**PRESS RELEASE: Victorian Government Sponsored Research: Digital Skills the key to securing Melbourne’s Cyber Security Future**

Since the pandemic, many organisations have invested heavily in technology to address immediate concerns such as falling revenue, interrupted supply chains as well as building longer-term competitiveness and resilience.

Our increased dependency on technology also functions as a catalyst for cyber security threats. Despite our public-spirited resilience, we are more vulnerable than ever to cyber security attacks as the new environments we study and work in demand unprecedented agility and precaution from us.

A new report by RMIT University “Digital Skills and Cyber Security: How do we secure our future” attempts to understand the current digital skills issues, and the challenges the pandemic brought about, in the context of developing Melbourne as a Digital CBD. The research is funded by the Victorian State Government.

**“Digital Skills and Cyber Security: How do we secure our future”** **Report Recommendations**

The report makes the following recommendations:

* Establish a Victorian Digital Skills Academy;
* Establish an Australian Cyber Security Accreditation Body and an Australian Cyber Security Body of Knowledge;
* Create a comprehensive ICT and Cyber Security Diversity Action Plan for Victoria;
* Increase skilled migration to aid Victoria’s recovery;
* Invest in innovative school programs highlighting the skills required in a digital economy;
* Create a program to increase the awareness of digital technologies and the need to upskill digital skills within the Melbourne CBD.

**Comments**

The RMIT University Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation Director, Professor Matt Warren, states that “we are more vulnerable than ever to cyber security attacks as the new environments we study and work in demand unprecedented agility and precaution from us.”

“For Melbourne to become a Digital Central Business District (CBD), we need to enhance our collective understanding of the digital skills shortages among professionals – An important first step on the path toward global excellence, for the state of Victoria.”

“Ensuring Melbourne transforms into a digital leader for cities around the world is a thrilling aspiration. We are proud to offer our services to help shape Melbourne’s future, its CBD and the broader regional economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Report co-author, Dr Ahmad Saleh Sahraki said “In Australia, one in three workers lacks basic digital skills, indicating that a substantial number of workers need reskilling or upskilling”

To provide further insight into the current skills shortages in the Victorian labour market, as part of the report RMIT surveyed digital professionals including ICT & cyber professionals, who worked in greater Melbourne.

Dr Sahraki stated that “Although over 60% of respondents indicated that there has been an increase in the number of cyber security staff compared to three years ago, only a quarter of respondents believe that they currently have enough cyber security professionals working in their organisation.”

In addition to this, less than 15% of workers in the cyber security industry are women, making it the industry with the biggest gender gap.

**The Report**

The Report “Digital Skills and Cyber Security: How do we secure our future” can be downloaded from:

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/au/en/for-business/blockchain-innovation-hub/digital-cbd/digital-cbd-project-report-4.pdf>

The report is published by RMIT’s [Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation](https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/rmit/au/en/research/centres-collaborations/cyber-security-research-innovation.html),  [Blockchain Innovation Hub](https://rmitblockchain.io/) and the [Digital Ethnography Research Centre](https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/rmit/au/en/research/centres-collaborations/digital-ethnography-research-centre.html).

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