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22 May 2015

Ms Tracey Rowley
Assistant Director
ICT Statistics Review Secretariat
Australian Bureau of Statistics
GPO Box K881
PERTH WA 6842

Dear Ms Rowley,

DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STATISTICS REVIEW 2014-15

The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) appreciates another opportunity to provide a submission on the joint Australian Bureau of Statistics and Bureau of Communications Research's (ABS-BCR) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Statistics Review, 2014-15.

The ABS-BCR discussion paper identifies key topics based on initial stakeholder submissions received, and seeks stakeholder feedback on prioritising these topics.

We support the ABS-BCR taking this step as part of this review. Stakeholder feedback will give the ABS-BCR some guidance as to the areas that should be focused upon as a matter of priority. Such priorities should be consistent with the intention of the review, which we consider is to generally improve the ABS's ICT statistics. But more importantly, as we stated in our previous submission, this should better inform users of the state of ICT in Australia, particularly within businesses, and provide insights into factors that could contribute to the growth of the digital economy.

In addition to the points we have made in our previous submission, we wish to make the following comments relevant to the ABS-BCR's discussion paper.

Data sources for developing ICT statistics framework

The ABS-BCR have indicated that they will consider various sources to assist in developing ICT definitions and productivity measurement, and for other statistical purposes in the Australian context. We agree that it would be worthwhile to consider other sources, especially where there is relevant data or frameworks readily available but not currently utilised by the ABS.

However, in addition to the other sources mentioned in the discussion paper, we suggest that it may also be worthwhile for the ABS-BCR to consider material from the World Economic Forum (WEF). For example, we note that the ABS-BCR is considering the International



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Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as the ideal international frameworks for ICT definitions. As a Partner Institute to the WEF we recognise that, while ITU and OECD data are very useful sources which the WEF does use, they are also limited to a certain extent, especially for the purposes of producing the WEF's annual global digital competitiveness report. To acquire data that is not currently being collected by the ITU and OECD, the WEF conducts its own survey through the Executive Opinion Questionnaire. We therefore suggest that it would be useful for the ABS-BCR to at least review the WEF's Executive Opinion Questionnaire to see if it can devise a meaningful way of collecting the survey-based answers via some quantitative or qualitative output.

Efficient use of data

We consider that there will also be broader opportunities to maximise the efficient use of data where there is centralised access to common data through the Government's digitisation of services, open data initiative, and advancement of Big Data technology. We encourage the ABS-BCR to bear this in mind during this review, and work with other Government agencies to ensure consistent use of and access to data. Such improvements through data collection and use are expected to provide benefits through reduced red tape and regulatory burden for businesses.

We would be pleased to further engage with the ABS-BCR on this review should there be another opportunity.

For further information in relation to this submission, please contact our adviser Charles Hoang (02 9466 5462, charles.hoang@aigroup.com.au).

Yours sincerely,

Peter Burn
Head of Influence and Policy