Australia's border reopens: AIIA calls on federal government to prioritise visas for ICT professionals

Australia's peak industry representative body for innovation technology, the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) welcomes the Prime Minister's announcement that fully vaccinated visa holders, including skilled workers, will be allowed to come to Australia without having to apply for an exemption from 1 December 2021. As plans are finalised in the coming days the AIIA is however, calling on the Government to ensure that visas for skilled ICT professionals are prioritised to address Australia's significant shortages.

AIIA CEO, Mr Ron Gauci said: "A priority for our sector is to grow local capability and increase the level of digital skills in our economy by working with the VET, the higher education sector, government and industry to increase the pipeline of talent to support the high demand for digital jobs in Australia. We also must do more to demonstrate the varied and successful digital careers you can have to school leavers so they see digital careers as a preferred option full of opportunities across the range of industries in Australia's economy.

"However, while we strive to grow the skills base locally, we do need access to certain highly skilled and in-demand people from overseas where the local market cannot supply them; from cyber security to applications development, data and analytics have been identified by the AIIA as big areas of demand.

"Australia's economic recovery can be led by innovation and investment in technology. Governments must continue to work to address Australia's digital skills to support our digital transformation, provide a skilled workforce to support economic growth and protect our digital sovereignty. The AIIA will continue to champion this for our members, lobby governments to support domestic skills development and support our member's needs with platforms such as the AIIA's Skills Hub," Mr Gauci concluded.

In a recent survey by the AIIA of the Australian ICT industry it found that:
- 73 per cent of respondents said they expect to be actively growing and hiring in 2021.
- 65 per cent of respondents indicated that they are looking to hire staff with cyber security skills in 2021, an increase of 10 per cent compared to the AIIA's 2020 survey results.
- Cloud specific skills are the second most in-demand skills, with nearly 60 per cent of respondents indicating they will be hiring staff with these skills in 2021.

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

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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.