

Case Study: Starting from the Ground Up - Building Digital Confidence and Connection in South Waikato

Organisation: MTFJ WORKit

Contact: Paniora Daniels, Employment Coordinator MTFJ | Community and Engagement

Overview

MTFJ WORKit is taking its first steps into the digital space, driven by a commitment to support local people and industries to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world. Through the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ), Paniora Daniels is helping the district navigate this new territory - learning from the ground up and seeking connections that can spark change.

Experience with the Ecosystem Mapping Prototype

Paniora participated in the prototype testing to help South Waikato find its place in the regional digital landscape.

"We need to start something here...we need to be a part of something so we don't get left behind."

For a district where digital technology is still an emerging conversation, the map offered a first glimpse of "who's who" in the sector and what resources exist.

"If we can connect the dots, it'll be a lot clearer for us to go and portray back to other people and the community."

The tool is helping MTFJ WORKit and the community understand that 'tech' is a broad field - from infrastructure to innovation - and that participation begins with awareness.

Key Impacts and Opportunities Identified

The ecosystem map revealed how limited connections currently are in South Waikato, with only a handful of known contacts to lean on. Paniora recognises that this visibility gap is the first challenge to address.

"I need to know how to talk the talk...it's a different world."

At the same time, he sees immense potential for growth through partnerships and shared learning.

"One connection could turn into 100...we're not trying to reinvent the wheel."

MTFJ WORKit aims to use the tool as both a learning platform and a connector - linking local organisations to regional opportunities and inviting others to support South Waikato's digital readiness journey.

Quote

“Local people fixing local problems...creating pathways and tools for ourselves - that’s the dream.”

Looking Ahead

MTFJ WORKit plans to leverage the Ecosystem Map to connect with industry mentors, training providers, and neighbouring districts to build a foundation for digital literacy and employment pathways. For Paniora, the goal is clear - to build confidence, capacity, and connection so that South Waikato is no longer “on the fringe,” but an active part of the region’s digital future.