

Why an old laptop could change someone's future

By Naomi Jones-Black GTLP and Rose Schramm

Most of us have an old laptop sitting somewhere.

Perhaps it has been replaced by a newer model. Perhaps it is tucked away in a cupboard, gathering dust. For many households and workplaces, an unused laptop is little more than forgotten technology.

For others, it can be the difference between participating in modern life and being left behind.

Digital technology now underpins much of our daily lives. Applying for jobs, accessing government services, managing healthcare appointments, staying connected with family and friends, and participating in education increasingly happen online. New technologies such as artificial intelligence are only increasing the importance of digital confidence and access.

Yet not everyone has the tools needed to do these things.

We see the impact of digital exclusion every day.

At Hobart City Mission, , they see first hand people investing time and effort into building their digital skills. They attend coaching sessions, learn how to navigate online systems and develop confidence using technology. But too often there is a missing piece: they do not have a suitable device at home to continue learning and practising.

Without regular access to a laptop, new skills can be difficult to maintain. Confidence can quickly fade. Tasks many of us take for granted become harder, if not impossible.

This is not simply a technology issue.

It is an issue of participation.

Digital exclusion can limit access to employment opportunities, services, information and social connection. It can deepen existing disadvantage and increase isolation, particularly for people already facing barriers.

At the same time, many perfectly usable laptops sit unused in homes and workplaces across Tasmania.

That contrast prompted a group of graduates from the 2025 Tasmanian Leaders Program to partner with Hobart City Mission on a simple idea: what if we could connect those unused devices with people who need them?

The result is *100 Laptops in 100 Days*.

The project aims to collect working laptops from individuals and organisations across Tasmania. Devices are securely wiped, refurbished where required, and provided to people who have completed digital literacy coaching through Hobart City Mission.

It is a practical response to a real problem.

Importantly, this is not just about giving someone a device. It is about ensuring people have the opportunity to use the skills they have worked hard to develop.

Digital literacy is no longer optional. Increasingly, it is part of everyday life.

When people have both the skills and the tools they need, they are better able to engage with their communities, access services independently, and pursue education and employment opportunities.

The benefits extend well beyond the individual.

Communities become more connected. Services become more accessible. Fewer people are left behind as technology continues to evolve.

There is also an environmental benefit. Reusing devices that might otherwise become e-waste gives them a second life while reducing waste and extending their value.

Tasmanians have a long history of responding when a practical community need is identified. This project is one example of that spirit in action.

The good news is that many of us already have the solution sitting at home or in the office.

If you have a working laptop sitting unused, consider what it could mean for someone else.

With the 100 Laptops in 100 Days campaign running until 30 June 2026, there is still time to donate a working laptop. Drop-off locations and donation information are available at www.tasmanianleaders.org.au/cap/

For you, it might be old technology.

For someone else, it might be access, opportunity and connection.

And sometimes, changing someone's future can be as simple as opening a cupboard.

About the authors

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