

Cyber Skills Boost for High School Students

South Australian high school students will now have the opportunity to gain valuable cyber skills through a partnership with IBM to equip our next generation workforce with the capability needed for the future.

IBM, in partnership with the South Australian Government and AustCyber's South Australian Cyber Security Innovation Node, will offer its [SkillsBuild for Students](#) online program to high schools across South Australia, including state, private and independent schools, for students and educators to develop their skills across a six-month program.

Minister for Innovation and Skills, David Pisoni, said the initiative will help students gain cyber skills that will have a real-world application when they enter the workforce.

"From today, South Australian high school students will have the opportunity to begin skilling themselves for a future career in cyber thanks to a new program on offer to all schools that is free to all learners – be it public, private or independent," Minister Pisoni said.

"South Australia is in prime position to seize the opportunities created by the global demand for cyber security solutions and high-quality talent, and the Marshall Liberal Government is committed to initiatives here to address these demands.

"The IBM SkillsBuild program will give high schools access to an amazing resource that is free for students and educators. The program aligns to industry needs that focus on key cyber skills, including artificial intelligence, cloud computing and cybersecurity.

"It also includes courses on emerging technologies and courses on professional competencies, both leading to free digital badges that students can share on their online resumes.

"Through the program, students preparing for internships and jobs earn the same badges as professionals in the field with the platform providing skills development in both technical as well as workplace readiness topics."

The partnership is part of IBM's global commitment to provide [30 million people of all ages with new skills](#) needed for the jobs of tomorrow by 2030, and to address critical skills shortages in Australia.

Katrina Troughton, Managing Director of IBM Australia and New Zealand says without intervention now, Australia faces extreme shortages of cyber security talent which is needed across all industries.

"Cyber security is one of the biggest issues of this decade. It impacts nearly every facet of life, from national security through to personal safety and mental wellbeing. But with a shortage of people with cyber skills in Australia, we need to look at ways to fast track young people into these critical areas of need, and that challenge is bigger than any organisation to address alone," says Ms Troughton.

"Our partnership with the South Australian Government and AustCyber South Australian Node is designed to unlock opportunities for high school students and give them access to the range of possibilities that a career in technology holds. More than that, students will be able to enter the workforce of tomorrow with the digital acumen they need to be able to fully participate in and contribute to the digital economy.

AustCyber's CEO, Michelle Price, said initiatives like IBM's SkillsBuild would build on curriculum based cyber security initiatives in the classroom and promote the cyber sector to Australia's workforce of the future.

"With an estimated 7,000 new direct jobs needed in the cyber security sector by 2024, now is the time to give our students the skills they need to be ready to meet our future challenges."

"SkillsBuild is a gamechanger for all high school students across South Australia. Students will have the opportunity to embed learning on everything from the basics, right through to the complexities in cloud computing, artificial intelligence and the emerging technology of tomorrow. It will give them an edge in any vocation they decide to go on to further study and/ or when entering the workforce."

IBM has been preparing students to be ready for, and competitive in the jobs of the future through the P-TECH

(Pathways to Technology Early College High School) program for 10 years. First launched by IBM in 2011, the P-TECH model has been adopted in more than 300 schools across 28 countries with over 600 corporate partners. Now, IBM and its industry partners have created the IBM SkillsBuild for Students program to bring those same benefits to students around the world.

In Australia, IBM has successfully piloted SkillsBuild in New South Wales in partnership with AustCyber's New South Wales Node and the New South Wales Government, which saw almost 70 schools participate, and platform content mapped to the New South Wales curriculum.

The IBM SkillsBuild for Students (<https://skillsbuild.org/students>) online program is available for South Australian high schools to register from today.

For more information about IBM SkillsBuild please visit <https://skillsbuild.org>
