

Joint Digital Technology Industry Submission

To the Digital Strategy for Aotearoa

08th November 2021

Preface

In this submission we provide the following information:

- Background on the Industry Groups party to this submission
- Provide key areas for consideration (the main body of our submission)
- Provide answers to the questions requested

About the Digital Technology Industry Groups

The digital technology industry, while relatively young as an industry, is one of the fastest growing in Aotearoa. There are many specialist groups representing the interests of industry companies and their staff. The parties to this submission are the 5 largest Industry Groups in Aotearoa, representing the broadest spectrum of companies and individuals.

IT Professionals New Zealand (ITPNZ)

ITPNZ (Te Pou Hangarau Ngaio) is the professional body for the tech industry in New Zealand. With thousands of members across New Zealand and a 60 year history, ITPNZ works to develop the digital and technology profession and equip tech professionals with the skills to enable New Zealand's digital future.

InternetNZ

InternetNZ is the home and guardian of .nz, providing the infrastructure, security and support to keep it humming. We help New Zealanders harness the power of the Internet through our community grants, research and policy. We are champions for an Internet that is accessible, open, and secure for all New Zealanders.

NZRise

NZRise is all about strengthening the New Zealand owned digital technology industry. A not-for-profit incorporated society, NZRise members have a particular interest in growth of the industry, talent and workforce development, legislative conditions and government procurement practices. We acknowledge the opportunities the unique capabilities, culture and leadership style Aotearoa can offer on a global stage.

NZTech

NZTech is a not-for-profit association that brings together 20 technology associations with over 1600 members who employ more than 10% of the workforce. We work together to help create a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous New Zealand underpinned by technology. We do this by connecting the tech ecosystem, promoting the importance of technology to New Zealanders and New Zealand technology to the world, and advancing the critical foundations for a successful digital nation.

TUANZ

The Technology Users Association is the group helping its members make sense of the digital future through sharing experiences and knowledge about using current and new technology. TUANZ is an independent and representative voice for all users, both corporate and individual, who know that connectivity is key to a growing digital economy.

Industry Response

As an industry leadership group we have seen a number of Digital Strategies or similar processes attempted by successive governments and agencies. Our primary concern entering into this exercise is to help the government make sure that this strategy will be seen through to fruition. We do not want to see it, like others before it, end up filed away and forgotten.

The opportunities digital technologies present to support Aotearoa realising our goals as a prosperous, sustainable, wellbeing focused nation have never been greater than today.

We acknowledge the mahi to date in getting to this point and in developing the Digital Technology Industry Transformation Plan. We also appreciate the conditions leading to this opportunity for success have also created challenging times for all aspects of our society.

As a general statement, we support the three “pillars” of Mahi Tika, Mahi Tahi and Mahi Ake (Trust, Inclusion and Growth) and see these as crucial elements to an effective strategy.

We recognise that everyone involved in this strategy development process is very busy, and so we have kept our substantive comments brief. Our organisations go into more detail where they have made individual feedback as part of this consultation.

Specifically we would like to ensure Ministers and government staff consider the following when undertaking development of this strategy:

1. Ambition

- a. The Digital Strategy for Aotearoa needs to be **Ambitious - filled with audacious goals** - or it risks leaving our nation behind.
 - The consultation document “*Towards a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa*” is a starting point, however we would like to see the strategy evolve to embody the ambition this strategy needs to realise for our nation.
- b. We would like to see **commitments to significant and effective change** - beyond what is in current initiatives or the consultation material.
- c. The opportunity to **diversify our economy** needs to be grasped now as we face the reality New Zealand is rapidly being left behind in the digital world.

2. Grounded in Aotearoa

- a. The strategy **must be grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
 - The consultation document indicates an intention to embody Te Tiriti, we would like to see this as a strong focus
 - Indigenous concepts such as Maturanga Māori provide unique opportunities for Aotearoa as a leading nation and should be embraced within the strategy.
- b. Opportunities for all New Zealanders, with a specific focus on **opportunities for Māori must be a strong theme**
 - The strategy must be specific on how it addresses opportunities for Māori, this should not be deferred to later.
- c. **Sovereignty must be a key principle** of the strategy to:
 - Ensure New Zealanders can retain control of their own data and destinies
 - Recognise that sovereignty creates a platform for trust
 - Provide protection for Māori people, their language, culture, resources and environment
- d. Reflect and **embrace the unique environment of Aotearoa**
 - While this strategy should embrace global best practice, it must recognise that Aotearoa is a unique nation with unique strengths we should be harnessing and embracing
 - For community and citizens, large, unwieldy, unapproachable implementation projects staffed by expensive consultants create a wedge between government and our people
 - The strategy should encourage community-led initiatives, community-owned initiatives and provide a framework for true partnership between government and citizens.

3. Governance and Accountability

- a. We would like to see structures in place from the outset to maximise the likelihood that the ambitious goals will be realised.
- b. The development and execution of the strategy should be overseen by an **External governance group** (industry + community) to:
 - support implementation and
 - hold govt and others to account for delivering plans that can achieve the strategy
- c. The strategy should be developed with a focus on **Outcomes and Results** to:
 - maintain focus and
 - enable practical mapping to a resulting roadmap and work plan.
- d. The **Roadmap and Work plan** should be developed in parallel with the Strategy itself, to:
 - ensure the strategy implementation can be funded and is able to commence immediately once signed off.
 - provide clarity for industry, community and citizens on how they can engage with and support the strategy execution.
- e. A **Measurement framework** should be developed in parallel with the strategy itself to:
 - provide clear success measures
 - provide transparency
- f. **Cross Ministerial Commitment** should be officially agreed and resourced, to ensure:
 - all agencies involved in the execution of the strategy are adequately empowered and resourced for their role and
 - the strategy is collectively recognised as a central element in the development Aotearoa's future

Conclusion

The Digital Technology industry is 100% supportive of this strategy and sees this initial consultation as a great starting point. Our industry is committed to helping support the development of an ambitious and accountable digital strategy steeped in the unique fabric of Aotearoa as a nation.

There has never been a more compelling time to get this right, for the government to deliver for a backbone our nation can thrive from.

It is time to close the digital divide, to diversify the economy and leverage the untapped potential digital technology brings.

Signed on behalf of the Digital Technology Industry



For InternetNZ
Jordan Carter



For IT Professionals NZ
Paul Matthews



For NZRise
Victoria MacLennan



For NZTech
Graeme Muller



For TUANZ
Craig Young