



# Submission on the Towards a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa - Discussion Document

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## Introduction

1. TUANZ is pleased to provide this brief submission in relation to the Discussion Document released by the NZ Government on Towards a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa.. This submission is a Public Version and contains no confidential information.
2. The TUANZ CEO also took part in an online workshop providing feedback on the document as part of the consultation process.
3. Our address is PO Box 65503, Mairangi Bay, Northshore 0754 or Level 7, 62 Victoria Street West, Auckland Central. Our email address is [office@tuanz.org.nz](mailto:office@tuanz.org.nz) and our website can be found at <https://www.tuanz.org.nz>.

## The Technology Uses Association of NZ Inc (TUANZ)

4. TUANZ is the association for the users of digital technology and connectivity which is in its 35th year since incorporation. We are unique - **we believe there is no other group or organisation that is representative of the people and organisations that are the end users of digital technologies in the manner that TUANZ is. We value our independence and will always seek to speak for users without undue influence.**
5. Our member's want to see a lift in the digital economy along with the continued development of strong markets across the technology and connectivity sectors providing real choice for end users – whether corporations or consumers. We seek a national drive to leverage the opportunities that we have with our world leading digital networks. **TUANZ has the vision where New Zealand is one of the top 10 digital ready nations by 2030.**
6. TUANZ position is consistent and clear: **The availability of competitively priced, good quality, fast connectivity in all parts of NZ is a critical economic enabler for the future of the NZ economy.**
7. TUANZ is a not-for-profit membership association with over 160 members, predominantly large organisations with a strong dependency on digital technology and connectivity as well as small enterprises and individual members. These small businesses and residential users are the

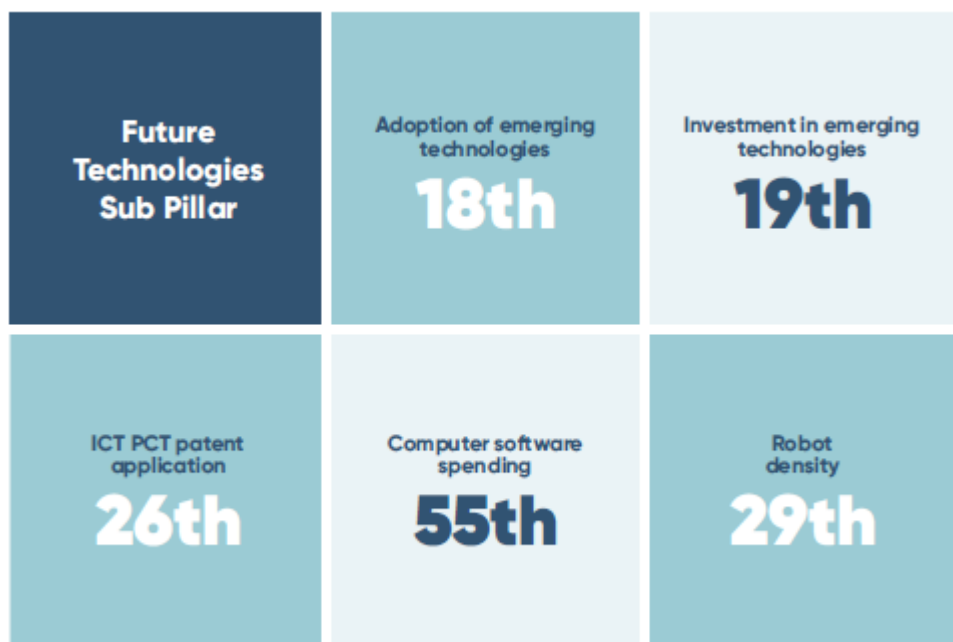
customers of our large corporate members, who are just as focused on the quality of their customers' connectivity as their own.

## Vision

8. TUANZ has been a key advocate over the last few years for a holistic and visionary strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand to lift the digital capability of the nation. This is reflected in our vision for our nation to be a leader in digital readiness.

