

Australians ready to embrace jobs of the future, says AIIA survey

Coincides with release of AIIA's position paper on impact new technologies will have on future employment

Sydney, Australia – 21 September 2017 – The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA), the nation's peak industry body for the technology sector, today released the findings of a national survey on Australians' attitudes towards technology and its impact on future employment opportunities.

While nearly all Australians believe that innovation is important to Australia's future prosperity (99%) and feel positive about future work and job opportunities (97%), only one in four attribute their positive outlook to the belief that government will develop the right policies in areas such as education and training.

Instead, people were more likely to attribute their positive attitude about the future to the fact that technological revolutions throughout history have always resulted in the emergence of new industries and jobs (54%), Australia is a strong, stable country that will be able to adapt to change (52%), and because Australian entrepreneurs will take advantage of emerging opportunities in new industries (45%).

The survey on Australians' attitude towards innovation, jobs and future employment was conducted by Galaxy Research on behalf of AIIA**.

"There is widespread commentary that technological disruption will cause job loss without job replacement. However, our poll indicates the majority of Australians are actually positive about the future, despite fear mongering about loss of jobs as technology develops," said Rob Fitzpatrick, CEO, AIIA. The survey also found that the majority of Australians believe they will need to take charge of their own careers and reskilling as jobs evolve due to technology advancements, irrespective of the industry in which they are working.

To adapt to technological change, Australians say workers need to stay up to date with changing technology in their industry (76%), undertake self-learning/further education (55%), access professional development through their workplace (53%), and be prepared to change careers or jobs as new roles emerge (51%).

"History has demonstrated that technology and automation have increased productivity, improved the quality of goods and services, reduced prices and led to improved standards of living. It's great that people are prepared to manage their own careers, however, it's crucial that industry and government also respond appropriately to ensure Australians are well positioned to take advantage of new jobs and industries that will emerge on the back of new technologies," said Mr Fitzpatrick.

The survey indicated many Australians believe it is vitally important to support young people so they are prepared for the jobs of the future. The most popular approach is to improve education standards and the curriculum in STEM subjects (68%), while large numbers also said Australia should provide more workplace training opportunities for university and high school students (64%), develop more relevant vocational and education training programs (59%), and develop programs that promote resilience and confidence in young people (53%).

Areas Australians would like to see embracing innovation and technology include medical research and development to deliver cures and better health management (72%), helping disadvantaged people gain better access to appropriate support services (65%), and investing in technological change in existing Australian industries such as manufacturing and agriculture (58%).

The survey results coincide with the release of AIIA's "Skills for Today, Jobs for Tomorrow" position paper, which is focused on the urgent need for a practical strategy and action plan for the future of jobs.

"ICT and digital leaders must work proactively with governments and communities to develop practical strategies to build Australia's digital literacy capabilities to prevent social and economic dislocation," said Mr Fitzpatrick. "While history shows technology will ultimately add productivity and economic growth, our position paper is the start of what needs to be an ongoing conversation about developing an action plan to ensure Australians are adequately prepared for the jobs of the future," he added.

AIIA's NSW Forum 'Skills for Today, Jobs for Tomorrow'

To mark the launch of the position paper, AIIA is holding a luncheon on Thursday 21 September in Sydney. The event will feature renowned futurist

Shara Evans and broader industry leaders, including David Thodey (Chairman of Jobs for NSW), Alexis Rouch (COO Medical Media), and Attila Brungs (UTS Vice-Chancellor).

They will discuss: The implications of new digital technologies such as AI, robotics, and automation on the nature of jobs and employment in the future; New look future jobs and employment opportunities across different industry sectors; and The implications for skills development, reskilling and policymakers.

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About the 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 favorable business environment for members and to contribute to Australia's economic prosperity. AIIA does 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.

** The Galaxy Poll was conducted online among a nationally representative sample of 1,004 Australians 18 years and older.

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