



ballarat **ict**
2030
learn it live it benefit



2030

A strategy and plan for the future

Introduction

The Ballarat community has worked hard and diligently to establish a local world-class Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry.

Ballarat now has the highest proportion of ICT employees in regional Victoria and the third largest in regional Australia. This highly educated and skilled workforce has been a major factor in establishing Ballarat as a nationally and globally competitive ICT centre.

Across the globe, information and communication technologies are transforming the world's economies and societies - and this transformation is happening at an amazing rate. The speed of technological and economic change is happening so fast that whole industries are shifting the basis of their competitiveness and organisation, and new social phenomena are emerging.

Within the next 20 years, Australia and the rest of the world will witness a major realignment of world economic activity. New global industry structures will emerge, and ICT products and services will need to keep pace with the demands of more than a billion new consumers.

More and more businesses are now moving to Ballarat to take advantage of the region's high-calibre infrastructure and facilities, its competitive set-up and running costs, and the support it offers to new and existing enterprises.

Ballarat is now the fastest growing regional centre in Victoria. As a preferred location for ICT investment and development, the City offers:

- a high-technology infrastructure
- a skilled and experienced workforce
- a relatively low cost of living
- quality health, education and transport, and
- a mature and diverse economic base.

Ballarat's industry base is rapidly changing. The role of manufacturing is declining, and the City has higher than

average unemployment, particularly amongst young people. As a growth industry, ICT has the potential to reduce these disadvantages and create dynamic and sustainable growth in the City.

ICT offers unique and tangible returns to the Ballarat community, contributing towards meeting its social, economic and environmental needs.

ICT can improve the efficiency and sometimes the competitiveness of its users, and as an industry in its own right, it has considerable economic impact.

Ballarat is now well positioned to harness the advantages of ICT. The growth and expansion of this local industry is in everyone's interests:

- information technology is recognised as a creator of jobs
- it attracts skilled professionals, entrepreneurs and investment to the region
- it opens up new markets – regional, national and international – for local businesses
- it increases the competitiveness of local industry
- it enhances Ballarat's social, economic and environmental position.

The ICT sector and the University of Ballarat Technology Park have gained considerable momentum over recent years by attracting major industry players to Ballarat (such as IBM) and by commercialising local innovation. Ballarat's learning community offers ICT companies direct access to highly skilled and experienced research scientists, technical and support staff, and graduates.

The City's ICT Cluster provides a keen competitive edge in an increasingly global marketplace, helping position Ballarat above other competitive regional centres.

Wider use and take-up of ICT in Ballarat – in education, the workplace and at home – will ensure that everyone shares in the opportunities and benefits that the industry provides.

Ballarat ICT 2030 Strategy

Ballarat ICT 2030: A Strategy and Plan for the Future, represents a joint undertaking by Ballarat ICT Ltd. (previously cBallarat), the City of Ballarat and the University of Ballarat to develop the next generation strategy for ICT in the Ballarat region.

Ballarat ICT Ltd, an independent not-for-profit organisation, assists in the promotion and coordination of ICT development in the Ballarat region and provides a bridge to various ICT funding organisations.

The 2030 Strategy seeks to build on past successes and position Ballarat as a leading international ICT centre.

It recognises ICT's potential as a driver of economic and social development in the region and provides information, recommendations and actions that will strengthen Ballarat's national reputation as a vibrant, progressive ICT centre.

In developing the 2030 Strategy, more than 220 individuals were consulted over a period of approximately four months.

Research confirmed Ballarat's position as Victoria's premier regional centre for ICT.

The Strategy provides for Ballarat to become acknowledged internationally for the strength and innovativeness of its ICT industry, the strategic use of ICT by lead users in the region, and the rapid diffusion and effective use of new technologies by the Ballarat community.

In effect, the 2030 Strategy provides a blueprint for Ballarat's future global competitiveness.

The overriding strategic intent is to create a business, research, training and community environment that:

- encourages new investment
- fosters business startups
- encourages leading edge research, and
- supports the rapid adoption and effective use of ICT technologies across all sectors of business and the wider community.

