

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **AIIA calls for Government Services and Digital Economy Minister**

With an upcoming election, the Australian Information Industry Association ([AIIA](#)) is calling on an incoming government to create a new Cabinet level **Minister of Government Services and the Digital Economy**.

The AIIA's proposed Minister of Government Services and the Digital Economy would be directly responsible for **ensuring that Australia is a leading digital government by 2025 and then a leading digital economy by 2030**.

The AIIA has identified there is now a need to better align and coordinate the various digital economy initiatives under one Minister and one portfolio. The current Digital Economy Minister – a minister the AIIA called for – has already been coordinating policy and arguing for important budget initiatives. Creation of the Digital Economy Minister has been a good first step but now the opportunity is to have a Minister with a singular focus and broaden the scope of digital accountabilities within that portfolio.

A new area of responsibility for the Minister would be to lead on tech regulation, including establishing a Council of Technology Regulators that includes industry - a reform the AIIA has previously called for. There is a red tape burden falling on the digital economy - from cyber to technology regulation - which needs to be better targeted and coordinated. The new Minister would have responsibility to ensure that tech regulation does not put a hand break on the productivity of the economy. In addition, any new proposed tech regulation would need to be proposed to the Council which should be chaired by the Minister.

**AIIA CEO, Mr Ron Gauci** said: "Technology is an essential driver to economic growth that will create employment opportunities, improve services, and enable us to be globally competitive. Now is the time for Government to recognise the opportunities that the Technology Sector will provide and ensure the right processes and systems are in place to make this a reality. The Federal Government has important and achievable goals to be a leading digital government and digital economy. To do this, the AIIA calls for a Minister for Government Services and Digital Economy."

In addition, the AIIA's proposed new portfolio must incorporate strategic domestic procurement policies and critical technologies and ensure industry and Government are aligned on policy and direction. This must include critical AI and Quantum strategies, tech commercialisation and incentives policies.

The portfolio would sit inside the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet which already has the key responsibilities for the portfolio which would be expanded in responsibilities to include:

- Government digitisation services and whole of government architecture that is the role of the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA to remain and keep this responsibility but report to Minister)
- Digital Identity and data sharing programmes that the DTA supports
- The work of the Digital Economy Taskforce
- Tech Regulation including cyber regulation for non-critical industries (as defined by CI SoNS)
- The work of the Modernising Document Execution Taskforce and e-invoicing initiatives
- The AIIA policy of the Made in the Australia Office that supports using government procurements to assist SME capabilities and create long term strategies to support Australian

tech procurements

- Government SME procurement reform and policies
- Consumer Data Right policies
- Coordinating role for digital skills initiatives
- Critical liaison path between industry and defence around critical technologies initiatives
- Quantum and AI Strategies
- Minister to have a direct say in whole of government commercialisation and incentives strategy including R&DTI, AI and quantum commercialisation and patent box and look for innovation in program delivery

Mr. Gauci continued: “AI and Quantum Computing offers Australia massive economic growth opportunities. Having a minister solely focused on supporting and delivering national strategies for key digital growth areas such as these is a must. Location for these industries is irrelevant, Australia can lead the world, from our cities and our regions.

“Australia’s capabilities in the ICT sector must be prioritised by our next Government. Streamlining strategic domestic procurement policies and critical technologies is needed to support Australia’s ICT sector, both large providers and SME’s. It is important Australia’s domestic capabilities in the sector are supported and recognised, we have seen in the past two years that we can’t rely on other countries to supply services and talent to fill our shortages.

“The skills shortage in the ICT sector is a significant challenge for the next Government to address. Reforming the Australian Curriculum to prioritise the Digital Economy is a way to address skills in the long term, whilst reskilling, upskilling and immigration will play key roles in the short and medium term to improve the shortage being experienced. A Government Services and Digital Economy Minister will need to work with Cabinet to drive reform to support this and ensure the digital economy can continue to support all economic sectors to improve productivity and growth.”

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.
- **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.

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.

**ENDS**

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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; developing compelling content and relevant and interesting information.