

Digital Future

Protect people. Harness innovation. Ensure ownership.

New technology can help New Zealand build a more productive economy and a better quality of life. Artificial intelligence offers opportunities to develop new products, improve public services and grow businesses that compete around the world. Realising those opportunities means protecting the people, information and natural resources on which our prosperity depends.

Opportunity believes we can both embrace technology and manage its risks. Clear rules can give businesses the confidence to invest and people the confidence to use new tools. Our ambition is a country where researchers and entrepreneurs can develop technology here, businesses can adopt it with confidence, and New Zealanders share in the benefits rather than carry the costs of change alone.

That requires a durable national direction. We will work across political lines to build a technology economy that rewards innovation, protects personal information and intellectual property, and strengthens our ability to make decisions in New Zealand's interests. We should be a country that creates technology as well as uses it, connected to the best the world can offer without becoming dependent on any single provider.

1. Protect our people, data and environment

The benefits of innovation should not depend on workers bearing the costs of disruption, communities subsidising resource use, or people surrendering control of their information. Practical protections can build the trust that allows useful technology to flourish. We will back adoption while making responsibilities clear and supporting people through change.

Support workers through change

Technology should help create better work and higher living standards, not make people disposable. Businesses should be able to improve how they operate, while workers have the financial security and opportunities to build new skills that make change manageable.

Opportunity will:

- fund the R&D experience and R&D career grants - which enable interns and graduates to work in firms undertaking R&D - permanently and expand the number of available grants
- use Opportunity's Citizens' Income to provide financial security through technological change. See our [Tax Reset](#) policy for more detail.
- pursue technology adoption as part of our broader commitment to higher wages and better-quality jobs
- require government agencies undertaking restructures based on technology-driven efficiencies to share the business-case with affected staff and unions then publish it in advance of implementation and evaluate outcomes.

Build digital infrastructure within environmental limits

AI infrastructure can support new industries and services, but its growth must be matched by responsible use of electricity and water. Clear requirements will give investors certainty while ensuring that expansion supports, rather than undermines, a resilient low-emissions economy.

Opportunity will harness the growing consensus around permitting of AI data centres with guidance through the National Policy Direction and National Standards under the new Planning and Natural Environment Acts that requires them to:

- underwrite their own new clean energy generation, pay the full cost of grid connections, meet efficiency mandates and curtail power use during peak grid events.
- report publicly on power usage effectiveness and water usage effectiveness, and impose limits on potable water use.

Strengthen cyber security and accountability

Confidence in technology depends on being able to use it safely and respond effectively when something goes wrong. Stronger technical capability and clear reporting responsibilities can protect essential services, help businesses manage risks and give regulators evidence for proportionate action.

Opportunity will:

- increase funding for the National Cyber Security Centre, so it can extend its cyber and technical support to government agencies and the private sector
- bring the Electoral Commission's systems within the proposed critical infrastructure cyber security regime and increase its funding
- require mandatory reporting of serious AI incidents and their harms and remedial actions
- strengthen the Privacy Commission with infringement notices for lower-level breaches and court-imposed civil pecuniary penalties for serious or repeated failures to protect personal information.
- broaden the Law Commission's current review of automated decision-making to include private sector decisionmaking and key human rights and other protections in light of AI-use, including the potential for algorithmic bias and discrimination, securing rights to human review and transparency in AI decision-making, personal or cultural likeness rights, Māori data sovereignty and copyright.

2. Back Kiwi innovation and become a leader in technology exports

Our goal is not simply to use more AI and technology for the sake of it. It is to help New Zealanders create more value: better products, stronger exports, more rewarding work and public services that meet people's needs. Support for technology should make room for experimentation while ensuring public investment delivers benefits and risks are managed.

Help businesses adopt and develop technology

Innovation includes putting proven tools to work, not just inventing something new. We want smaller businesses to have access to that opportunity, with support that is straightforward to use and tied to real economic outcomes.

Businesses also need a practical way to safely test new technology and products, and the public needs confidence that experimentation will not come at its expense. Supervised trials can help innovators and regulators learn together, identifying benefits and risks before new products are used more widely.

Opportunity will:

- introduce a technology tax credit to support businesses adopting AI technology to increase productivity. See our [Breakthrough Economy](#) policy for more.
- set a lower qualifying threshold and simplify applications for Research and Development tax credits so firms without in-house tax or research and development teams can participate. See our [Breakthrough Economy](#) policy for more.

Give innovation a stable national direction

Long-term investment needs more than enthusiasm for the latest technology. It needs clear expectations about data, intellectual property and accountability, alongside the infrastructure and incentives that help good ideas succeed. Public participation and cross-party cooperation should make those settings both trusted and durable.

Opportunity will:

- develop a cross-party national AI framework to cover intellectual property protection, data rights, investment incentives and the infrastructure needed for adoption and give clear responsibility for implementing it to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- convene a committee within the first year of government to oversee the framework's development.
- support the framework with participative democratic processes on AI's wider impacts on society and employment, building public legitimacy for major governance decisions. See our [Citizens' Voice](#) policy for more.

3. Own and benefit from our digital future

New Zealand should benefit from global advances in technology while building the skills and capability to develop solutions of our own. Public purchasing can help create that opportunity, connecting local innovation with public needs. The aim is better services and long-term value, with security and accountability built in.

Use government purchasing to grow local innovation

A promising local product should have a fair opportunity to prove itself. Smaller contracts and simpler processes can open doors for New Zealand businesses, while shared learning across government can help successful trials grow without repeating mistakes.

Opportunity will:

- build on Government Procurement Rule 8 by increasing the minimum economic-benefit weighting for AI procurement, splitting large AI contracts into smaller lots where practical, and actively prioritising New Zealand suppliers for pilot contracts under \$100,000 – while complying with New Zealand's international trade and procurement obligations.
- prioritise open-weight AI models suitable for local fine-tuning in public-sector deployments where feasible.

- recognise Te Mana Raraunga's Māori Data Sovereignty Principles in public-sector AI procurement.
- maintain a central register of public sector technology and their outcomes across agencies, with clear responsibility for deciding which should be scaled.
- encourage and prioritise open-source solutions within government technology procurement where the business case and operational overhead make sense.
- build on programmes in agriculture, health and social services, exporting small and medium-sized businesses, and public services, each with a dedicated transformation office and named targets.

Combine global access with trusted local capability

Building capability at home does not mean shutting out international innovation. We should use our relationships overseas to access leading technology while ensuring that systems used here meet clear expectations for governance and security. That balance supports both economic opportunity and the ability to act in New Zealand's interests.

Opportunity will:

- use New Zealand's trade, security and science relationships, alongside our own science investment, to secure reliable access to leading AI models for productivity and national security.
- phase in requirements to comply with international AI governance standards (e.g. ISO 42001).
- protect New Zealand data sovereignty by requiring sensitive and restricted government data to be hosted and processed in New Zealand where suitable capability exists, and strengthen Privacy Act protection against foreign access to New Zealanders' personal information.