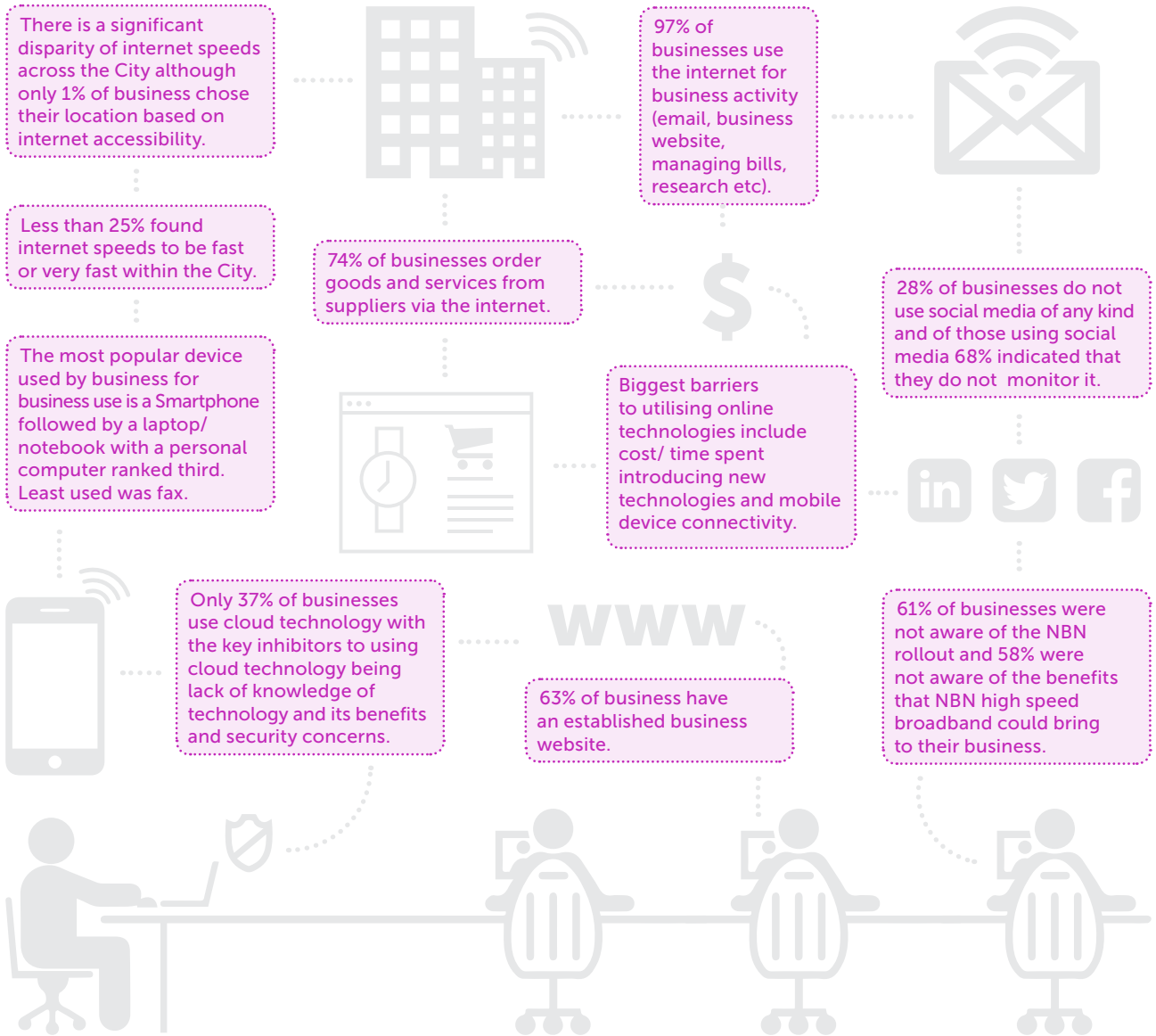## DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CITY OF MELTON

▶ Whilst the City of Melton is serviced well with a range of broadband and ADSL options, there are a number of black spots due to existing infrastructure operating at capacity and inability for additional users to access ADSL service.

▶ Black spots have been identified in Eastern Corridor estates (including Caroline Springs, Burnside and parts of Taylors Hill) which were developed prior to mandatory instalment of NBN in new developments.

