More educational focus needed on IT to fill growing skills shortage: Survey

- Merely 3% of Australian CIOs say today's education system is able to meet the demands of the IT employment market.
- 41% believe education providers need to focus more on IT security to meet the demands of the IT employment market, followed by data/database management (34%) software/application development (32%), and systems administration and networking (29%).
- 82% say it is more challenging to find qualified IT professionals today compared to five years ago.

Sydney, 18 January 2018 – Australian CIOs have expressed in an independent survey commissioned by specialised recruiter Robert Half the need for IT education providers[1] to enhance their services to meet the IT employment market's demands. Merely 3% of Australian CIOs say today's education system is able to meet the demands of the IT employment market.

In 12 months, the IT sector has created nearly 19,000 additional jobs. This represents an annual growth of 9.6%[2], compared to 1.6%[3] for the overall Australian employment market. However, while employment in IT continues to boom, Australia is increasingly confronted with a shortage of staff in many IT functional areas. More than eight in 10 (82%) Australian CIOs say it is more challenging to find qualified IT professionals compared to five years ago, highlighting the important role of education as these institutions can help supplement the influx of skilled IT staff into the employment market, as well as help upskill existing technology staff.

With a 109% increase in security incidents and cyber-attacks in Australia in 2016[4] and 53% of Australian IT leaders saying cyber-security is the functional area where it is the most difficult to source skilled job candidates, it is not surprising that IT security has been identified as the number one area that requires greater focus on by IT education providers (41%), followed by data/database management (34%), software/application development (32%), and systems administration and networking (29%).

Andrew Morris, Director of Robert Half Australia said: *"As Australian companies accelerate their use of new technologies, there's increasing concern that the current IT talent pool has not kept pace with market demand and skills that are required in the modern IT sector. Education systems and providers play a key role, not just to guarantee a continuous flow of skilled IT professionals into the employment market, but also to help upskill existing staff. With companies increasingly investing in training to develop the skills of their current IT workforce, it only further emphasises the key role that education providers play in helping to close the current and future skills gap."*

"Technology is changing continuously and rapidly which also implies the required IT skillsets are evolving continuously and rapidly. To keep up with the changing marketplace and to equip their students with the skills required in the workplace of the future, education providers need to ensure their STEM qualifications, courses and degrees evolve at a similar speed technology does."

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[1] Universities, technical schools, etc.

[2] 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, May 2017: Employed persons by Industry division of main job (ANZSIC) - Seasonally adjusted – May 2017

[3] 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, May 2017: May 16 to May 17

[4] http://www.pwc.com.au/publications/global-information-security.html

"While education institutions are of great importance, a comprehensive approach where education providers work alongside the wider business community and potentially supported by government initiatives is key in order to successfully tackle the talent shortage. A career in IT and technology needs to be 'marketed' and promoted as an attractive career path. You will never create change unless you explain to people why they should change," concluded **Andrew Morris**.

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Notes to editors

About the research
The annual study was developed by Robert Half Australia and was conducted in June-July 2017 by an independent research company. The study is based on 160 interviews with CIOs/CTOs from companies across Australia, with the results segmented by company size, sector and geographic location.

About Robert Half
Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy and member of the S&P 500. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing temporary, interim and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services, technology, and administrative professionals. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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Gabrielle Nagy	Laura Sanford
Public Relations Manager, Robert Half Asia Pacific	LEWIS Communications
gabrielle.nagy@roberthalf.com.au	laura.sanford@teamlewis.com
02 8028 7751	02 8599 1000