



Name: The Tech Council of Australia

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Improve school student outcomes with the best available tools and resources

What (if anything) needs to be done to improve the use of edtech tools (including GenAI) in schools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

What more (if anything) needs to be done to improve awareness and access to high quality lesson planning and curriculum materials in schools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Is there anything more you would like to say about edtech, GenAI or lesson planning and curriculum materials?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Which of the following best describes you?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Are you currently using any edtech tools (including learning games and GenAI) to support teaching and learning in the classroom?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Are there things you would like to do with GenAI or edtech tools that you can't do currently? What's stopping you from doing these things?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using any edtech tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Do you access lesson planning and curriculum materials online?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, what has been your experience with using these tools?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you tell us why you are not using online lesson planning and curriculum materials?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Support the workforce through a flexible post-secondary education and training sector

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

In your experience, how well does the credit transfer and recognition of prior learning system operate in Australia? Does it adequately support students to move between courses or have their work experience recognised as part of a qualification? Are there ways it could be improved?

Australia's current credit transfer and recognition-of-prior-learning (RPL) frameworks provide a basic mechanism for formally accredited qualifications, but they overlook the rapidly evolving tech workforce's reliance on non-traditional training. Employer-delivered training, private-provider short courses and self-directed upskilling often deliver the exact skills that employers need—but because these pathways lack formal accreditation, they remain invisible to public systems. As a result, many learners must repeat content or pursue parallel credentials simply to gain academic credit, discouraging both students and employers from investing in targeted, job-relevant training.

To address this gap, RPL processes should be broadened to recognise unaccredited yet skills-aligned programs—using streamlined assessment rubrics rather than rigid unit-by-unit comparisons. Simultaneously, national credit transfer protocols must be strengthened to map common tech competencies across VET, higher education and industry microcredentials, reducing the paperwork burden on learners. These reforms would enhance student flexibility, encourage employer-led upskilling and help fill critical gaps in Australia's tech talent pipeline.

At the same time, it is important to remember that, in the tech sector, hands-on experience with real-world tools often matters more than formal qualifications; validating employer-delivered training and work-based projects ensures the system aligns with industry preferences and helps fill critical shortages in Australia's tech talent pipeline.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

I am a former university student

In the past 3 years, have you applied for credit recognition or recognition of prior learning (RPL)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, what was your experience in applying for credit recognition or RPL like?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on why you didn't apply?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Work related training

What are the main reasons individuals and/or businesses do or do not participate in work-related training?

Cost is the primary barrier to engaging in work-related training, especially small startups and small and medium-sized businesses. Every dollar spent on training must be weighed against immediate needs like product development or hiring, while prospective learners in precarious roles face lost income if they take time off to upskill.

What role, if any, should businesses be playing to address any barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

Businesses are uniquely positioned to close skills gaps in the tech sector by embedding role-specific training within their own teams. They understand firsthand the digital literacy, project management, collaboration, and innovation skills required for success, and can design targeted programs—whether through on-the-job rotations, mentorship, or short courses—that directly map to their organisational needs. By collaborating with industry bodies and VET providers to co-create curricula, offering paid release time for upskilling, and providing clear career pathways tied to new competencies, businesses can lower participation barriers and ensure employees develop the real-world tech-sector skills that drive both individual and company performance.

To further enhance training relevance and adaptability, businesses should leverage AI-driven insights to pinpoint existing and emerging skills requirements. With access to high-quality datasets, AI can analyse industry-specific trends, demographic shifts, and geographic nuances to refine the focus of employer-delivered programs. This enables organisations to tailor learning pathways, recommend microcredentials, and personalise upskilling plans for individual workers—empowering employees to quickly acquire in-demand capabilities and helping companies remain agile in a rapidly evolving job market.

What, if anything, could government do to address barriers and better support the offer of work-related training to employees?