▶ NBN currently available in Melton Township as well as a number of new estate developments. Switch off of existing and outdated telephone / communication technologies will take place early 2016.

▶ Caroline Springs, Rockbank and Burnside were announced in the NBN rollout plan for the first time in October 2015. Works scheduled to commence second half of 2017.

▶ Public Wi-Fi is currently available at the Melton Library and Learning Hub and Caroline Springs Library as well as a number of other Council facilities including Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres.

▶ Free Public Wi-Fi is also available through a number of commercial premises across the City including CS Square and Woodgrove Shopping Centre.

▶ There is currently no on-street public Wi-Fi available in the City of Melton.

WHAT THE RESEARCH HAS BEEN TELLING US

SME's can save between 25–50% by shifting basic services to the cloud.

Businesses that embrace cloud services have 40% more revenue growth.

There is a cause and effect relationship between digital business and economic performance.

Businesses that use the web to engage customers are 2.5 times more likely to innovate and 4.8 times more likely to export than those without a web presence.

If 10% of Australian employees were to telework 50 per cent of the time, the total gains to the Australian economy would be around $1.4–$1.9 billion.

Demand for data downloaded over fixed lines has grown at a compounded rate of 62% per year.

OPEN

BUSINESS DIGITAL CONFIDENCE

There is a significant disparity of internet speeds across the City although only 1% of business chose their location based on internet accessibility.

Less than 25% found internet speeds to be fast or very fast within the City.

The most popular device used by business for business use is a Smartphone followed by a laptop/ notebook with a personal computer ranked third. Least used was fax.

74% of businesses order goods and services from suppliers via the internet.

97% of businesses use the internet for business activity (email, business website, managing bills, research etc).

28% of businesses do not use social media of any kind and of those using social media 68% indicated that they do not monitor it.

Biggest barriers to utilising online technologies include cost/ time spent introducing new technologies and mobile device connectivity.

Only 37% of businesses use cloud technology with the key inhibitors to using cloud technology being lack of knowledge of technology and its benefits and security concerns.

63% of business have an established business website.

61% of businesses were not aware of the NBN rollout and 58% were not aware of the benefits that NBN high speed broadband could bring to their business.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE TELLING US

▶ 66% of businesses do not know how to find information about online technology and tools

▶ Businesses would like to receive information about online technology and tools through seminars, one-on-one mentoring and electronic newsletters.

▶ Ways in which Council can support businesses include digital training and workshops, case studies, information on funding opportunities, public Wi-Fi and facilitating relationships between business and digital providers.

TWO KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED

1. A lack of efficient broadband and internet access across the municipality that has a major impact on effective business operations

2. Lack of knowledge and expertise relating to digital technologies, both in how the technology can assist business growth and how it can be introduced and operated.

Where we would like to be...

What will business be like in a digitally engaged Melton? Almost all small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) in Melton will understand the opportunities offered by digital technologies to sustain and grow their business.

Businesses will use relevant online services including social media to gain, retain and interact with customers. Some of their customers will be in Melton while others could be intrastate, interstate and overseas. Melton businesses will use technology to support efficient, effective and trustworthy work practices. Businesses could make extensive use of online services to communicate with suppliers and partner businesses, some of which may be overseas. Many businesses will have re-designed their operations and work practices, taking the opportunity to shed unnecessary assets and facilities. In some businesses, staff could work from home. Other businesses could use shared offices, telecommuting centres and other facilities in the City that have been equipped with good broadband and other services.

INNOVATION IN CLOUD TECHNOLOGY

The City of Melton is currently in the process of switching the entire organisation to cloud computing services by early 2016 providing dynamically scalable infrastructure for application, data and file storage. The advent of this technology will enable the City of Melton to become a leading government body in the cloud computing space. Similar to the City of Melton, SMEs have a lot to gain from engaging in the cloud computing discussion, and in implementing cloud computing practices wherever possible.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS FOR SMEs INCLUDE:

▶ Achieve economies of scale

▶ Reduce spending on technology infrastructure

▶ Reduced entry and exit along with migration costs

▶ Reduced risk

▶ Globalised workforce

▶ Streamline processes

▶ Reduce capital costs

▶ Monitor projects more effectively

▶ Minimise leasing new software

▶ Improve flexibility

Case Studies

The Case studies below and on page 11 are based on actual local business experiences.

