

MEDIA RELEASE
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**INVESTING IN A LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCE:
AIIA CALLS FOR THE 2024-25 BUDGET TO DRIVE PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH CRITICAL TECHNOLOGIES
ADOPTION AND ENHANCED CYBER SECURITY**

Australia's peak body for innovation technology, the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), has released its pre-budget statement and priorities for the 2024-25 Federal Budget, identifying three priority areas in need of Government focus and funding and which are complementary to existing Government technology-focused initiatives.

Alongside the three priorities identified below, the AIIA submission makes additional specific proposals, which can be read in full here ([link](#)).

Priority 1. Establish and fund an independent central Government body to coordinate the implementation of technology-focused strategies for coherence, agility and continuity.

Technology is core to a modern digital economy and the pace of change - as witnessed with generative AI - is rapid. and the AIIA is concerned there is a high risk of poor implementation of newly launched strategies and responses. The Albanese Government has to its credit embarked on a range of initiatives over the past 18 months from establishing the National Reconstruction Fund, developing national Robotics, AI, Cyber and Quantum strategies, the review of MyGov by David Thodey and progressing the Digital Identity legislation and these require seamless delivery and support across industry and government portfolios where it is currently fractured.

Notwithstanding the construct of the body (e.g Council of Tech Regulators or in a different mechanism), it is critical that decision making timeframes from policy development to funding reduces from the 3 years to 12 months.

The AIIA also strongly supports the full program funding of MyGov and digital identity program as the legislation is now in parliament as a critical national digital infrastructure project.

Priority 2. Formulating an industry-focused policy and funding to cultivate globally competitive companies.

The AIIA calls for a review of industry policy with a focus on commercialisation, motivated by the need for Australian scale-up companies to access funding for growth and create jobs within the country. We reiterate our recommendations for the Federal Government to commission a comprehensive review of how Australia supports innovation, from ideation through to commercialisation with the objective of creating a national framework for support and recommending how existing gaps can be addressed.¹

One key funding idea for consideration is establishing a Federal Digital Innovation Project Fund. The Fund should prioritise support for Australian innovation and SMEs, to enable procurement pathways (separate from industry grants) for Australia's tech start-up and scale-up community.

¹ AIIA, [Building Australia's Digital Future in a Post-COVID World](#), 2020.

Another recommendation is that the Government invests in AI commercialisation projects, noting that there is an unstoppable global demand for AI tools to boost business productivity. The AIIA is keen to see the Budget assist companies in taking advantage of major economic trends and opportunities.

Priority 3. Implementing a skills-focused strategy to mitigate disruptions in an ever-changing job market.

The AIIA understands the paramount importance of a shift from ‘career planning’ to ‘career portfolio’. Diversifying experiences and skills will equip future workforce with greater resilience and adaptability in the ever-changing job market. The AIIA is pleased to see the consultation on National Skills Passport,² noting that an approach that enables career switching is important due to the fast-moving nature of the industry.

In our 2020 White Paper on [Building Australia’s Digital Future in a Post-COVID World](#), we advocated implementing a nationally recognised lifelong learning framework with skills passport to capture digital skills across VET, University and micro-credential certification. In line with this, the AIIA also recommends that the current JobKeeper payment scheme be updated with a portion of the current funding allocated to training credits for employers to re-skill their workforce in critical technical skills.

The AIIA CEO, Mr Simon Bush said: “In our fast-moving industry, any delays in implementing strategies and funding to industry in Australia will cause a serious disadvantage to the economy.”

“The Government needs a new way of working, with the aim of increasing agility and speed of execution between strategy and identified industry and citizen needs. We need to move to actioning the plans and put in a system that drives the momentum of digital transformation.”

Media

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About AIIA

The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) is the peak ICT body, representing approximately 90 per cent of Australians employed in the tech industry across a diverse group of members. Since 1978, AIIA has pursued strategic policies and activities to stimulate and grow Australia’s digital ecosystem to create a favourable business environment and contribute to Australia’s economic prosperity. We do this by providing a strong voice for the industry; building a sense of community through events and education; enabling a network for collaboration and inspiration; and developing compelling content from the industry’s expertise.

² Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, [National Skills Passport Consultation](#), 17 January 2024