To bridge the gap between education and employment, Australia needs earn-while-you-learn pathways and subsidised entry-level positions—especially within SMBs—where apprenticeships or traineeships combine part-time work with accredited microcredentials, allowing learners to contribute value as they train. Funding reforms should include wage subsidies for SMBs that create digital traineeships, refundable tax credits tied to demonstrable training outcomes, or matched-fund vouchers that lower out-of-pocket expenses. Such measures would complement existing TAFE, university and private-provider offerings by ensuring financial support targets work-integrated learning, helping employers access skilled staff, learners earn while they upskill, and the economy adopt critical digital competencies more rapidly.

Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.

The participant did not respond to this question.

For business owners, managers and sole traders, how many employees do you have?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For employees/individuals, have you participated in any work-related training in the last 12 months that did not relate to general compliance (such as WHS)?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to undertake work-related training?

The participant did not respond to this question.

For business owners, managers or sole traders, have you provided or supported your employees to participate in work-related training in the past 12 months?

The participant did not respond to this question.

If yes, can you elaborate on the reasons for the training and any benefits you or your employees received from doing it?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Can you describe whether you accessed any government assistance, what type, and the amount received? If you didn't access any financial assistance, please tell us the reasons why.

The participant did not respond to this question.

If no, can you elaborate on any challenges or barriers you faced in attempting to provide or support your employees to undertake work-related training, such as the time or cost, availability of relevant or high-quality courses, and level of interest from your employees?

The participant did not respond to this question.

Balance service availability and quality through fit-for-purpose occupational entry regulations

What are the effects of occupational entry regulations? Please describe your experience and name the specific occupations you are referring to.

Australia's tech sector is, in most respects, an open-entry labour market. Roles such as software development, cloud engineering, and product management are accessed through demonstrated skills, not statutory credentials. This is a deliberate policy setting that has supported innovation, competition and workforce mobility.

There are three key reasons why this model works:

1. Low public safety risk: Errors in code typically do not pose the same risks as regulated professions like medicine or construction.
2. Rapid technological change: Licensing frameworks cannot keep pace with evolving skills and tools.
3. Firm-level accountability: Regulation in high-trust domains like cyber security focuses on organisational governance and architecture, not individual licensing.

However, there are narrow but consequential exceptions where licensing applies—particularly at the interface between digital systems and the physical world. These include:

- Structured cabling under ACMA regulations
- Electronic security systems, which require jurisdiction-specific licences and are excluded from automatic mutual recognition
- Engineering registration, which may capture some ICT and systems engineers working on critical infrastructure

Do you believe current occupational entry regulations are proportionate to the level of risk associated with different professions? Why or why not? If not, do you have any suggested improvements to regulations to better reflect risks? Please name the specific occupations you are referring to.

Tech Council supports the current licence-free approach for most of the tech sector.

Which of the following best describes your connection to occupational entry regulations? Please select all that apply.

Industry association or professional-body representative

Which state or territory are you predominantly based in?

New South Wales

Cover sheet: Supporting document #1

Kickstarting productivity through the Australian tech sector

Australia has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to lean into structural challenges and reposition our economy for a new global reality. Domestically, we are confronting lower GDP growth, slowing productivity, demographic shifts, and declining workforce participation. Globally, we are navigating a shifting world order alongside the rise of new industries, supply chains, and trading relationships.

The tech sector and digital economy will be central to how we respond, with AI an intrinsic part. The digital economy and broader tech sector offer critical levers for boosting productivity, attracting investment, and building sovereign capability. Now is the time to lean into this opportunity—while we still can—and lay the foundations for the industries of the future.

Australia's prosperity has always tracked the tools we put in people's hands. Each time a breakthrough technology—tractors, container shipping, broadband—has spread through workplaces, output per worker has risen and real wages have followed. Today that dynamic is sputtering: productivity growth is the slowest in 60 years, and if this slowdown persists the average Australian will be noticeably poorer just as an ageing population tightens budgets.¹

At its core, productivity is about doing more with less. Efficiency gains matter—but history shows the biggest leaps come when those savings are paired with entirely new sources of value. True productivity growth unlocks fresh opportunity as much as it trims inefficiency.