PHARMACY

"We use digital technology to make sure we provide optimal healthcare to our patients and run our business smoothly. Our newest service is MedAdvisor, a smartphone-based app that keeps track of customer medications. Customers can check their phone to see how to take each medicine and click a button to ask for a new script to be dispensed. The prescription is ready as soon as they walk into the pharmacy. It's more convenient for customers and allows us to manage our workflow better.

With digital technology we can offer our customers value-added health services such as recording their blood pressure, noting interactions with their doctors, tracking how they take their medication and providing videos on using medical devices like asthma inhalers.

On the retail side, we're linked via an online network to other stores in our buying group so we can share products between stores, usually by the next day. We can see if a product is available, generate wholesale orders automatically and check competitor pricing.

Our Facebook page is helping to spread the word, and this year our group established an online store. Technology is changing the way we operate businesses and the way we live. In our pharmacy, it's helping us to give our customers the best possible health outcomes."

ACCOUNTING FIRM

"Operating a small accounting business these days can be challenging, so moving to digital technology is really helping us. We use targeted search engine optimisation techniques to attract people to our website, where we provide them with as much information as we can. The website offers a remote service where clients can download forms and send tax returns to us online or through the mail. Soon we're hoping to upgrade to a fully online service.

We post on our Facebook page regularly and we're building new followers all the time. It's a great way to stay in contact with clients and generate appointments from people who can't make calls during working hours. We also offer web conferencing through Skype to clients who can't come to the office. This works really well, especially for clients who've moved away from the area but want to keep working with us. Reminding clients of appointments via SMS is very effective and we're also introducing streamlined practice management/ workflow software.

My advice to others? Take the time to explore digital technology options, try them out and stick with what works for you. It's well worth the effort."

Key strategic themes and objectives

This strategy details key actions under four strategic themes:

1. Infrastructure and technology.

2. Online content and social media.

3. Digital capacity and confidence.

4. Digital innovation.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Wireless broadband access is a key foundation for Melton's digital future. The City of Melton will continue to work to ensure adequate infrastructure and mobile connectivity through modern technology.

NO.	ACTION	TIME
1.1	Investigate the feasibility of public Wi-Fi points across the city	Year 1
1.2	Develop an online blackspot register	Year 1
1.3	Support businesses with switch over to the National Broadband Network (NBN)	Year 1
1.4	Integrate the use of iPads in the City of Melton Visitor Information Centre	Year 1
1.5	Develop an online application process for the Business Excellence Awards	Year 1
1.6	Develop an electronic business database	Year 1
1.7	Explore Digital Hub models across the state and nationally, and assess feasibility of a hub in the City of Melton	Year 2
1.8	Explore the use of iBeacon technology	Year 2
1.9	Advocate to State and Federal Government to address blackspots in the city	Year 2, 3
1.10	Explore mobile technology for business promotion	Year 3
1.11	Explore opportunities for teleworking and coworking within Council facilities including libraries and community centres	Year 3, 4
1.12	Promote opportunities for teleworking and coworking through partnerships with developers	Years 3, 4

2. ONLINE CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The City of Melton has the capacity to build online content and establish a robust platform for its approach and use of social media.

NO.	ACTION	TIME
2.1	Develop YouTube content	Year 1
2.2	Ongoing development of Venture Melton Facebook and Twitter	Year 1
2.3	Explore opportunities for an Instagram photography competition regarding local visitor attractions	Year 1
2.4	Develop Visitor Servicing Online content	Year 1
2.5	Ongoing development of WRAP and Melton Jobs Hub	Year 1, 2
2.6	Ongoing development of the Venture Melton E-Newsletter	Year 1, 2
2.7	Melton City Much More Facebook page and E-Newsletter	Year 1, 2
2.8	Development of a digital resources portal for local businesses	Year 2
2.9	Explore opportunities in using digital technology to support local businesses with meeting compliance requirements (i.e. local laws and planning)	Year 3
2.10	Explore the possibility of a Digital Directory to connect businesses operating in the digital space	Year 3

3. DIGITAL CAPACITY AND CONFIDENCE

The City of Melton can build capacity and confidence through continuous communication with the business community and collaboration with its stakeholders to position the city well in the digital space.

