



SMART CITIES GUIDANCE NOTE

Civic Innovation

October 2018

About us



Smart Cities Council Australia New Zealand (SCCANZ) is part of the Smart Cities Council, the world's largest network of smart cities companies, practitioners and policy makers, embracing technology, data and intelligent design to accelerate liveability, workability and sustainability in our cities and towns.

Further information about the Smart Cities Council can be found [here](#).

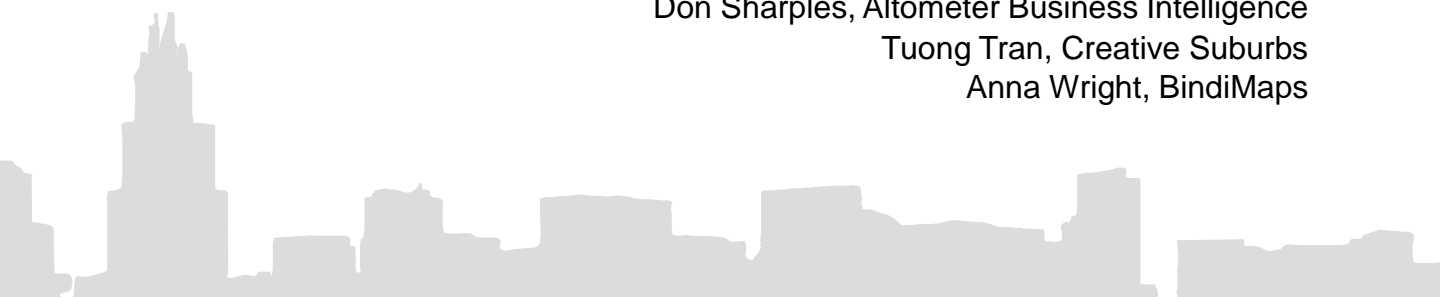
SCCANZ invites comments and discussion around the contents of this document, and encourages written comments to adam.beck@anz.smartcitiescouncil.com.

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Introduction

What is civic innovation?

Civic Innovation is the rapid explosion of citizen-led, or citizen-powered innovation that occurs when citizens play an active role in democracies.

Enabled and empowered by technology and access to public and city-wide data, citizens and businesses are playing a fundamental role in driving innovation in cities, with a focus on improving social and economic outcomes for local communities.

Civic Innovation is a global movement that includes a range of concepts including; citizen-centric smart city investment, civic tech (the development of tools created by and used for citizens and businesses), active citizenship (citizens involved in democracy) and social innovation (to address social problems).

This Guidance Note defines Civic Innovation as encompassing five guiding principles:

1. Citizen-led innovation
2. Citizen-centric smart city planning and investment
3. Active citizenship and democracies
4. Unlocking the knowledge of citizens
5. Building the digital capacity and capability of citizens.

Smart Cities Council
Australia New Zealand
established the Centre for Civic
Innovation in 2018 to build the
capacity and capability of
government and industry to
foster civic innovation as a
means of delivering better cities
for people.

Why civic innovation is important

Immense challenges demand new solutions

Global cities are facing immense challenges and opportunities that can only be solved collaboratively with citizens. Climate change, population growth, changing demographics and the rapid pace of technological evolution is placing incredible pressures on our cities.

Around the world, communities are using digital technology and their time, resources and ingenuity to solve problems. And to do it fast and collaboratively. Every day ordinary citizens and businesses are driving innovation.

Social innovation

Social innovation is the practice of citizens working with social organisations to solve social problems. Digital technology enables citizens to connect locally and globally and to quickly accelerate change and deepen impact.

Citizens often identify social problems before city-makers and corporations. And through technology and social networks, everyday citizens are developing viable solutions to solve social problems such as homelessness, violence, depression or inequity.

Our communities are leading social movements around the world, by creating grassroots networks and ecosystems, and developing technology solutions to identify, track and solve social challenges.

Why civic innovation is important

CivicTech

Civic Tech is technology created and used by citizens, businesses or governments to improve our communities. Excited by falling development costs, creative commons and open source software, everyday citizens are developing new technology for community benefit. This includes developing new platforms, software and applications.

