



## **Media Release: AIIA calls on re-elected Coalition Government to focus on Australia's digital skills shortage**

**Canberra, Australia – 20 May 2019** -- The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), the peak member body for the ICT industry, congratulates the Liberal–National Coalition on their federal election win.

Ron Gauci, CEO of the AIIA said, “On behalf of the AIIA, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Liberal–National Coalition on being elected on Saturday. The AIIA looks forward to working with Prime Minister Morrison’s government and incoming ministers to help them deliver on commitments made in their pre-election campaigns.

“It’s imperative that industry, government and research institutes collaborate closely to foster a vibrant and innovative digital and technology sector, supported by a regulatory framework that encourages the economic growth, productivity and sustainability of our nation.”

Reflecting on the past few months of regulatory activities, Mr Gauci said, “We are looking for a commitment that changes to the *Assistance and Access Act*, proposed by Labor in February, be passed through parliament in the first 100 days of the new government.

“It is time to execute these amendments so that industry and users of encrypted services have certainty over these new laws. The AIIA has made significant [contributions and recommendations](#) with respect to these amendments - but has yet to see the recommendations considered or adopted leaving industry unclear on the operational requirements.”

AIIA members are also concerned about the lack of consultation and the reach of the *Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Bill* passed in April this year. “We look forward to greater two-way dialogue between government and industry to address the concerns that have been raised by our members about these pieces of legislation,” said Mr Gauci.

It is well recognised that there is a significant shortfall of available digital skills and expertise in the Australian workforce.

“The industry looks forward to contributing to the skills programs announced by the Coalition government. \$41.7 million will be provided for two pilot Skills Organisations, in the areas of digital technologies, cyber security, and human services care. AIIA members are delighted that the Government also intends to establish the National Skills Commission to oversee the \$2.8 billion annual investment in Vocational Education and Training (VET),” said Mr Gauci.

“Some of our members have successfully led and are rolling out alternative pathways to developing digital skills in school children. These programs have seen collaboration between government departments, Universities, research institutes and industry. Our members would

be delighted to share their success stories and learnings from these programs with the new government to further provide the crucial evidence of the success of these initiatives.”

For a summary of the Coalition’s Digital Skills policy, visit AIIA’s [website](#) for the analysis undertaken by AIIA.

“We look forward to working with the incoming government and fostering collaboration between industry, government and research institutes to ensure that Australia realises its economic potential in the fourth industrial revolution,” concluded Mr Gauci.

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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 favorable 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.

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