

## Letter to Minister/shadows or relevant parties



Name  
Title  
Address  
Address

Dear [relevant person]

We, the Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance (ADIA), write to you to express our concern for the growing digital divide in Australia and the resultant social and financial cost. With the federal election now behind us, **we are calling for the development of a national digital inclusion strategy** to address the following key issues;

- > Nearly 2.5m people in Australia remain offline<sup>i</sup>
- > Australia are global laggards in inclusive internet ranking – 15<sup>th</sup>, behind Poland, Spain, Portugal<sup>ii</sup>
- > The \$51bn investment in the NBN is being underutilised

As an alliance<sup>iii</sup> of community organisations, businesses, corporates and academic institutions we are deeply concerned because digital exclusion is linked closely with lower employment participation, education outcomes and social exclusion – a social and financial cost Australia cannot afford. **The call for a national digital inclusion strategy has been endorsed by xx of our ADIA member organisations.**

The **national digital inclusion strategy** should give focus to **three key barriers** and set hard targets.

- > **Affordability:** remove cost as a prohibitive barrier to internet access
- > **Digital Ability:** Ensure everyone has the skills and confidence to fulfil basic internet activities
- > **Inclusive Access:** Allow everyone to use the internet including those living with a disability, from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, or with other needs

The data reveals a number of underserved groups, with the risk being that ongoing digital exclusion will serve to exacerbate poverty and social inequality. **A national digital inclusion strategy** should pay particular attention to these groups.

- > Low income households
- > Older people
- > People living with a disability
- > Indigenous Australians
- > People living in regional and remote areas

The ADIA through consultation and engagement across its network has developed a call-to-action framework with suggestions for targets and proposals that could be applied in a **national digital inclusion strategy**, which is provided as an attachment. This attachment should not be viewed as definitive, rather as further detail to help frame the issue and

highlight areas for investigation as part of the development of a **national digital inclusion strategy**.

**We urge you to commit** [*or press for in the case of the opposition and other parties*] to:

- > the development of a **national digital inclusion strategy**,
- > allocation of resources and process for its development – ADIA as an alliance across sectors and geography is well placed to help drive the development, and
- > investment in programs arising from the **national digital inclusion strategy** to help close the digital divide.

As the internet increasingly becomes part of everyday life and crucial services are shifted online the impact of being disconnected will intensify. The growing digital divide is an issue that simply cannot be ignored.

We look forward to hearing from you in response to this letter and working with you to close the digital divide, so everyone can be part of our digitally-enabled future.

Yours sincerely,

David Spriggs  
Chair, Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance

cc John Huigen, ADIA Alliance Facilitator  
Andrew Whelan, ADIA Collective Voice Project Leader

**Signatories:**

- > XXX
- > YYY
- > ZZZ
- > AAA
- > BBB
- > CCC
- > DDD
- > EEE
- > FFF
- > GGG
- > HHH
- > III
- > JJJ
- > KKK
- > LLL
- > MMM
- > Etc...



**Contact: The Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance**

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<sup>i</sup> 2.5m adult Australians as reported in Digital Inclusion Index measured by ABS 2016-17

<sup>ii</sup> As measured by Inclusive Internet Index (The Economist),  
<https://theinclusiveinternet.eiu.com/explore/countries/performance>, accessed 2/4/19

<sup>iii</sup> The Australian Digital Inclusion Alliance (ADIA) is a shared initiative with over 400 business, government, academic and community organisations working together to accelerate action on digital inclusion. Our vision is to reduce the digital divide and enable greater social and economic participation for everyone in Australia, <https://www.digitalinclusion.org.au/>, accessed 8/4/19