MEDIA RELEASE
For immediate release

AIIA welcomes Labor's commitment to tackle tech skills shortage by reaching 1.2 million Australian tech-related jobs by 2030

Australia's peak body for the innovation technology sector, the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), has thrown its support behind Federal Labor's plan to invest heavily in Australia's tech skills sector.

Unveiled this morning, Labor's commitment outlined it will work with industry to reach 1.2 million Australian tech-related jobs by 2030. Australia currently experiences a significant labour gap of 60,000 ICT workers annually, related to supply and demand post-pandemic. The AIIA applauds Labor for understanding that tech jobs underpin the economy and our critical industries as well as its willingness to work closely with the tech sector to develop a plan focused on increasing local IP via upskilling and jobs creation.

Australia's tech sector has witnessed a major skills shortage for many years. The AIIA view VET, HE and micro-credentialing courses as key to overcoming the skills shortage currently experienced. As such, Labor's plan to double fee-free TAFE places and higher education places by 20,000 is welcomed by the AIIA.

With a focus on building and growing local tech IP in Australia, the **AIIA CEO, Mr Ron Gauci** said: "Today's announcement is a significant commitment to a sector that will be Australia's driving force when it comes to economic recovery. This is the time for our political leaders to show that they truly understand the benefits that can be derived from Australia's ICT industry and it's refreshing that Labor has recognised this.

"The growth in ICT is unlimited. It delivers jobs, economic growth, global competitiveness and it protects Australia's core industries. Our geographic location is no restriction on our growth potential. Our tech sector impacts and supports all other economic sectors, growing the tech sector will grow Australia's economy significantly."

Earlier this month, the AIIA has recently released their **Federal Government Pre-Budget and Pre-Election Policy Submission 2022**, detailing 24 key recommendations to support Australia's tech sector to grow and support the Australian economy, selected recommendations include:

- **Australia's Skills Agenda**: including recommending reforming the Australian Curriculum to prioritise the Digital Economy and Industry 5.0 capabilities for primary and secondary school students.
- **Digital Government:** Continue to support and fund the Digital Transformation Agency to ensure that it can support digital adoption by the government to be a top 3 digital government by 2025.
- **Emerging Critical Technologies:** Includes a Quantum Strategy to be executed within 12 months, which notes additional funding and establishes a National AI Commercialisation Hub.
- **Domestic Capability:** Establish a 'Made in Australia' Office within the DPM&C.
- **Commercialisation Agenda:** Undertake urgent work to support globally-viable commercialisation off the back of government-assisted research. Create a separate R&D software tax incentive and expand the limited scope of the proposed patent box.
- **Digital Health:** Re-engineer 'My Health Record' to enable true digital health record capability.

Mr. Gauci continued: "Australia has the opportunity to be a globally leading digital economy, however, given the global trends and how rapidly we are falling behind, this must be the year that our political leaders show their full support for the ICT sector to achieve the economic benefits on offer. Our industry is full of organisations with the appetite and commercial experience to respond if it can see tangible support from Government. The policies outlined in the AIIA Pre-Budget and Pre-Election submission support growing Australia's domestic capabilities in the tech sector. The AIIA looks forward to working with the Government to implement these policies.

"The country can't simply rely on borders reopening to help fill the digital skills shortage, we need to encourage upskill and invest in home-grown talent - we're currently playing catch-up with other leading nations. The AIIA looks forward to working alongside industry and government to attract students to the available courses. With such a competitive market for labour currently, we must highlight the many benefits in the tech sector including; high demand for skills, well paid jobs and the ability to transfer skills. The pandemic has exacerbated the issues our industry is facing and now is the time for considerable action to be taken, the announcement from Labor today is a good start."

The AIIA is a not-for-profit organisation aimed at fuelling Australia's future social and economic prosperity through tech innovation and remains committed to working with all levels of Government to secure Australia's digital future.

To view the full set of recommendations by industry please visit: **Federal Government Pre-Budget and Pre-Election Policy Submission 2022**

ENDS

For media enquiries: Thrive PR and Communications

Gareth Beddoes
M: 0403 463 248
E: gareth.beddoes@thrivepr.com.au

Michael Banks
M: 0418 862 545
E: michael.banks@thrivepr.com.au

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; developing compelling content and relevant and interesting information.