Press Release ACDICT re Digital Technologies Curriculum

The Australian Council of Deans of Information and Communications Technology (ACDICT) has supported for years the forward-looking national digital technologies curriculum for schools. Thus, ACDICT is understandably dismayed at the proposed axing of the curriculum by the recent federal government-commissioned school curriculum review.

“Cutting the development of fundamental computational thinking so necessary for the jobs of tomorrow is equivalent to reducing the capabilities of school leavers to second class citizens on a global scale” said Professor Iwona Miliszewska, President of ACDICT.

The UK and other parts of Europe are preparing their primary school students for the future while Australia seems to be retreating with the curriculum. “This move (if implemented) will have long-term effects on student capabilities as well as our future economy that increasingly depends on digitally focused jobs”, said Professor Miliszewska.

The proposed change is the more difficult to understand, as only today did the government release its competitiveness blueprint. The policy has international competitiveness and commercial innovation at its heart and, among other measures, it plans to champion new programs to enhance the standing of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in schools, and produce workers with the skills that industry needs.

Along with the ACS and Industry Groups, ACDICT’s Skills Action Plan has highlighted the shortage of ICT skills in the workforce. The Plan has stressed also the importance of the development of ICT skills in teachers, as the teachers are crucial to implementing the necessary computational and design thinking into the curriculum.

By effectively relegating the ICT curriculum to later years, the incentive for teachers to lift their abilities for those formative early years will be removed; this will be at odds with systems promoted in other developed countries.

Professor Miliszewska concluded that: “It is most disappointing that the views of the Australian Universities, ACS, ACARA, industry bodies, and forward thinking developed countries should be disregarded and the Australian education set back in such fundamental ways.”

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