



Geelong's CBD has been bustling over the festive period.
Picture: MIKE DUGDALE

City lagging on Wi-Fi

THERE was such a friendly and positive vibe in central Geelong in the lead-up to Christmas.

At this time of the year people are winding down from work and heading off for a well-deserved break over the New Year period.

Each year the annual influx of tourists to our region continues to grow, with many looking to come into Geelong to spend a day or two shopping.

There's plenty to keep them occupied in central Geelong. One of the essential, modern

CHAMBER UPDATE

with Bernadette Uzelac



day services we lack though is free Wi-Fi coverage.

This service has been successfully trialled in Ballarat and Bendigo for the past 12 months — and both those regional cities have reported an increase in patronage to their city centres, which ultimately leads to more people spending

money in local businesses.

So successful were those trials, the State Government decided to roll out free Wi-Fi across Melbourne's central business district.

More than one million sessions were recorded in Ballarat and Bendigo during the trial period.

Since being switched on in Melbourne, the FreeVicWiFi service is now the largest free public Wi-Fi network of its kind in Australia covering 600,000 square metres across these three cities.

The State Government has

invested \$11 million into this program over the next five years and I would hope that central Geelong is connected at some stage in the near future.

The City of Greater Geelong does offer free Wi-Fi in some parts of Central Geelong, such as the Moorabool St bus interchange and Malop St Central, and at Johnstone Park.

It provides a 100MB daily limit with a fee charged for any additional access. Plus, you need to download the Central Geelong app so your phone or

iPad can detect when you're near the service.

The State Government's plan, managed by TPG, allows users up to 250MB a day per device.

Geelong is quickly becoming renowned as a leader in the technology sector. It needs to be switched on to finding new ways to fill our cafes and shops, not just over the traditional holiday periods but year round.

Bernadette Uzelac is Geelong Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer.

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