**Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation**

**PLIS to accompany the Great South Coast Digital Strategy survey**

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<th>PROJECT TITLE:</th>
<th>Great South Coast Digital Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:</td>
<td>Dr Helen Thompson</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER/STUDENT</td>
<td>George Fong, Alison Ollerenshaw, Jennifer Corbett</td>
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The Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University Australia, together with Lateral Plains, have been funded by Regional Development Australia Barwon South West Committee to conduct research to inform the development of a digital strategy for the Great South Coast region. The region under examination includes the local government areas of Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Southern Grampians Shire and Warrnambool City Council.

Research is being undertaken to identify the region’s level of business uptake of digital solutions that enhance productivity and profit, level of digital maturity in businesses and exemplar businesses that are contributing to or have the potential to contribute to the growth of the region’s digital economy. The findings from this research will be used to inform the development of the Great South Coast Digital Strategy.

Dr Helen Thompson, together with research colleagues at Federation University Australia (Alison Ollerenshaw and Jennifer Corbett) and George Fong from Lateral Plains, are undertaking this research using surveys and interviews to gauge the level of technology adoption and engagement by businesses across the region.

As a representative of a local business, member of a community/business network, or a recipient on a mailing list with contacts to key stakeholder organisations (Regional Development Australia Barwon South West Committee and/or local municipalities) we are contacting you to invite you to participate in this research. We ask you to share your insights about the digital strategy and digital technologies in the region by participating in a short online survey.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and the information you share will provide important insights to inform the strategy. The survey will ask questions will elicit information about digital technology adoption in your business.

This research will provide important insights about your business’ uptake of digital solutions and how digital technologies are supporting your business and will be used to inform the digital strategy for the future. The data may also be used by the research team to prepare academic journal articles and conference papers to inform national and international knowledge about digital strategies. The collated data will also be shared via a report to the funding organisation and local government areas in the region.
All information you provide will be treated confidentially and will only be used to identify the main themes and insights relating to this research. No information collected through the online survey will be used to identify individuals. The researchers are the only people who will have access to this information at any time following data collection and analysis.

All data collected for this research will be stored securely, and data will be destroyed after a minimum period of five years.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and your confidentiality will be maintained at all times. You are free at any time up until and when completing the survey to withdraw your participation in this research, without explanation. There are no consequences to withdrawing from the research. You may also choose not to respond to all questions in the survey - just answer the questions you are comfortable with.

This project has received approval from Federation University Australia’s Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: A15-142).

Consent to participate in this research will be assumed when you complete and submit the survey.

It is extremely unlikely that you will experience any distress as a result of questions asked in this online survey however, in the unlikely event that you are concerned with any of the questions included in the online survey, or with the research project itself, we advise that you contact Lifeline on telephone 13 11 14.

For further details about this research or participating in this research please contact Dr Helen Thompson on (03) 5327 9418.

If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project titled Great South Coast Digital Strategy, please contact the Principal Researcher, Dr Helen Thompson of the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation:
Phone: (03) 5327 9418
Email: h.thompson@federation.edu.au

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the Federation University Ethics Officers, Research Services, Federation University Australia, P O Box 663 Mt Helen Vic 3353 or Northways Rd, Churchill Vic 3842.
Telephone: (03) 5327 9765, (03) 5122 6446
Email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au

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