Citizen activation

Active citizens enable cities to do more with less. Empowered through technology, active citizens are helping cities to collect live data, push community education campaigns, or participate in their local communities at a pace that no city can. Through mobile technology they're tracking endangered species, collaboratively mapping cities, or activating grassroots campaigns with little or no cost.

Collective impact

Rather than spread resources and efforts across multiple, smaller projects, community groups, citizens, businesses and governments form united collectives with shared goals and resources. Together they identify city problems and make concerted, targeted efforts to achieve a greater collective impact.

Civic innovation principles

The five civic innovation principles are:

- 1. Citizen-led innovation**
- 2. Citizen-centric planning and investment**
- 3. Active citizenship and democracies**
- 4. Unlocking the knowledge of citizens**
- 5. Building the digital capacity and capability of citizens**

1. Citizen-led innovation

Citizens aren't waiting for governments to solve problems. They're doing it themselves. We can enable and accelerate citizen-led innovation by releasing data, by funding citizens to develop innovations to solve city-problems, by providing capability building programs, or by providing the necessary digital infrastructure and tools to enable communities to innovate. Using technology and data, citizens are creating social movements, establishing new and next generation businesses, and solving social problems.



**CITIZEN-LED
INNOVATION**



2. Citizen-centric planning and investment

By putting citizens at the heart of smart cities, governments and the private sector focus their efforts on improving how our communities live. Cities do this in three ways: by prioritising investments that deliver genuine benefit for citizens; by embracing user-based design approaches; and by measuring the success of smart city initiatives based on how they deliver benefits to citizens.

3. Active citizenship and democracies

Thriving democracies occur when citizens actively participate in cities' decision making. Using digital platforms can make it easier and faster to connect. Citizens are also demanding a greater role in planning cities, in determining how budgets are spent, and what programs and initiatives are prioritised. More and more, cities are seeking advice and support from citizens.



**ACTIVE
CITIZENSHIP**



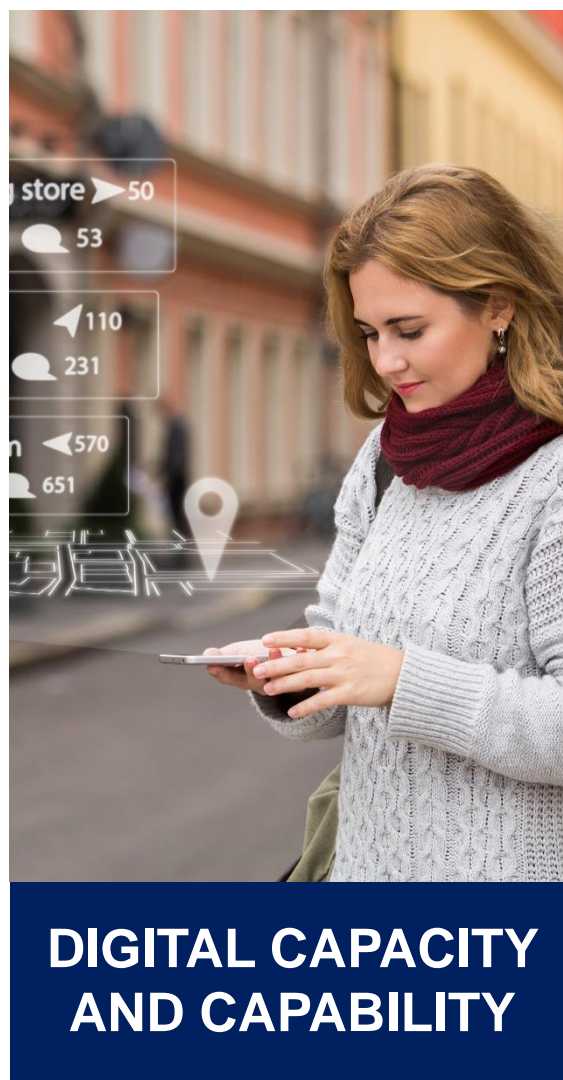
UNLOCKING KNOWLEDGE

4. Unlocking the knowledge of citizens

Using digital platforms enables cities to reach a broader group of citizens and unlock the knowledge of our communities and businesses. Using real-time data can provide powerful insights into how and when citizens use city infrastructure and services, which can improve cities' ability to adapt for greater efficiencies.