The Strategy highlights the continuing need for Ballarat to migrate to a more competitive, innovative and sustainable structure.

It recognises that the most important resources for the future competitiveness of Ballarat are the knowledge assets generated from the activity of a growing ICT cluster and the foresighted support of the Ballarat community, government, institutions and businesses.

The Strategy recognises the need to encourage greater adoption and use of ICT across all business sectors and the wider community.

It also recognises the need to foster an environment that encourages new investment, business start-ups, sophisticated research and the rapid transfer of new ICT knowledge and innovations.

Ballarat ICT 2030 Vision

Ballarat's vision for its ICT industry is aspirational:

"Ballarat will become acknowledged internationally for the strength and innovativeness of its ICT industry, the strategic use of ICT by lead users in the region, and the rapid diffusion and effective use of new technologies by its community".

Aims

The Ballarat ICT 2030 Strategy will deliver a number of tangible benefits to the City of Ballarat, and to the region.

The Seven Aims of the 2030 Strategy

1. Establish Ballarat as a globally competitive ICT centre.
2. Provide an ICT and associated infrastructure – especially broadband – that will achieve productivity gains, innovation and differentiation of products and services.
3. Increase the competitiveness of the local economy by developing appropriate linkages between the ICT cluster and other industries.
4. Facilitate the growth of existing ICT businesses and support the start-up of new ICT businesses.
5. Actively attract new ICT and support businesses that will help develop and grow the Ballarat ICT industry and cluster.
6. Attract and retain ICT talent in Ballarat and facilitate funding and collaboration to enhance research capability.
7. Acknowledge the diversity in the Ballarat community and provide opportunities for citizens from all backgrounds to work, develop and participate in the digital community.



Global Leader

The Strategy takes a staged approach to establish Ballarat as a globally competitive ICT centre.

Stage One aims to create a dynamic ICT Cluster in Ballarat by 2012. This Cluster will be innovative and export-oriented, and serve as a benchmark for other regional clusters, nationally and internationally.

It will facilitate the growth of existing ICT businesses, support the start-up of new ones, attract business investment, and open up new markets – local, regional, national and international.

In Stage Two, taking Ballarat forward to 2030, the ICT Cluster and the region will be recognised for its strong international ICT presence, the rapid diffusion of new technologies and for state-of-the-art application of ICT in tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, health, education, and other leading industries.

Ballarat's ICT Cluster is essential for the region's sustained growth and prosperity.

Likewise, the ability to cultivate entrepreneurs is central to the development of ICT in the region. An entrepreneurial culture should provide the environment and support infrastructure to undertake business development, an education system to develop skills, a network of experienced peers, and an R&D system that would reward innovation.

Talent Pool

The Strategy aims to develop, attract and retain the talent that the region needs to prosper. It will deliver IT and business graduates who are work-ready with adaptable knowledge, skills and competencies.

The livability, liveliness and creative environment of a place is key in its ability to attract and retain skilled workers. Ballarat must cultivate its nightlife, music, and art, as well as celebrating its rich history.

“Ballarat will become acknowledged internationally for the strength and innovativeness of its ICT industry...”

World Class Infrastructure and Competitiveness

The Strategy aims to build better infrastructure (like broadband) to facilitate links between organisations, and it recognises the importance of embedding ICT to increase the competitiveness of local industry.

Without adequate infrastructure and human intellectual capital, without leadership and entrepreneurship, without smart skills, connections to markets, ideas, and Research and Development (R&D), the ICT sector in Ballarat cannot compete.

Improved infrastructure will underpin the growth of ICT in Ballarat.

New Investment and New Businesses

The Strategy aims to better attract investment, foster new startups, encourage research and support more people and businesses 'connecting' with ICT. It will facilitate the growth of existing ICT businesses, support the start-up of new ones, attract business investment, and open up new markets.

Quality Jobs and R&D

The Strategy seeks to create quality jobs, channel funding and cooperation, and enhance R&D capability. It recognises the importance of stronger links between Ballarat's learning communities and the local sector.