Australia's tech sector can drive this next wave of productivity growth. Whether it's AI that clears hospital-imaging backlogs and frees clinicians for complex care; precision-agriculture platforms that combine IoT sensors and analytics to help farmers launch premium, sustainable-produce lines; or fintech marketplaces that let small businesses instantly access microfinance and expand into new export markets—these are tools that expand what Australians can accomplish.

The tech sector is deeply intertwined with almost all sectors of the national economy, meaning strong economic fundamentals are in the sector's direct interests. Further, the success of the tech sector in Australia directly relies on settings that support innovation and tech adoption, access to capital, access to talent, and fit-for-purpose regulation.

We welcome the Productivity Commission's (PC) Productivity Review as a chance to co-design a growth-led agenda that keeps Australia globally competitive. In particular, we support the five reform areas identified by the Commission and commit to developing actionable, targeted and impactful proposals in each domain. The Tech Council looks forward to ongoing engagement with the Commission and Government to advance Australia's productivity agenda.

¹ Treasury, *Intergenerational Report* (2023).

Technology investment can drive productivity growth across our economy

We strongly support the development of policy options that will incentivise investment and drive innovation across the economy. Australia enters this decade at a pivotal juncture. R&D investment has fallen from 2.1% of GDP in 2011 to 1.7% today, and the long tail of the mining boom is receding. The next phase of national prosperity will depend on how we apply technology and innovation—not only to lift productivity in traditional strengths in mining, agriculture and manufacturing, but to pioneer new frontiers where Australian ideas are already leading, from AI to quantum.

Australia's tech investment – defined as the sum of R&D and tech adoption spending – is currently equivalent to 3.9% of GDP. That's equivalent to \$88 billion in total investment, or \$3,400 per capita.²

Based on existing trends, this figure is forecast to fall to 3.5 per cent of GDP by 2030 due to the ongoing decline of R&D spending as a share of GDP and a lack of growth in tech adoption investment. Our modelling suggests that this decline would cost Australia around \$8.2 billion dollars in 2035 alone and a total of \$25.3 billion dollars between now and 2035 in foregone productivity benefits, relative to maintaining our current level of tech investment.

Higher levels of tech investment would deliver substantial benefits to the Australian economy. Lifting tech investment to 4.6 per cent in the medium scenario modelled would contribute an additional \$39 billion to GDP from productivity gains in 2035. Going further to lift tech investment to 6.9 per cent would contribute an additional \$167 billion to GDP by 2035.

Accelerating businesses' tech adoption has practical benefits for the businesses creating this uplift. ASX200 firms that actively invested in tech adoption were more likely to survive and grow compared to average firms across 2005-16, and small businesses actively adopting tech saw their revenue grow 3.5pp faster and their headcount grow 2.2pp faster than other small businesses according to the Office of Innovation & Science Australia.

Turning around Australia's productivity performance could be driven by higher tech investment, which will require us to address barriers to lifting R&D and tech adoption. Across both measures, we forecast that the uplift will need to be undertaken by business but Government also has an essential role to play as a policymaker and strategic investor.

Tech-driven productivity through building human capital

Improving productivity and Australians' wellbeing hinges on ensuring workers have the skills to seize opportunities created by more productive uses of capital, and we strongly support pillar 2 - to support Australia's workforce through a flexible post-secondary education and training sector.

The tech sector still faces a systemic shortage of workers, despite entry wages 32 percent above the national average, a gender pay gap half the size of comparable sectors, and

² Tech Council of Australia, *Lifting Tech Investment in Australia* (2024).

VET-trained workers earning 35 percent more than their peers. This disconnect underscores the need to align training and migration systems with real-time industry demand.

Part of the answer lies in understanding the pace of technological change and how it requires similarly innovative training methods and pathways. Australian workers increasingly rely on flexible, non-traditional models—employer-delivered programs, private providers and self-directed upskilling—that can adapt more quickly than formal qualifications. However, these pathways often go unrecognised by public systems and lack formal credentials to give students confidence in their choice.