**Our vision is that Aotearoa New Zealand will be in the top 10 digital ready nations by 2030.**

9. We base this measure of the network readiness index previously released by the World Economic Forum, and now managed by the Portulans Institute (<https://networkreadinessindex.org/>)
10. In the most recent report, New Zealand has moved up in the index and currently ranks higher than the income group average, but despite “two years of digital transformation in two years”<sup>1</sup> we are still only ranked 16th.
11. We are doing well in terms of non-technical issues such as ease of doing business and access to things such as fixed broadband, but are ranked lower at 20th in the technology pillar but 29th in the future technologies sub pillar.



<sup>1</sup> Blog post from Satya Nadella, Microsoft

12. To lift us to the levels of leading globally, the Digital Strategy for Aotearoa needs to be ambitious, challenging and a stretch. It needs to have audacious goals which are targeted and a call to action.
13. While we think the vision and goals in the discussion document “Towards a Digital Strategy for Aotearoa” is a good start, it does not embody the ambition this strategy needs to realise the benefits for Aotearoa New Zealand.
14. We would like to see commitments to significant and effective change - beyond what is in current initiatives or the consultation material.

### **Including digital businesses**

15. We would also like to make the point that the whole of business (economy) must be involved in developing and delivering on a holistic digital strategy. The discussion document alludes to this, however, there is no specific action to support the wider business environment or obligation placed on the wider economy. These businesses are not SMEs but are large users of digital services and we would like to see recognition of the importance of the wider business community – both in terms of how Government will support their digital transformation, but also how larger businesses will play their part in securing our digital future.

### **Goals**

16. We generally agree with the framework outlined in the document for the three goals:
  - a. Mahi Tika : Trust
  - b. Mahi Tahi : Inclusion
  - c. Mahi Ake : Growth
17. Earlier in 2021 we undertook a project to survey a range of senior digital leaders across a range of large corporate members of TUANZ and TechLeaders Executive on the priorities that they saw in the near future.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Aotearoa's digital priorities in 2021 report is submitted as part of this submission

These provide a sense of what business leaders see as being important for a strategy to focus on.

18. **Future of work (Fits with Mahi Ake)** – COVID-19 has forced organisations into a new way of working. Now we need digital technologies to help enable organisations to combine the benefits of working together in-person with the benefits of working from home. This requires a cultural shift too, working alongside other functions to ensure productivity doesn't drop.
19. **Supporting digitalisation (Fits with Mahi Aki)** – Many organisations have prioritised addressing the technical debt of intergenerational platforms or legacy systems and unplanned cloud migrations. Migrating to the cloud, updating basic IT infrastructure, and controlling the costs around these activities is a key priority.
20. **Cyber security (Fits with Mahi Tika)** – Enabling a secure hybrid workplace is a key priority and responding to an increased level of security threats that emerged in 2020. Digital leaders are looking at how they can increase their cyber security defences with technology.
21. **Demand for digital skills (Fits with Mahi Ake)** – A lack of international talent and the local skills shortage is a concern for many leaders. With the increase of digitalisation of services and organisations migrating to the cloud, the demand is through the roof.
22. **Getting the most from our data (Fits with Mahi Tika)** – Data collection data analytics, data organisation and utilisation, automating the delivery of data – Getting the most out of their data, efficiently, is a big priority for leaders in 2021.
23. **Access and inclusion for everyone (Fits with Mahi Tahī)** – COVID-19 further highlighted the digital divide in New Zealand. With the increase in WFH to online learning, the demand for high-speed connectivity and data is higher than ever, and the inequality must be addressed.
24. These priorities were also reinforced when we hosted our Tech Users Day on the 12th August 2021 in Auckland. The Communique<sup>3</sup> released after the event found that there is much we have left to do if we want to achieve our vision for Aotearoa New Zealand is to be a digital leading nation but that we have done it before, so we can do it again.

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<sup>3</sup> Tech Users Day Communique is submitted as part of this submission

## **Final Comments**

25. TUANZ welcomes the opportunity to provide this brief submission supporting the feedback that the CEO provided at the consultation session.
26. We have attached our two relevant reports from our work this year to support our feedback on the mahi to develop a digital strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand.
27. We look forward to working further with the Government on this matter..

## **Contact**

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