Submissions Skills and Workforce Development Policy
Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency
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The Australian Council of Deans of Information and Communications Technology (ACDICT), Australia's peak academic body for ICT, is pleased to provide comments on the Discussion Paper concerned with the future focus on Australia's skills and workforce development needs.

We congratulate the Agency on a comprehensive discussion paper that addressed all the relevant issues and challenges of the future workforce needs through a range of plausible scenarios, all of which depend substantially on a workforce with skilled ICT capabilities. Even though predicting the future of ICT innovation and impact is almost impossible, it is certain that ICT will be central to future productivity and prosperity in a rapidly evolving world that is increasingly shaped by ICT products and services.

The pressing skills, needs and issues related to ICT are concerned with the present education system's ability to produce the required skilled ICT workforce. The education system encompasses schools, all tertiary providers, registered training organisations, and the contributions made by industry to this system. The problem is that insufficient students are engaging with the study of ICT to meet present and future demands of the ICT workforce.

The engagement of students at all levels with ICT depends upon the skills and capabilities of the teachers and the perceptions of an ICT career. The training of teachers that are capable of embedding ICT skills in all disciplines and engaging the students in the creation of ICT innovations by developing computational thinking is a fundamental requirement of the education system upon which all other successes depend. The lack of skilled ICT educators requires long-term strategies and commitment by teacher training and professional development organisations and government to address this crucial chronic issue.

Industry also can contribute at all levels to the student learning of ICT. It can provide projects and industry experiences internally or externally to the primary learning location and help shape perceptions of what ICT Professionals do as useful contributors to other disciplines including science and engineering, society, humanity, the economy and environment.

ACDICT is willing to be involved in the development of strategies that require a holistic perspective and the collaboration of all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Professor Leon Sterling
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