

Australian Computer Society Inc

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28 January 2022

The Hon Michael Sukkar, MP

Assistant Treasurer

The Treasury

Langton Crescent

PARKES ACT 2600

AUSTRALIA

Australian Computer Society – 2022 Pre-Budget Submission

Dear Sir,

ACS, the professional association for Australia's technology sector, would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to assist in developing the 2022 Federal budget.

The last two years have shown the technology sector's importance to Australian business and society and the measures proposed aim to build on the economy's strengths while aligning with the government's objective of making the nation a digital leader by the end of the decade.

We therefore put forward the following six proposals for your consideration. We also attach copies of the 2021 Digital Pulse Report prepared by Deloitte Access Economics for ACS which forms the basis of our submission.

1. A program to boost the technology profession's diversity and inclusion – ICT Diversity Trainee Scheme

\$500m for a trainee program aimed at women and groups not well represented in the IT sector. The program would provide employees a subsidy of \$20,000 for 5,000 places a year over five years.

The 2021 ACS/Deloitte Digital Pulse report showed that boosting female participation in the Australian tech sector could see 5,000 highly skilled jobs created each year for the next 20 years.

Modelling for last year's Digital Pulse found increasing the technology workforce's gender diversity would grow Australia's economy by \$1.8 billion each year on average over the next 20 years. This amounts to an \$11 billion opportunity for Australia's economy.



2. Encouraging Digital Technology education in schools

A \$100m program to boost the resources and support for schoolteachers to implement the Australian Curriculum Digital Technologies framework.

Australia's chronic technology workforce shortages are hampering the nation's aim to be a global digital leader by 2030. ACS believes this can be partially addressed by boosting the resources available to teachers responsible for delivering technology related courses.

The 2020-21 Computer Education in Australian Schools survey found more than 50% of primary schools reported 75% or more of their teachers had no prior experience or training to teach the Digital Technologies Curriculum.

For our children to meet the needs of a technology driven society, ACS submit a boost to IT education resources and support to students and teachers is essential and this program would serve as a starting point.

3. Boosting the workforce's digital skills

Up to \$10,000 per employee tax credit program for businesses providing staff vocational technical training, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Australia's economy is rapidly evolving, and technology touches all industries. In order for the nation's business to compete in the global digital economy, it is essential the workforce has skills appropriate to the modern workplaces and markets.

ACS therefore proposes a tax credit program supporting businesses that provide training for staff in key technology fields.

4. A crackdown on spam and scams

A \$100m program to eliminate online scams and text messages coupled with stronger requirements for telecommunications operators.

Scam messages have become the bane of Australian households. ACS proposes a \$100m effort to reduce the volume of SMS, phone and email-based scams by boosting enforcement, tightening controls on scammer's money flows and compelling telcos to take stronger action to block calls from providers known to be hosting scam operators.

5. Boost Australia's regional digital economy

A \$500m dollar program to support regional councils and local groups to provide hubs aimed at improving the digital literacy of their communities and local businesses.



Digital technologies are essential to all aspects of Australia's economy and the regions cannot be left out. Agriculture, mining and logistics are as dependent upon modern technologies as any other sector, while communities need access to the internet and IT services to attract business and workers.

ACS proposes a network of regional hubs providing advice and support on digital technologies to communities and businesses across Australia.

Along with the program ACS advocates, governments need to ensure all Australians have access to reliable and fast internet connectivity to enable their communities to compete in the modern, global digital economy.

6. Establish a Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

Create a Commonwealth Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology within the Department of Parliamentary Services to provide MPs and Senators with advice and guidance upon science technology matters.

Based up on the Westminster Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, the independent office would provide impartial advice on technology and scientific issues to both houses and all members of parliament.

The Office would consult with industry and provide guidance to members and the government on current issues, assist in the drafting of bills governing technology matters and raise the digital literacy of the Parliament.

Conclusion

Should you have any further queries on these proposals we would be delighted to elaborate further, please contact Paul Wallbank, paul.wallbank@acs.org.au, on 0418 557 459. We once again thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Troy Steer
Director, Corporate Affairs and Public Policy
Australian Computer Society