This will make sure ideas that start at the academic level, are commercialised by local enterprises; and that University graduates are industry-ready, having had exposure to the latest ideas and software products being used in industry.

Community

For the community, the Strategy seeks to connect ICT with diversity and social justice, by providing opportunities for all Ballarat citizens, particularly its children and youth, to switch on to ICT.

While most of the Ballarat community is able to participate in the connected ICT age, some are increasingly being left behind. Ballarat needs to ensure that all of its citizens are given the chance to participate.

Ballarat ICT 2030 Strategic Actions

Ballarat's vision for its ICT industry has been translated into eight strategies, each supported by strategic actions:

1. Laying the foundations and improving the infrastructure

- Establish Ballarat ICT Limited to ensure that all agencies, organisations and groups that foster regional development and represent the interests of the Ballarat ICT community are actively committed to, and involved in, realising the direction and projects of Ballarat ICT 2030: and to convey these projects to the community.
- Pursue partnerships with governments, telecommunications providers and others to ensure Ballarat achieves its strategic requirements for delivery and maintenance of world's-best infrastructure.

2. Improving the skills

- Develop, attract and retain the ICT talent that the region needs to prosper.
- Deliver IT and business graduates who are work-ready with adaptable knowledge, skills and competencies.
- Through research and partnerships, foster regionally useful and relevant research and knowledge transfer.

3. Leveraging the strengths

- Build local, regional and international linkages to support achievements of the Ballarat ICT 2030 goals.
- Work with State and Federal governments, and the University, to accelerate establishment of ICT spin-out enterprises from the University and other organisations.

4. Raising the profile and demonstrating the value

- Strengthen Ballarat's reputation by actively promoting and branding Ballarat as a dynamic and vibrant ICT centre.
- Develop and implement measures to ensure the whole community owns the vision of Ballarat ICT 2030.

5. Working together

- Establish niche areas of focus and build 'laboratory' and 'test bed' activities.
- Identify opportunities for producing competitive advantages through widespread adoption of ICT across Ballarat's major industry sectors.

6. Building critical mass and attracting investment

- Continue to support the development and growth of the Ballarat ICT Cluster but develop policies to expand both its depth and breadth. Continue to encourage interaction between participants.
- Attract new ICT businesses to the Ballarat region.

7. Creating and accessing new knowledge

- Facilitate new industry based research partnerships and programs.
- Identify and exploit ICT niche areas where Ballarat can achieve competitive advantage.

8. Giving something back

- Foster innovation through projects that focus on the application of ICT to achieve social, environmental and sustainability goals.
- Ensure all Ballarat citizens are given the chance to participate in the connected ICT age.

Building a Ballarat for the Future

The City of Ballarat needs to continually act as a catalyst for the local ICT sector. It needs to encourage companies to raise their aspirations and move to higher levels of competitive performance.

Increasingly, other regions and towns are seeing the opportunities for development from ICT. While Ballarat will gain from this, it is also sometimes in competition with these locations. Ballarat will consolidate and then grow its ICT position through aggressive but targeted investment in capital, technology and people.

Applied and continuous learning is essential, if Ballarat is to keep pace with the speed of the ICT industry's global technological change. To stay ahead of ICT innovation, Ballarat needs to develop high-end skills, expertise and entrepreneurial flair.

Maintaining and improving Ballarat's high-technology infrastructure, and a well-funded R&D program, is vital. So is developing the resources and competencies of the Ballarat ICT Cluster, and using ICT to achieve productivity gains, innovation and differentiation of products and services.

ICT Belongs to Everyone in Ballarat

Ballarat ICT Ltd has a key role in championing innovation as a sustainable driver of social and economic development by providing all Ballarat citizens with an opportunity to benefit from its ICT products and services.

Through the 2030 Strategy, all the people of Ballarat will be encouraged to think about, and work with, ICT on an everyday basis. This will help to establish Ballarat as a globally competitive ICT centre.

Contact Us

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