

# WA Digital Inclusion Project



The WA Digital Inclusion Project is a collaboration of 25 partners, including leading community service organisations, together with NBN Co, that aims to build the digital capability of front-line community service workers and vulnerable people, together with their communities. Funded by Lotterywest with a grant of \$3.9 million to address the key barriers to digital inclusion, the project commenced on 1 July. The three-year project aims to assist 100,000 people in metropolitan Perth and several regional centres in the state. The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) is leading the initiative, and has responsibility for project governance.

## What is 'Digital inclusion'?

Digital inclusion is about **ensuring the benefits of digital technologies are available to everyone**. As access to services from government and community service providers moves increasingly online, there is a growing group of people in the community who are excluded through circumstance, age or education. Removing access, affordability and ability barriers supports people to build their digital skills, knowledge and confidence so they can enjoy the many social and economic benefits that access to connectivity can bring. For example, ability to safely use online government services (e.g. MyGov and Centrelink), online banking, health services (including telehealth and electronic prescriptions), connecting with family and friends, job search, education and training, working from home, entertainment and more. Affordability remains central to closing the digital divide and ensuring social equity in our community.

## Outcomes

The WA Digital Inclusion Project aims to support vulnerable people to more safely and effectively use online services, by uplifting the digital literacy of the front-line community service workers they know and trust. Longer term goals of the project include developing training programs for vulnerable people to gain digital skills and qualifications that will help them to gain employment and volunteering opportunities into the future. Once training programs have been established, the project will also look to utilise its partner networks to provide affordable devices to some of the most digitally excluded in our community.

## Strategic focus areas and supporting initiatives

The WA Digital Inclusion Project has three strategic focus areas:

1. Ability - build digital skills and capability of front-line community services workers to better assist the vulnerable people they serve.
2. Access - improve access to connectivity for vulnerable people.
3. Affordability - improve affordability of access and devices for vulnerable people.

The three strategic focus areas are supported by seven initiatives that aim to close digital inclusion gaps:

Strategy focus area	Supporting initiatives
Ability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Digital Skills Training Program for ~<b>1,500</b> front line community service workers.</li><li>2. Digital Skills Transfer Program to uplift the digital skills of at least <b>45,000</b> vulnerable people.</li><li>3. Digital Inclusion Development Program to identify innovative ways to expand capacity, including development of digital skills credentials and <b>200</b> digital skills scholarships.</li></ol>
Access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Social Housing Connectivity Pilot Program to provide new/uplifted services for <b>500</b> social housing tenancies to uplift digital inclusion.</li><li>5. Community Connection Program to educate and support up to <b>50,000</b> vulnerable people across WA to better access local community digital hubs, support, facilities and resources.</li></ol>
Affordability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Train <b>150</b> Financial Counsellors in telecommunications industry knowledge, and support more than <b>1,000</b> vulnerable people to make informed decisions on affordable access.</li><li>7. Affordable Devices Program to provide safe, secure and fit for purpose devices with back up support, for up to <b>1,000</b> people.</li></ol>

## Co-design as a core principle

The development and implementation of training and upskilling programs to improve digital capability across the community services sector will be done as part of a co-design process with community service partners, their staff and the communities they represent.

The project aims to align with the:

- [WA Government Digital Strategy](#)
- [WA Digital Inclusion Blueprint](#)
- Lotterywest focus on bridging the digital divide.

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