

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AIIA supports Startup Year policy to boost Australia's innovative technology sector**

Australia's peak industry representative body for innovation technology, the Australian Information Industry Association ([AIIA](#)), has welcomed the Labor Party's Startup Year policy, recognising the incredible potential Australia's ICT industry has to grow and develop Australia's economy.

Recently announced, the initiative will foster innovation through HELP loans to university enrolled students who will receive mentoring and professional development. This will help support the development of business ideas and improve the potential long term viability of the businesses. 2,000 students will be able to enter the program, with some of Australia's most innovative universities to help deliver the initiative.

The AIIA CEO, Mr Ron Gauci said: "This is a great policy initiative from the Labor Party that will support Australia's digital innovation industries. Australia's future economy will have digital at the heart of every industry. We must plan and prepare for this now. With some of the world's leading technology companies as members, the AIIA can support with leveraging its network to source mentors, and funding or commercialisation of great innovation ideas.

"It has been really positive to see that innovation and digital policy now is at the core of the Federal Government and Opposition's policy responses to the challenges facing our economic future. Discussion and competition for policy solutions that support digital innovation will help Australia overcome the economic challenges that we are currently facing.

"At the heart of the technology industry is the need for strong local ICT skills and governments must ensure policies are put in place to grow this in our domestic workforce. The AIIA strongly believes we need to be inspiring younger generations, both in school and post school, to take up a career in the digital technology sector - especially young women. Whether it's through a cadetship, digital skilling or mentoring, every initiative is important.

"The AIIA is committed to working with government, opposition parties, institutions and industry to harness the best and brightest minds to inspire our future generations. There are truly some amazing innovators who think outside of the box right here in Australia that we can tap into. Supporting these ideas from incubation to commercialisation will help deliver a strong Australian economy into the future," Mr Gauci said.

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's [Skills Hub](#) has over 3,000 courses available, produced by some of Australia's leading tertiary education providers including RMIT, QUT, University of Queensland, Central Queensland University, University of Sydney and NSW and QLD TAFE. Microsoft, IBM and AWS have also made courses available on the Skills Hub. More than 5,000 courses are expected to be available by the end of 2021. Individuals are able to create a Skills Passport to map and manage their skills for career development.
- 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 infrastructure.

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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.