5. Building the digital capacity and capability of citizens

Digital connectivity is a basic human right. It fosters social connections, imparts vital information, enables community education and provides access to fundamental services such as banking, health and transport. Our cities must strive to provide digital access and skills to all citizens irrespective of age, ability or economic status.



Benefits of civic innovation

Technology and data present enormous opportunities to optimise the relationships that government and industry have with the broader community.

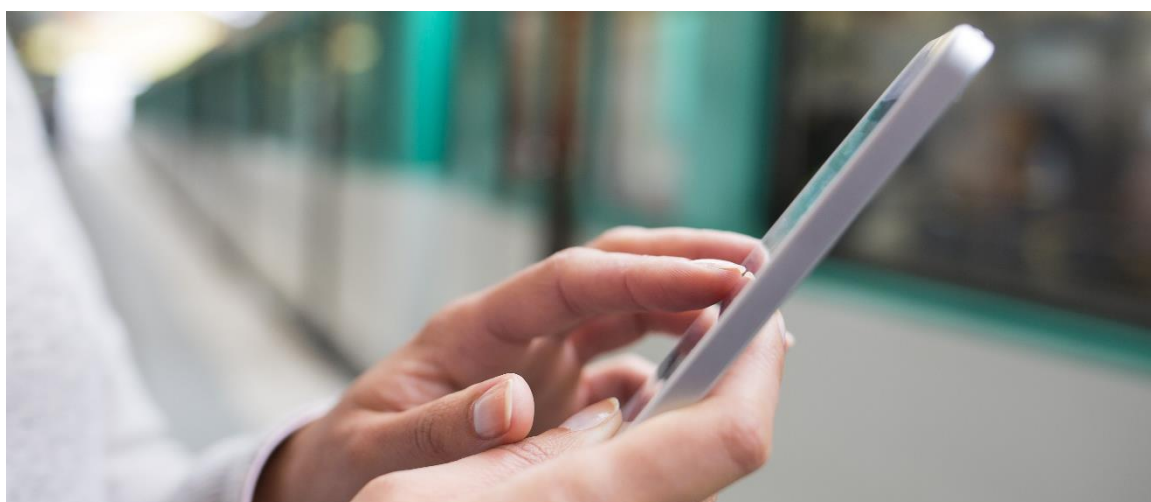
This opportunity presents itself at a time when there is historically low trust in institutions traditionally held in high regard and automation and other technologies present a changing face of government and engagement.

Cities and regional centres face increasing challenges associated with insufficient city infrastructure, increasing population density, reduced social connections and a changing labour market. Deeper and more purposeful engagement between government, industry and communities can assist in mitigating these challenges and unlock enormous opportunity.

The following benefits can be achieved by promoting civic innovation through better use of technology and data:

- Increased democratisation with citizens becoming actively involved in decision making and policy development;
- Real time understanding of community sentiment and situational awareness;
- Ability to gather collective wisdom of community and quantify engagement;
- Broader engagement of all segments of community and conversely ability for more targeted engagement where appropriate;
- Ability to nimbly “test the waters” and refine as required;
- Increase innovative use of open data for community and entrepreneurial benefit;
- Ability to achieve more with less in a time of changing labour forces and automation; and
- Greater peer to peer exchange to foster social innovation and social connectedness.

Your next three moves



There is no “standard” starting point for advancing civic innovation, however we suggest the following as options for potential next steps.

1. **Build capacity** – Share, listen, learn and find your peers. This is undoubtedly your first move which can not only be your easiest, but also your most impactful. Clearly communicate your interest and intent to advance a civic innovation agenda and welcome others on the journey with you.
2. **Assess your level of maturity, and readiness** - Cities can enable civic innovation to flourish through processes, programs and infrastructure. From developing through progressive to excelling, an organisations journey in civic innovation will be different in approach and outcomes, and the pace at which it advances. The Centre for Civic Innovation is currently working on a Civic Innovation Maturity Model and will release it in early 2019.
3. **Bring the community to the table** – There is no doubt that civic innovation is a community agenda. As this guidance note has indicated, unlocking the wisdom, energy and entrepreneurialism of the community is at the heart of civic innovation. Engage your community early, and often, providing them with the opportunity to be creative and contribute to your cities future.

**We thrive on feedback, and would welcome your comments
to help make this work as impactful as possible. Please
contact us at anytime.**

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