

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$400k Investment to Develop Tech Skills in Queensland

Australia's peak body for the tech industry, the Australian Information Industry Association ([AIIA](#)) has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Queensland Government to partner with the Queensland University of Technology ([QUT](#)) to deliver critical skills around innovation in IT and cyber security. Including additional contributions from AIIA and QUT, the project will see more than \$400,000 invested to provide targeted training for 1,500 Queenslanders.

The AIIA members will co-design with QUT the two pilot courses ('Strategic IT-enabled Innovation' and 'Cyber Security') to ensure that the skills acquired by participants meet industry needs. The first course is focused on improving the soft skills of ICT professionals and encourages innovation. The second course is designed to improve the technical capability and digital acumen of early to mid-career ICT professionals within Australia's Cyber Security Industry.

Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, Shannon Fentiman, said: "IT and Cyber Security skills are needed now more than ever and that's why the Palaszczuk Government is proud to support this partnership with AIIA and QUT to deliver this fantastic new pilot.

"We know skills will be crucial in our State's economic recovery post COVID-19," Ms Fentiman said.

Queensland is home to 20 per cent of Australia's population, yet only 13.5 per cent of the national ICT workforce resides in Queensland.

"The micro-credentialing system will be recognised by employers as a globally accepted industry standard meeting the current needs and demands of industry," explained AIIA CEO, Ron Gauci.

"The AIIA is pleased to be driving these important industry-crucial initiatives to deliver targeted courses post-COVID. Building skills around innovation in IT and cyber will only help position us stronger and assist in rebuilding the Australian economy - we thank the Queensland government for its support and foresight," Mr Gauci said.

QUT's Executive Director for the Graduate School of Business and QUTeX, Mr Bob O'Connor said: "The university is excited to be partnering with AIIA on this pilot program, as the partnership exemplifies QUT's positioning as 'The University for the Real World'.

"These two pilot micro-credential courses, which will give a QUT-AIIA academic for the expected 1,500 expected participants, are aligned to meet skills that are in demand by employers. This is a model that the university is keen to champion," Mr O'Connor said.

Working in consultation with State and Federal governments, The AIIA recently released a white paper titled '[Building Australia's Digital Future in a Post-COVID World](#)'. This set out a series of practical recommendations, designed to help guide policy development and focus areas for now and the next decade including digital investment priorities, skills and jobs of the future.

The white paper recommendations include:

- Accelerating the up-skilling of industry trainers by reducing the mandatory Certificate IV in Training and Assessment course duration to 6 weeks rather than the current average of 11 months.
- Implementing a nationally recognised lifelong learning framework with skills passport to capture digital skills across VET, University and micro-credential certifications.
- Issuing government credit to employees to promote lifelong learning and up-skilling.

Mr Gauci said: "Australia is currently short of [2,300 workers in cyber security](#), with an expected demand of at least 17,600 additional professionals required in the sector by 2026 - we hope this investment and focus goes some way to addressing the gap.

"The AIIA supports micro-credentialing courses and we encourage school leavers and those looking to change industries, to attain skills in IT and have a long and successful career in an industry where jobs are in demand," Mr Gauci concluded.

The AIIA has partnered with Skillslogiq to develop and manage the Skills Hub Passport Program. SkillsLogiQ is a technology company providing skills management and workforce innovation solutions to individuals, organisations and higher-education institutions, and is a member of the AIIA.

AIIA's micro-credential pilot program aligns with Priority 2 of the Queensland Government's Queensland ICT Workforce Plan 2019- 2022.

The course is due to start January – March 2021, Cohort 1 (courses 1 & 2), with a review between April and May, before accepting further students between July - September, Cohort 2 (courses 1 & 2).

The AIIA is a not-for-profit organisation aimed at fuelling Australia's future social and economic prosperity through technology innovation.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

- The AIIA recently released a white paper titled '[Building Australia's Digital Future in a Post-COVID World](#)', which emphasised the need to look beyond traditional infrastructure investment by government with more focus on technology

nfrastructure.

- In October 2019, AIIA issued a survey to approximately 400 ICT businesses across the Australian ICT sector for the purpose of gaining industry insights into the current state and predicted future state of its industry. The survey revealed the following:
 - 56.1% of respondents identified skills shortages as a barrier to expanding their business operations
 - 38.3% of respondents have outsourced globally due to unavailable skills in Australia; and
 - 37.7% of businesses are looking to grow their domestic ICT business by expanding offshore or increasing exports.

Course information:

The two micro-credential courses are to be rolled out as part of the pilot:

Topic 1: Cyber Security

Key skill areas being addressed:

- Network security
- Predict, identify and mitigate cyber risk
- Knowledge and strategies to defend and respond to threats and attacks
- Protecting organisations, people, their data and rights

Topic 2: Strategic IT-enabled Innovation

Key skill areas being addressed:

- problem-driven innovation and validation of problem definitions business
- transformation enabled by IT innovation and change
- Co-design strategies and approaches in IT enabled innovation
- Strategies, methods and approaches used by organisations to develop innovation programs and support IT enabled transformation
- Methods and approaches in collaboration for technology product innovation
- Treatment of innovation risk

The content for the micro-credential modules will be written at an AQF 7/8 Level, and will align with the Department of Education's Academic Qualifications Framework as well as the Skills Framework for the Information Age version 7.

The proposed micro-credentials will be non-award programs consisting of approximately 20-30 hours of online self-paced, self-directed learning with expert virtual facilitation and mentoring.

The skill set of each participant will be benchmarked upon commencement and completion of the micro-credential program. Each participant will also be issued a skills passport so that they can track their progress throughout their learning journey. Upon completion of the program, each participant will be issued an industry recognised digital micro-credential.

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About AIIA

The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) is Australia's peak representative body and advocacy group for those in the digital ecosystem. Since 1978 AIIA has pursued activities to stimulate and grow the digital ecosystem, to create a favourable business environment for members and to contribute to Australia's economic prosperity. We do this by delivering outstanding member value by providing a strong voice of influence; building a sense of community through events and education; enabling a network for collaboration and inspiration; and developing compelling content and relevant and interesting information.