

Opinion Piece

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Brisbane's next big infrastructure challenge isn't concrete. It's digital.

Have you ever tried to send a video from the Gabba or Suncorp Stadium? Or make a phone call along the river during New Year's or Riverfire?

If so, you've probably been greeted by the familiar spinning wheel of frustration.

For a city-region that aspires to be one of the world's great places to live, work and invest, our digital infrastructure is not keeping pace with our ambition.

Brisbane city-region continues to experience mobile blackspots, below-average download speeds when compared with global peers, and limited data hosting capability. At a time when our economy, services and communities are becoming more reliant on digital connectivity, these are challenges we can no longer afford to ignore.

The good news is that we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get it right.

Across the region, billions of dollars are being invested in transport networks, hospitals, sporting venues, community infrastructure and new housing. Decisions being made today will shape how we live and work for decades.

It is far easier and far cheaper to embed digital capability during planning and construction than it is to retrofit it later. Whether it's data sensors, connectivity, digital twins or smart infrastructure standards, the window to act is now.

Today, the Committee for Brisbane is releasing its Digital Advocacy Plan, developed with members from across industry, government and the community.

The plan is built around a simple idea: digital infrastructure should be treated as essential infrastructure.

Just as for generations we have invested in roads, water and energy networks, we must invest in the digital foundations that will support future services, productivity and innovation.

Of course, the 2032 Games give this conversation additional urgency. The difference between Paris 2024 and Brisbane 2032 will be extraordinary. Artificial intelligence was only beginning to emerge at scale during the Paris Games. By 2032, digital technologies will be deeply embedded in almost every aspect of our lives.

But this is not really about the Games.

It's about leveraging activity in the lead up to 2032 to create a more connected, inclusive and resilient Brisbane city-region. It's about improving decision-making through better data. It's





about ensuring residents can access services, businesses can innovate, and communities can remain connected during times of disruption.

The best digital infrastructure is often invisible. When it works, nobody notices.

Right now, we're noticing it.

That's why government, industry and community must work together to build the digital foundations our growing city-region needs, not just for 2032, but for the decades beyond.

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