

March 10, 2012

## **Brisbane to fast forward to digital future**

Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk today launched The Digital Brisbane Strategy to fast-forward Brisbane into the multi-trillion dollar global digital economy.

The strategy aims to kick-start a business revolution to ensure the city capitalises on the rapidly growing digital economy including the online market, currently valued at \$US20 trillion, and future-proofs its living standards.

The strategy sets clear five-year targets including: doubling the number of Brisbane firms selling products and services online, a 35% improvement in productivity growth achieved through digital technology, and support for 50 promising local digital start-up companies.

Specific initiatives of the strategy include:

- A new Digital Business Power-up program to help more than 4000 businesses with face-to-face digital training and information forums and a further 30,000 people through web-based support tools per year
- Grants for budding entrepreneurs with promising digital potential and proactive programs to link dozens of digital business 'start-up' operators with potential mentors and investors
- Launch of the Coderdojo program in city libraries to encourage hundreds of young people how to master digital coding
- Hosting the TechConnect conference in Brisbane this April
- The return of the CLICK! Digital Expo in partnership with Regional Development Australia

Councillor Quirk said the Digital Brisbane program would kick off immediately with the circulation of a calendar of upcoming digital events, the introduction of a digital component to the Lord Mayor's business forums and a series of events for small and medium businesses attended by Chief Digital Officer Kieran O'Hea.

He said, while Council and the city's economic development board Brisbane Marketing would drive and facilitate the strategy, the true success would come through businesses and organisations putting the necessary focus on improving their digital capacity.

"I see this as starting a focus of digital that will flow across the city and influence our priorities and our mindset," he said.

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“I want Brisbane to become known as a city for digital participation, innovation and education. Many of our businesses already embrace the digital age but the city needs to act to speed the pace of change and help our business community to make the transition.

“Crucial to the success will be partnering with businesses and organisations that can drive the change and assisting businesses to find the people and information to help them.”

Cr Quirk said the digitisation of the global economy was happening rapidly and companies needed to move quickly into this space to increase efficiency, maintain competitiveness and grow market share.

“As geographical economic boundaries become less rigid we are already seeing overseas competitors take business from local providers through efficient online commerce and services,” he said.

“We need to win back that business and look for opportunities to globally scale Brisbane businesses and encourage start-up entrepreneurs with great ideas. If we do this well we have the potential to create thousands of quality jobs for Brisbane residents and attract significant talent from overseas.”

Cr Quirk said the digital strategy was centred around giving business access to quality advice, information and professionals to help on their digital journey.

The strategy also includes advanced forums for experienced digital operators, tailored training and mentoring programs and creating courses, programs and chairs in digital economics and entrepreneurialism.

“In some cases these would be developed by the Digital Brisbane efforts within Brisbane Marketing but in many cases the program will support relevant activity from other organisations and businesses developing support programs in the digital space,” Cr Quirk said.

“Brisbane is already well advanced in its digital thinking as one of the first cities in the world to appoint a Chief Digital Officer to help drive economic development and as a recognised leader in using digital media to communicate with residents and manage crises.

“I urge every business to start the digital conversation today and ride the wave of opportunity. Brisbane needs to have a digital state of mind and a burning ambition to lead, innovate and boldly embrace the future.”

The full strategy document can be found at: [www.digitalbrisbane.com.au](http://www.digitalbrisbane.com.au)

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