NO.	ACTION	TIME
3.1	Identify local digital business champions and develop case studies for promotion	Year 1
3.2	Integrate ongoing opportunities for digital training and mentoring as part of the business training calendar	Year 1, 2
3.3	Support business with digital planning as part of Business Visitations Program	Year 1, 2, 3
3.4	Provide information to businesses regarding digital funding opportunities including crowd sourcing	Year 1, 2, 3
3.5	Develop opportunities for business to connect and engage with digital providers	Year 2, 3
3.6	Delivery of a one day digital business conference	Year 3, 4
3.7	Explore opportunities for Webinar Business Training	Year 3, 4
3.8	Explore opportunities for Digital Networking	Year 3, 4
3.9	Develop a tool/ resource kit to identify digital gaps and enhance digital confidence including cloud technology	Year 3, 4

4. DIGITAL INNOVATION

Initiate a range of general and targeted programs to create new innovative businesses by stimulating new local start-up businesses, attracting other start-up businesses, and attracting existing innovative businesses and promoting entrepreneurial networks.

NO.	ACTION	TIME
4.1	Explore the potential of an ideas lab at Western BACE	Year 2
4.2	Develop an inventory of IT/innovation training courses available in the City and promotion through learning and employment networks	Year 2, 3
4.3	Facilitation of a local competition promoting innovation	Year 2, 3
4.4	Explore opportunities to recognise innovation and digital capacity in business awards	Year 3

Evaluation and Monitoring

The outcomes of the Strategy will be measured in a number of ways. The Strategy will guide future digital programs, initiatives and resources developed by Melton City Council. The action plan outlines the key priorities and actions that will be delivered.

Some measurement indicators include:

▶ Numbers of businesses participating in digital programs and initiatives

▶ Business digital confidence captured through engagement

▶ Increase in awareness of NBN and how it will support business activity and growth

▶ Increase in number of businesses using digital technologies

▶ Enhanced digital infrastructure across the City.

An annual review will be conducted to ensure the strategy's ongoing relevance reflecting technological advances and the local economic climate.

Case Studies

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROVIDER

"To market our business to the widest possible demographic, we've found that digital technology is the way to go. Being a relatively new facility and outside the central metropolitan area, we can't rely on people passing by.

So our website needs to always be comprehensive and current. Offering virtual online tours of our venues has been very effective because people can view the spaces wherever they are. We also advertise them on digital booking portals. Social media such as Facebook works well for us too. We've learned that it's important to get the mix right and not to bombard people. We always include a bit of humour and interesting images to build interest in our page. Facebook also allows us to track how we're going – which posts were popular and what information people 'Like'. That's really useful. And we monitor TripAdvisor for reviews of our accommodation, aiming to respond to each so that we can address any issues that might arise. This helps us to keep our customers and also to improve our services.

For businesses like ours, marketing through digital technology is definitely the way to go. It offers a lot of opportunities and a variety of ways to connect with regular and potential customers."

FUNERAL SERVICES PROVIDER

"Because we need to be contactable 24/7, digital technology is critical to our business. We all have smart phones and tablets, and our online diary system is accessible to everyone so that we can plan our work and make bookings. We need to be sure of availability so there's less stress for families.

Our website is the most important promotional tool we have, particularly because we're a new business. It's the primary way that people find out about us. Families can see our products and services online, read positive testimonials from clients and then give us a call. We also use digital advertising on targeted sites, which has worked better than print ads.

Using tablets when we visit families is a great improvement on carrying around reams of catalogues. We can show them the full range of products they can choose from, and they can view our venues or other venues around Melbourne. And having GPS-enabled smartphones in each car means we can map the most appropriate routes, being aware of traffic flow and hazards. That's really important on the day. It's a competitive sector and technology is helping us to make our mark and provide a great service. Over the coming year we're planning to use technology to streamline our administrative systems and help us to work smarter."

The City of Melton Digital Business Strategy 2016–2019 is a medium term vision which aims to create an environment within the City of Melton which fosters and encourages digital growth, creativity and innovation for businesses that supports new investment and future business growth.

To find out more about the Strategy or to obtain a copy in an alternative language contact Council on (03) 9747 7200.

For more information contact Melton City Council's Economic Development & Advocacy Department venturemelton@melton.vic.gov.au or (03) 9747 7200.

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