The Tech Council has consistently advocated for reforms that improve the flexibility, responsiveness and recognition of these training models, including:

- **Recognition of prior learning (RPL) for unaccredited, skills-aligned training**, so workers' demonstrated capabilities count toward formal certification.
- **Incentives for hybrid and employer-led models**, such as digital apprenticeships and modular training, to ensure curricula keep pace with evolving technology needs.
- **Credit-transfer systems** that enable seamless movement between VET, higher education and work-based learning, allowing individuals to build on micro-credentials and stackable certificates as their careers evolve.

By aligning public support and certification with these flexible pathways—and pairing them with proactive skilled-migration policies that attract global talent while facilitating knowledge transfer—Australia can equip its workforce to adopt cutting-edge tools and drive productivity across every sector.

Fit-for-purpose regulation in the digital age

Smart regulation provides guardrails without dampening momentum. To secure Australia's position as a global leader in technology, the regulatory environment must be clear, coordinated and strategically aligned across the entire economy to accelerate innovation and investment (while continuing to safeguard public interests). We strongly support the PC's focus on reducing the impact of regulation on business dynamism, and creating a regulatory environment which supports innovation.

There is a significant number of regulatory reforms underway, without sufficient clarity as to scope or timing of the expected changes. This uncertainty risks stalling investment and delaying the adoption of transformative technologies, without which Australia may lose out on capturing the next wave of productivity gains.

It is therefore critical that the current regulatory agenda is proportionate and focused towards specific harms, rather than responding reflexively to uncertainty. At a minimum, this requires:

- Appropriate regulatory settings which support the growth of general-purpose technologies such as AI, quantum and blockchain that have economy-wide productivity potential;

- Cautious implementation of sector-specific regulation, which must be limited to addressing clear regulatory gaps that are likely to result in specific harms and which are aligned with reputable global standards;
 - In the context of AI: (1) removing key structural barriers to innovation such as copyright restrictions which prevent use of data in large-scale computation, and (2) providing early certainty on AI regulations; and
 - More broadly, adjusting Australia's tax settings to reward investment in innovation and technology (e.g. by improving the operation of ESOPs and changing depreciation schedules to improve the tax treatment of intangibles).
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These steps are not radical; they simply align policy with how value is created in a modern economy. If we choose that path now—lifting R&D, rewarding adoption, equipping workers and modernising rules—Australia can keep living-standards growth on the upward trajectory that has defined us for a century.

Prosperity, productivity and technology are now a single policy conversation. The Tech Council is ready to work with Government and industry partners to turn that insight into measurable national progress.

Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Productivity Case Study

Australia faces a once-in-a-generation productivity leap: artificial intelligence. As the world races to deploy AI, our economic readiness—our investment, skills and infrastructure—will determine whether we secure its benefits. Tech Council modelling shows that, with accelerated adoption and timely reforms, Australia could add \$115 billion in output and create 200,000 AI-related jobs by 2030—targets we can only achieve by preparing our economy and society today.

AI is a fitting case study of how a modern productivity agenda must weave together the PC's five pillars—capital, skills, data, innovative health regulation and clean energy—to capture tomorrow's gains before our peers do, rather than risk being left behind.

To begin with, capital and skills must advance in tandem. Capital needs to flow freely to AI startups—streamlining foreign-investment approvals—while tax settings that reward intangible investment and prudent public procurement de-risk early projects. Equally important, rapid, modular upskilling—AI bootcamps, micro-credentials and digital apprenticeships—will retrain one in three Australians within three years and unlock substantial economic gains.

At the same time, data and regulation jointly unlock AI's potential in sectors like healthcare. Data and digital infrastructure underpin every AI system. Clear, proportionate data-privacy rules aligned with global norms—and expanded digital networks—will let firms build models on high-quality, locally sourced information. Delivering AI in regulated settings such as healthcare—through faster approval of diagnostic software and pilot funding for predictive analytics—represents one of the greatest near-term productivity gains.

Finally, large-scale AI workloads demand reliable, renewable-powered data centers in key strategic locations. Investing now in cheaper, cleaner energy ensures we don't trade short-term productivity for long-term carbon targets.

A modern productivity agenda must weave together capital, skills, data, innovative regulation and clean energy if Australia is to capture AI's gains rather than watch them pass us by. The Tech Council stands ready to partner with Government and industry to make that vision a reality.