

Seizing Tech Opportunities

Can tech help shape a sustainable future?

Timaru district is on the brink of an exciting opportunity to tap into New Zealand's rapidly growing tech sector, which is already making a significant contribution to the national economy. In 2023, the tech industry contributed \$23 billion to New Zealand's GDP, making it the third-largest export sector. Nearly 5% of the workforce is employed in tech, underscoring the sector's crucial role in driving economic and social change. For the Timaru district, this represents a unique chance to enhance our local economy, create more job opportunities, and boost productivity—all while maintaining the high quality of life we cherish. A "work smarter, not harder" approach could be the key to leveraging this opportunity.

One area where tech could have a profound impact is in Timaru's agriculture sector, which contributed more than half a billion dollars to the district's GDP in 2024. Technologies like precision farming, gene technologies, drones, and AI-powered systems offer innovative solutions to make farming more sustainable and efficient. These advancements could help farmers grow more with fewer resources, reduce environmental impact, and increase overall productivity, ultimately ensuring that agriculture remains a cornerstone of the Timaru districts economy.

High-tech manufacturing is another promising sector for growth. In 2023, New Zealand's tech exports totalled \$7.6 billion, with manufacturing accounting for 71% of that total. Timaru districts goods-producing industries, which contribute nearly a third of our GDP, are well-positioned to benefit from innovations like automation, AI-powered precision engineering, and advanced 3D printing. Embracing these technologies could elevate Timaru's manufacturing sector, allowing us to lead the way in high-tech production while developing innovations that could be sold globally, giving our local businesses a competitive edge.

AI is poised to be a game-changer across all sectors of our community. The 2023 NZ Tech report highlighted that a 4% productivity boost could add \$2.7 billion to New Zealand's GDP. By automating routine tasks such as scheduling, data entry, and inventory management, businesses can streamline workflows and enable employees to focus on more strategic, high-impact work. AI-driven tools can also enhance team collaboration, provide personalised insights, and foster a culture of innovation—all while improving work-life balance and reducing burnout. In turn, this will allow businesses to prioritise client needs and deliver higher-value services more efficiently.

Ultimately, embracing technology, particularly AI, offers the Timaru district the opportunity to diversify its economy, create new jobs, and make significant contributions to New Zealand's overall success. With the right mindset and a commitment to innovation, we are well-positioned to be at the forefront of this transformative shift. The future is full of potential, and now is the perfect time to join the wave of change.

Voice of the community - William Rolleston



Embracing Technology & innovation.

Timaru district is at a pivotal point where technology, particularly AI and automation, can transform local industries. William Rolleston from South Pacific Sera points out that the food processing industry could greatly benefit from these technologies by improving efficiency and ensuring high-quality products. "Automation and AI could streamline manufacturing processes and support growth in this sector,"

William also highlights the need for local service industries to adopt AI to stay competitive. "Fields like legal, accounting, and architecture must embrace AI to handle routine tasks, freeing up professionals for more creative, high-value work. This can improve client services and increase efficiency."

South Pacific Sera is already using advanced technologies in its operations, including AI-driven drones through its sister company Aeronavics. "We're also exploring automation at SPS and using gene technology to help improve the production of medicines,"

Looking ahead, William believes Timaru's GDP could grow significantly with more tech adoption, but "we'll need to get cracking." He suggests creating an AI users' group for businesses to collaborate, share experiences, and accelerate AI integration into local workplaces. This collective effort could help Timaru stay ahead, benefiting both businesses and the community.

Let's shape Timaru's future together.

Your voice is key to ensuring our district remains sustainable, innovative, and prosperous for generations to come. Take part in the survey and help us build a brighter future for all—now and for those who will call Timaru home in the years ahead.

Help Develop: An Aspirational Vision for 2050.

Take the survey



Scan QR code or visit,
vtdevelopment.co.nz/towards-2050



"The Towards 2050 (and beyond) plan is not about me or you...its about US. Together lets be bold and innovative as we establish the foundations for our great district being the best it possibly can be and so much more. I encourage us all to take the time to feed into the plan – now's the time to 'Dream big, Plan well and Act now.'"

"Nigel Davenport
CEO, Venture Timaru"

TO**WARDS**
2050



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